

Psalms

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1. Introduction to Course and Psalms 1

I. Course Description

The Book of Psalms is the most popular book of the Old Testament. Often publishers combine the Book of Psalms with the New Testament. Quotations and allusions to the psalms are contained in every book of the New Testament with the exception of 2 and 3 John, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon. The Lord Jesus Christ probably memorized the book, and he and the apostolic community argued that they speak of him. It is the most represented corpus in the Qumran community. “Early Christian schools, especially monastic schools, introduced young initiates to the study of Scripture through the psalms and selected New Testament texts. Once admitted to the monastery, the neophyte had to commit psalms to memory and recite them while performing his daily chores.”¹ It is the first book ever printed, and, as the Bible came to be cast in the vernacular, it became the most widely translated book in sixteenth-seventeenth century England.

The Book of Psalms is also the Bible’s longest and most complex book, containing a collection of religious Hebrew poetry extending for about 1,000 years, from Moses to the post-exilic era. It achieved its final shape by about the time of the New Testament. This course on the Book of Psalms aims to edify the student by teaching them better to read and understand the Book of Psalms and to meditate authentically on it. The course assumes that all Scripture is best interpreted in a way accredited by the Bible, to wit, its plain sense: the sense authors intend their words and sentences to mean in their historical context. But the complexities of the Book of Psalms present unique challenges to its interpretation. It is a truism: the meaning of a text cannot be known until it is known how it means. Five approaches beside the plain sense of Scripture have proved helpful to know how it means: the historical, form critical, liturgical, rhetorical, eschatological and editorial. The course introduces the student to these approaches at first with a broad brush and then more finely in their application to selected psalms.

This corpus of religious poetry expresses a wide variety of human moods— from heart-wrenching anguish to bursts of exuberant joy—and is interspersed with religious instruction. The course assumes that whether the words were originally spoken to God or about God, they became in the canon of Scripture the Word of God to the people of God.

In this way, the student will know the shape and content of the Psalter and will begin to participate in the rich history of this book’s interpretation.

II. Objectives

- A. To empower the student authentically to internalize selected psalms and so increase their knowledge and love of God who inspired the psalms and to grow in righteousness. In this

¹ Alan Cooper, “Some Aspects of Traditional Jewish Psalms Interpretation,” *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*, edited by William P. Brown (Oxford; University Press, 2014), 258.

way, it is hoped, that their sacrifice of praises and petitions to God will become ever more pleasing to the Triune God and that they will enjoy God, who chooses to be known through his Son, Jesus Christ,

- B. To equip the student for a lifetime of growth in understanding the Book of Psalms.
- C. To present accredited methods of interpreting the psalms that have been developed over years of church history and that have served the church well in better understanding the psalms.

III. Calendar

1. Introduction to Course and Psalms 1
2. Hermeneutics
3. Historical Approach
4. Psalm 4
5. Hebrew poetry and Psalm 23
- 6.–7. Form Critical Approach with a Focus on Hymns
8. Psalm 100
9. Psalm 8
10. Grateful Songs of Praise and Psalm 92
- 11.–12. Form Critical Approach with a Focus on Laments
13. Individual lament: Psalm 3
14. Individual lament: Psalm 22
15. Communal laments: Psalms 90, 44
16. Songs of Trust: Psalms 91, 139
17. Liturgical Approach
18. Psalms 2, 110
19. Rhetorical Approach and Psalm 49
20. Messianic Approach and Psalm 16
21. Wisdom Psalms and Psalms 19, 73
22. The Editorial Approach

III. Requirements for two and three hours

A. For two hours

Required Text: *New International Version* (2011). Read the Book of Psalms in its entirety by the end of the course.

Read B. Waltke, "Psalms: Theology of," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, Vol. 4 (1997): 1100-1115

Critical review of Mark D. Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook* (Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Academic and Professional, December, 2007;. 229 pp). Review should be about 9 pages in length; it is suggested that three pages be devoted to each of the following: book's content, strengths and on weaknesses.

Write an exegesis of about eight pages on any psalm that is six verses or more in length. It is suggested the paper include about two pages of introduction pertaining to the theory of interpreting the psalm and about six pages of commentary. The paper takes the place of a final examination and should exhibit a familiarity with lectures and reading. At the end of paper include an honor statement concerning hours of class attendance and of satisfying the course's reading requirements.

B. For three hours

Same as for two hours

A critical review of "theological horizons of Psalms," in Geoffrey W. Grogan, *Psalms* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), pp. 231—430./

IV. Hours

Class hours	27 hours
Read book of Psalms	3 hours
Read Waltke and Write Critical Review of Futato	25 hours
Write exegetical paper	35 hours
Write critical review of Grogan, <i>Psalms</i>	40 hours

V. Evaluation	2 hrs.	3hrs.
Class attendance and reading Book of Psalms	20%	20%
Review of Futato	30%	20%
Review of Anderson or Waltke-Houston		20%
Exegetical Paper	50%	40%

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Psalm 1

Introduction

I. Life Pictured as a Journey

- A. “Wicket Gate” to Psalter and summary of Way. “It is a good belief that our life is a pilgrim’s progress—that we are strangers on the earth...our life is a long walk or journey” (Vincent Van Gogh)
- B. Inclusio of metaphor (vv. 1, 6)
- C. “Way”: character, context, conduct and consequences

II. Translation

- ¹Blessed is the person who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
- ²but their delight is in the law of I AM,
and on their law they meditate day and night.
- ³That person is like a tree planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.
In all that they do, they prosper.
- ⁴The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
- ⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
- ⁶for I AM knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Notes: “Blessed”: *baruk* versus *'ashre*. Potency for life and victory versus future blessedness based on present relationship with God.

Job 5:17—18 "Blessed (μακάριος) is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal.

Matthew 5:3—12: Blessed (Μακάριοι) are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you. ² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Mat 5:12)

“How rewarding is the life”

“Person”: ’ashray ’ish ’asher”

“Does not stand”: Does not stand in the way sinners take

“Way”: character, context, conduct and consequence.

“Righteous”

With regard to God: “depend on God for protection (34:6[7]), plead to God for forgiveness (38:18[19]); worship God in humility (17:15). They call on and align themselves with the righteousness of God (5:9[8]). They are rooted in the house of I AM, feed on his word and find access to God through prayer. They relate to God as a servant to a king who is their lord. Their child-like faith in his reign is their ultimate source of security. Their affirmation, “I AM reigns” is often offered amid circumstances that would seem to indicate that the wicked reign.

With regard to humanity, in aligning themselves with God they love and serve their neighbors. Their faith in God and their obedience to him are inseparable (Psalms 15, 24). They have “clean hands and pure hearts” (24:4a). Ethics begins with dependence upon God, not on adherence to a legal code.

The stance of the righteous before God sets them apart from the wicked. While the righteous praise God (33:1) and pray to God when in trouble (37:39—40), the wicked—almost always a group— “flatter themselves” (36:3a [2a] and seek to advance their own cause at any cost. “Greedy for gain,” the wicked “curse and renounce I AM” (10:3). This difference between the righteous and the wicked in turn produces way of life that are diametrically opposed to each other. The wicked are oppressive and violent and take advantage of the righteous. The righteous are often powerless before the wicked and therefor seek God’s mercy and justice (Psalm 143).

Human beings in the Psalter are divided between the righteous, who are represented as being faithful to I AM, and the wicked, who stand against him as he reveals himself in Israel's covenants. (Adopted and adapted from Jerome F. D. Creach [professor of OT at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary], "The Righteous and the Wicked," in OHP, 529—30).

"Law": catechism. Mediated by Moses elsewhere in Psalms

III. Structures

- A. Stitching: "righteous" (+), "wicked" (-)
- B. Two equal halves based on "way"
 - I. Way of righteous 1—3
 - A. Cause: Character, context, conduct 1—2
 - B. Consequence pictured: tree [leaves & fruit] 3a
 - C. Consequence in future plainly stated: prospers 3b
 - II. Way of wicked
 - C.' Consequence plainly stated: No prosperity 4a
 - B.' Consequence pictured (future): chaff 4b
 - A.' Cause: the Lord knows way of righteous 5—6
- C. Couplets
 - I. Cause (character, context, conduct) 1—2
 - II. Consequence pictured: present: 3—4
 - III. Consequence plainly stated: future. 5—6

Body

I. Cause of the blessed/rewarded life 1—2

A. Cause (context) negative: Renouncing way of sinners:

Progressive hardening in sin: 1

1. Exegesis: anabasis: counsel > way > seat

katabasis: walk > stand > sit

2. Moral

- a. Pope: Vice is a monster of so frightful mien/as to be hated needs but to be seen/
but seen too oft, too familiar that face/we must first endure, then pity, then
embrace
- b. Medusa
- c. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

B. Cause positive (v. 2)

1. Character: delights. Contrast of Saul (Law a lethal sword) and Psalmist (“sweeter than honey”).

- a. Two aspects to art: objective (mass) and subjective (imagination). Mona Lisa: acclaimed as "the best known, the most visited, the most written about, the most sung about, the most parodied work of art in the world".¹¹¹
- b. Values: Man at Bone Fish Grill
- c. Paul (aka Saul): Imagination of legalism in context of Diaspora. Rabbis created Judaism. Law known as Halakha, “the way”: rule and regulations. Psalmist: imagination of faith

2. Context

Law > Word of God > Christ

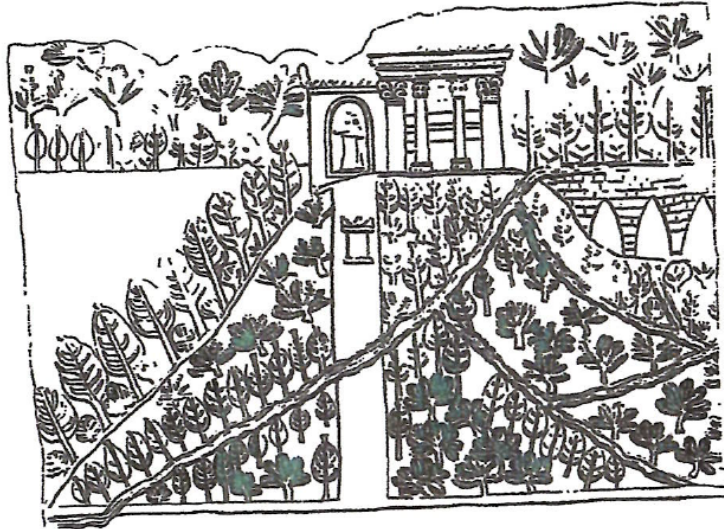
3. Conduct:

Meditate, not legalism. Prov. 2:1—4: accept, treasure, pay attention, pray, seek).

II. Consequences pictured: present

3

A. Tree planted by streams of water: See Psalm 92:12–15



Psalm 92, Plate 4:
This relief from the northern palace of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh (ca. 600 B.C.E.) shows a sanctuary on a mountain, surrounded by a park divided by canals of water. A *via sacra*, with an altar standing on it, leads to the sanctuary. In front of the sanctuary is a pavilion with the statue of a king at prayer. This relief combines the motifs of the paradisiacal garden of the gods and the temple as the realm of fertility and life. According to Psalm 92 the righteous are the park of paradise that blooms "in the courts" surrounding the house of YHWH. Source: Sketch by Hildi Keel-Leu.

B. Chaff: no life, no worth, no root, no endurance

III. Consequence: future

- A. Chaff: does not stand in time of judgment
- B. Righteous endure
- C. Lord knows/resonates/intimate knowledge of way of righteous; not present in way of wicked

2. Hermeneutics: Spiritual Approach

Part I: Introduction

I. Aim of lecture: to determine pre-understandings for an accredited hermeneutic

Klein, Blomberg, Hubbard: “preunderstanding consists of the total framework of *being and understanding* that we bring to the task of living: our language, social conditioning, even our emotional state at a given time.”

G. M. Hopkins; “out inscape determines the way we see our landscape”

W. Blake: “We do not see with the eye but through the eye”

Sages: “Fear of *I AM* is beginning of wisdom.”

II. Object of study has its own logic.

First “stand under” an object in order to “understand” object

III. Logic of Bible: All Scripture is Inspired by God” (2 Tim 3:16)

A. Divine Author: God is primary Author

B. Human author: inspired by God

C. Scripture: text

Part II: Body

I. Divine Author and Inspired Human Author

A. Witness of Book of Psalms

2 Samuel 23:1—13

These are the last words of David: "The inspired utterance of David son of Jesse, the utterance of the man [נְאֻם דָּוִד בֶּן־יִשָׁי וְנְאֻם הַגִּבּוֹר] exalted by the Most High, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, the hero of Israel's songs:

² "The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue.

³ The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me:.....

Psalm 110:1

The LORD says [יְהוָה יְהִי לְאֹדֹנָי] to my lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

Matthew 22:41—45:

⁴¹ While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴² "What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?" "The son of David," they replied. ⁴³ He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says, ⁴⁴ " 'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet." ⁴⁵ If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?"

B. Witness of New Testament

Acts 2:25—31

²⁵ David said about him: "I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. ²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, ²⁷ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay. ²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence." ²⁹ "Brothers and sisters, we all know that the patriarchs David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay.

Mark 12:12: Haven't you read this passage of Scripture: " 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone

Psalm 118:22: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone

John 10:35: Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are "gods"'

Psalm 82: 6 "I said, 'You are "gods"; you are all sons of the Most High.'

John 13:18: But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has lifted up his heel against me.'

Psalms 41:9 Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.

John 17:24 "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, "They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment."

Psalms 22:18: They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.

Luke 24:44–45: ⁴⁴ He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

II. Illumination: 1 Corinthians 2:11 – 14

¹¹ For who knows a person's thoughts except that person's own spirit within? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

¹² We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.¹

¹⁴ The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. (1Co 2:11-14)

A. Requires Sympathy (i.e., Inward Religious Experience)

He [the interpreter] must endeavor to attain to a sympathy in thought and feeling with the sacred writers, whose meaning he seeks to unfold. Such a sympathy is not required for the interpretation alone of the inspired writings; it is equally necessary in respect to *any* ancient author. Language is but the utterance of thought and feeling of one person to another, and the more we can identify ourselves with the state of mind out of which that thought and feeling arose, the more manifestly shall we be qualified for appreciating the language in which they are embodied, and reproducing true and living impressions of it

Not a few of them [interpreters] have given proof of superior talents, and have brought to the task also the acquirements of a profound and varied scholarship. The lexicography and grammar, the philology and archaeology of Scripture, have been largely indebted to their inquiries and researches; but, from the grievous mental discrepancy existing between the commentator and his author, and the different points of view from which they respectively

looked at Divine things, writers of this class necessarily failed to penetrate the depths of the subjects they had to handle, fell often into jejune and superficial representations on particular parts, and on entire books of Scripture never once succeeded in producing a really satisfactory exposition . . .

Hence it is laid down as a fundamental point by a distinguished German theologian—by Hagenbach in his Encyclopedia, that ‘An inward interest in the doctrine of theology is needful for a Biblical interpreter. As we say, that a philosophical spirit is demanded for the study of Plato, a political taste for the reading of Homer or Pindar, a sensibility to wit and satire for the perusal of Lucian, a patriotic sentiment for the enjoyment of Sallust and Tacitus, equally certain is it, that the fitness to understand the profound truths of Scripture, of the New Testament sentiment of piety, an inward religious experience.² See Patrick Fairbairn cited in *An Old Testament Theology* (2007): 84f.

B. Lectio Divina

The “lectio divina” has been likened to “Feasting on the Word.” The four parts are first taking a bite (Lectio), then chewing on it (Meditatio). Next is the opportunity to savor the essence of it through prayer (Oratio). Finally, the Word is digested and made a part of the body (Contemplatio).

1. Lectio

This first moment consists in reading the scriptural passage slowly, attentively several times. Many write down words in the scripture that stick out to them or grasp their attention during this moment.

2. Meditatio

The Christian, gravitating around the passage or one of its words, takes it and ruminates on it, thinking in God’s presence about the text. He or she benefits from the Holy Spirit’s ministry of illumination, i.e. the work of the Holy Spirit that imparts spiritual understanding of the sacred text. It is not a special revelation from God, but the inward working of the Holy Spirit, which enables the Christian to grasp the revelation contained in the Scripture.

3. Oratio

This is prayer: prayer understood both as dialogue with God, that is, as loving conversation with the One who has invited us into His embrace; and as consecration, prayer as the priestly offering to God of parts of ourselves that we have not previously believed God wants. In this consecration-prayer we allow the word that we have taken in and on which we are pondering to touch and change our deepest selves. ...God invites us in *lectio divina* to hold up our most difficult and pain-filled experiences to Him, and to gently recite over them the healing word or phrase He has given us in our *lectio* and *meditatio*. In this *oratio*, this consecration-prayer, we allow our real selves to be touched and changed by the word of God.

4. Contemplatio

This moment is characterized by a simple, loving focus on God. In other words, it is a beautiful, wordless contemplation of God, a joyful rest in His presence.

III. Text: Exegesis

A. Levels of Signification

13. canonical context
12. literary context
11. collection or book
10. sections/groups of songs
9. poems
8. stanzas
7. strophes
6. verses/lines
5. half-verses/versets/cola
4. *phrases*
3. *words*
2. *syllables*
1. *sounds*

1. Levels 1—5

Text criticism

Philological criticism: grammatico-historical (levels 5) (cf. 1 Sam 9:9; Ruth 4:7)

Figures of speech

2. Levels 6—10: Form and rhetorical criticisms

3. Levels 11—13 Editorial criticism and Biblical Theology

N.B. Spiral reasoning

“There is an ongoing process of dialogue with the text in which the text itself progressively corrects and reshapes the interpreter’s own questions and assumptions.”
(Thiselton, *Two Horizons*, p. 439)

II. Motif, theme, message

A. Motifs: concrete images that run through the text (e.g. seed, temple, anointing oil)

B. Theme: A theme is a main idea, moral, or message of a text

C. Message: Because God is Author, idea has a moral imperative

Part III: Conclusion: Postures Toward Scripture

- I. Liberal: stand above with canon of historical criticism: reason versus revelation
- II. Neo-orthodox: stand before Scripture: Scripture read > Scripture preached > Scripture Word of God
- III. Orthodox: stand beside Scripture with fathers/confessions
- IV. Fundamentalist: stand upon Scripture. Scripture inerrant according to their canon of truth
- V. BKW: stand under Scripture. Scripture the sole canon to interpret itself.

3. Historical Approach

I. Importance of superscripts:

- A. Insight into spiritual life of Israel's heroic paradigm
- B. Insight into interpretation of psalms: their original historical settings and identification of the "enemy."
- C. Validates the New Testament
- D. Firm basis that Psalms Speak of Christ.

II. Superscripts and Subscripts

Thirtle's theory:

l'mannesah (למנצח, "for the director of music" plus optional prepositional phrase pertaining to musical performance, which introduces fifty-five psalms, was originally a postscript to the preceding psalm, not an original part of the superscript.

Argument³

1. Paradigmatic example in Habakkuk 3: s/s, prayer and p/s

A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet. On *shigionoth*.

² LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, LORD. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.

³ God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens and his praise filled the earth.

.....

³ Waltke, "Superscripts, Postscripts, or both" *JBL* 110 (1991) 583-96

¹⁹ The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.

For the director of music. On my stringed instruments.

2. Resolves *interpretum* of Psalm 88: 2 genres and two authors

87:1 *Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm. A song.*

88:1 *A song. A psalm of the Sons of Korah. For the director of music. According to mahalath leannoth. A maskil of Heman the Ezrahite.*

3. Parallels for subscripts in the LXX and in 11QPs^a.
4. Parallels in ancient Near Eastern Literature.
5. Explains Psalm 3 and 4. Diodore of Tarsus (d.c.394) probably right in thinking that the absence of an ascription means that such psalms are related closely to the preceding one; cf. . Psalms 1 and 2, Psalm 9 and 10, 42 and 43, and so forth
6. Visual and oral textual error:
 - Prose (s/s)
 - Poem (psalm)
 - Prose (p/s)
 - Prose (s/s)
 - Poem (psalm)

Superscripts pertain to the psalm's composition and the postscripts to its liturgical performance.

B. An Apologia for the Traditional Approach of Authorship

1. "Of David." I^e ("of/for/by"?) with a proper name usually means "by."⁴

- a. Hymns outside of Psalter all use this preposition: Exod. 15:1; Judg 5:2; 2 Sam 22:1/18:1; Isa 38:9; Hab 3:1.

⁴ Moses (Psalm 90), David (73x), Solomon (72, 127), and the guilds and priests associated with David (: the sons of Korah (42-49, 84-87), Asaph (50, 73-83), Heman (88), and Ethan (89).

- b. Clearly its meaning in Psalm 18:s/s
Of David the servant of the LORD. He sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. He said: I love you, LORD, my strength.
- c. Tradition within Scripture: 1 Sam 16:14-23; Amos 6:5' 1 Chron. 23:5; 2 Chron. 29:25-30; Neh. 12:36).⁵ "In the Chronicler's day . . . it can scarcely be doubted that the meaning was 'by David.'"⁶
- d. So also Ben Sirach (47:8-10); the Qumran scrolls (11QPs^a); Josephus⁷; rabbis.⁸
- e. So also New Testament: Matt. 22:43, 45; Mk. 12:36, 37; Lk. 20:42; Ac. 1:16; 2:25; 4:25; Rom. 4:6; 11:9; Heb. 4:7.

2. Antiquity and reliability of superscripts in general

- a. No ancient version or Hebrew manuscript omits them.
- b. Sumerian and Akkadian ritual texts dating from the third millennium contain rubrics corresponding to elements in the Psalter superscripts,⁹ and so do Egyptian hymns from the Eighteenth Dynasty and later:¹⁰ cultic occasion; official appointed to utter it; type of composition (prayer, incantation, lament); title of composition; instrument/s to accompany it; mode of utterance (singing, reciting, etc.)
- c. Some psalms ascribed to David are ancient: Ps. 29 Canaanite background
- d. "Davidic" Psalms contain words, images, and parallelism attested in the Ugaritic texts (ca. 1400 B.C.).¹¹
- e. No hymn in the Old Testament outside of the Psalter lacks a superscript so original to composition (see above).
- f. Many technical terms in the superscripts obscure to the Greek (ca. 150 BC) and Aramaic translators, pointing to an extended gap of time between their

5J. Wheeler, "Music of the temple" in *Archaeology and Biblical Research* 2 1989

6 J. F. A. Sawyer, "An analysis of the context and meaning of the psalm," *Transactions*, 22 (1970): 6.

7 *Antiquities*, viii. 305f.

8 Charles A. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (New York, C. Scribner's Sons 1906-1907)p. liv.

9 H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Chico, Calif. : Scholars Press, 1985) pp. 13-24.

10J. B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 365-381.

11 Dahood, *Psalms* (AB; Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1966-1970) xxix-xxx..

composition and the Tannaitic period (10—220 CE),¹² agreeing with David ascription.

- g. Linguistic, stylistic, structural, thematic, and theological differences are so great between the Psalter and its imitative thanksgiving psalms at Qumran as to leave no doubt of the far greater antiquity of the Psalter, and if so, why not by David.
- h. Reference to “tent” of *I AM* only in Davidic psalms.
- i. Reference to salvation history extend from exodus to conquest: “It is very remarkable that all of these allusions [to salvation history] only treat the very oldest history of Israel. At the time, only this history possessed the sacred character that made it worthy to be named in the hymn to God.” [Gunkel and Begrich]. Or is because they are by David!]
- j. Arguments against Davidic authorship can be answered
 - 1) 1.) Ps. 24:7, 9: “temple” means “house of God,” not necessarily Solomon’s
 - 2) 2.) Ps 3:4[5]: “If holy mountain” is understood to be a reference to the Temple (as it usually is), it is anachronistic in relation to David.”¹³Curiously, Cooper dismisses Ibn Ezra’s suggestion “that the designation “holy mountain” is appropriate because the ark was present in Jerusalem.” The ark was the throne of Israel’s Holy One.
 - 2.) Psalm 139: Aramaisms do not prove late date. "evidence of Aramaic influence alone cannot serve as decisive proof for arguing for a late date of a given text."¹⁴
 - 3) 3.) Psalm 30:superscript: As Israel's poet laureate, there is good reason to suppose David composed the dedicatory prayer for the temple (Psalm 30) just as he designed and prepared beforehand for its building (1 Chronicles 28).
 - 4) 4.) Growth of David tradition. 73 (MT) + 13/14 LXX +all (Qumran. See 11QPsa XXVII, 2—11: (*Oxford Handbook*, p. 271. Josephus and Philoal

3. Extensive Royal Interpretation

- a. “I” is David in psalms that are “by David.”
- b. Psalms by sons of Korah refer to king (cf. Psalms 44, 84)

¹² The Tannaim are rabbinic sages whose views are recorded in the Mishnah, from approx. 70-200 A.D.

¹³ Alan Cooper, “Some Aspects of Traditional Jewish Psalms Interpretation,” *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*, edited by William P. Brown (Oxford; University Press, 2014), 257].

¹⁴A. Hurvitz, "The Chronological Significance of "Aramaisms" in Biblical Hebrew" in *Israel Exploration Journal* 18 (1968). p. 234.

- c. Temple music as a whole took its rise from the king: 1 Chron 15-16; 2 Chron 29; Isa 38:20).
- d. Throughout the ancient Near East the king took responsibility for worship.
- e. In Mesopotamia lament psalms were royal.
- f. The enemies are frequently nations (e.g., Psalms 18:43 [44]; 20; 21; 28; 61; 63; 89; 144) or enemies/people opposed to king .
- g. The royal interpretation gives integrity to psalms that otherwise lack unity (see Ps. 4).
- h. "The only 'situation' that is certainly attested is that of the king; . . . he is the subject in a number of psalms, and the dispute is only about how many. This cannot be said of the other suggested usages."¹⁵
- i. The representative character of the king explains the special problem presented by the psalms where 'I' (i.e., the king) and 'we' (i.e., the people/army) alternate (cf. 44, 60, 66; 75; 102).
- j. About twenty four motifs or expressions specifically appropriate for a king. Gunkel¹⁶ identified the following:
 - 1) All nations attend to his thanksgiving (18:49 [50]; 57:9 [10]; 119:46; 138:1, 4).
^{57:9} I will praise you, Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples.
 - 2) Deliverance has vast repercussions (22:27-31 [28-32]);
 - 3) Invokes a world-judgment to rectify his cause (7:7-8; 56: 7[8]; 59:5[6]; 8[9]; 43:1.
^{59:5} You, LORD God Almighty, you who are the God of Israel, rouse yourself to punish all the nations; show no mercy to wicked traitors.
 - 4) Depicts himself as victorious over the nations through God's intervention (118:10)
¹⁰ All the nations surrounded me, but in the name of the LORD I cut them down.
 - 5) Confronts armies (3:6)[7]; 27:3; 55:

15 J. H. Eaton, *Kingship and the psalms* (Naperville, Ill. : Allenson, 1976), p. 22.

16 H. Gunkel, *Einleitung in die Psalmen die Gattungen der religiöſen Lyrik Israels* (Goſttingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1933), pp. 147f.

- 6) Like a bull raising horns in triumph (92:10).¹⁷
- k. Intercession for the king: 61:6f[7f.]; 63:11[12a]; 84:9f; 28:8; 72
- ^{84:7} They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.
- ⁸ Hear my prayer, LORD God Almighty; listen to me, God of Jacob.
- ⁹ Look on our shield, O God; look with favor on your anointed one.

C. Historical Notices

1. Time of Exile (1 Samuel 16-31) Psalms 34, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 142
2. Time of Under Blessing (2 Samuel 1-10): Psalms 18, 60
3. Time of Under Wrath (2 Samuel 11:20): Psalms 3, 51, 63.
4. Psalms 7 and 30 are unclassified
5. Why, if additions are secondary, are the remaining fifty-nine Davidic psalms left without historical notices, especially when many of them could have been easily ascribed to some event in David's life?¹⁸ Also, why would later editors introduce materials in the superscripts of Psalms 7, 30, and 60, which are not found in historical books and not readily inferred from the psalms themselves? Finally, why should it be allowed that psalms in the historical books contain superscripts with historical notices (cf. Ex. 15:1; Deut. 31:30 (cf. 32:44); Judg. 5:1; 2 Sam. 22:1; Jon. 2; Isa. 38:9), but not in the collection of psalms, even though the syntax is sometimes similar (b^c + infinitive cstr.)?

III. Conclusion

Against the prevalent skepticism of academics regarding the originality, and so the veracity, of the Psalm's superscripts, both the universal tradition of Davidic authorship and empirical evidence support the notion that *l'd/-wi/-d* means "by David," that David authored the psalms attributed to him and that the historical notices that associate fourteen psalms with his career are credible. Lacking superscripts, one can infer from the psalms' contents that Psalm 107, 126, 137 were composed after the Exile.

It is unwise, however, to reconstruct the historical background where none is given in a superscript or overly to emphasize it and/or to pit it against other approaches, such as the form critical approach. Most of the psalms, including those in which an author is identified,

¹⁷ Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, pp. 20-26

¹⁸ Gleason Leonard Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1964), p. 28).

Lecture 3

are written in abstract terms, not with reference to specific historical incidences, so that others could use them in their worship. In sum, an accredited exegesis includes in its tool box the traditional approach to the superscripts' notice about their authors and historical circumstance.

4. Psalm 4

Part I: Introduction

I Translation

A psalm of David.

- 1** Answer me when I call to you, my righteous God.
Give me relief from my distress;
be merciful to me and hear my prayer.
- 2** How long, highborn men, will you turn my glory into shame?
How long will you love delusions and seek false gods? Selah
- 3** Know that I AM has set apart the godly for himself;
I AM will hear when I call to him.
- 4** Tremble and do not sin;
when you are on your beds, search your hearts
and be silent. Selah
- 5** Offer the sacrifices of the righteous
and trust in the *I AM*.
- 6** Many are asking, "O that one would show us good?
Let the light of your face shine upon us, *I AM*."
- 7** Fill my heart with great joy
when their grain and new wine abound.
- 8** I will lie down and sleep in peace,
for you alone, *I AM*, make me dwell in safety.

For the director of music. For flutes.

II. Ancient Commentators

A. John Chrysostom (347-407)

“We have both intimacy and confidence in God because of his righteousness. “*Let us therefore study how to converse with God*”. No intermediary, no oratorical skills are needed; only a humble, meek, and trusting heart. For it is only the ways and things of the world that will keep us separated from his providential care.”

B. Augustine (354—430)

“How loudly I cried out to you, my God, as I read the psalms of David, songs full of faith, outbursts of devotion with no room in them for the breath of pride!...How loudly I began to cry out to you in these psalms; how I was inflamed by them with love for you and fired to recite them to the whole world, were I able, as a remedy against human pride!” (Confessions 9.4.8)

In particular, he quotes Psalm 4 as expressive of the stages of his life experienced so far. “It all found an outlet through my eyes and voice when your good Spirit turned to us, saying, ‘How long will you be heavy-hearted, human creatures? Why love emptiness and chase falsehood?’ [Ps.4:2]. I, certainly, had loved emptiness and chased falsehood, and you, Lord, had already glorified your Holy One, [Ps. 4:3] raising Him from the dead and setting Him at your right hand...”

III. The Historical Context: three crises

A. Crisis I. Draught (cf. 2 Sam. 21:1-14)

⁶ Many are asking, “O that would show good?

Let the light of your face shine upon us, I AM .”

⁷ Fill my heart with great joy

when their *grain and new wine* abound.

1. No mention of Enemy

2 “Good” occurs elsewhere as a a metonymy for rain and/or harvest

Indeed, the Lord will give what is *good*,
And our land will yield its produce. (Ps 85:12)

They do not say to themselves,
“Let us fear the Lord our God,
who gives autumn and spring rains in season,
who assures us of the regular weeks of harvest.”
Your wrongdoings have kept these away;
your sins have deprived you of *good*. (Jer 5:24-25)

3. “Fill my heart with joy when [lit. “from the time] their grain and new wine abound.” (NIV). Pace 7 You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. (ESV).

תָּתַן: Precative perfective (*IBHS*, P. 30.5.4c).

מִיָּמֵי. Min is always ablative with (“from the time of”), never comparative (“more than the time of”). Cf, “from the time [מִיָּמֵי] (Isa 48:16 ESV) it came to be I have been there.”

- 4 Cf. Solomon’s Prayer at the Dedication of the Temple
“When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain, because they have sinned against You, and they pray toward this place and confess Your name and turn from their sin when You afflict them, then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of Your servants and of Your people Israel, indeed, teach them the good way in which they should walk. And send rain on Your land, which You have given Your people for an inheritance.” (1 Kgs 8:35-36)

B. Crisis II. King responsible for rain

1. Assurbanipal, King of Assyria (668—27):

“Since the time that I sat on the throne of my father, my progenitor, Adad [the storm god], has loosed his downpours, Ea [the fountain god] has opened his fountains, the forests have grown abundantly.”

2. Pharaoh:

“It is I, who produced the grain because I was beloved by the grain god. No one was hungry in my years.”

3. Israel’s king fails to produce rain; leaders turn to Baal

“How long, highborn men,
will you turn my glory into shame?
How long will you love delusions
and seek false gods?”

Baal was the great storm god who drove the clouds across the sky and let his voice be heard in the crash of thunder.

C. Crisis III. King to be potent in prayer

1. Pharaoh: “Everything proceeding from the lips of his majesty, his father [the god] Amon causes to be realized there and then.”

2. Assyrian king: “his prayer will be well received by the god.”

3. Israel: “How long?”: critical situation of unanswered royal prayer cannot continue.

In his last novel, *Till We Have Faces*, C. S. Lewis describes the critical situation within the ancient kingdom of Gnome when the rains fail and starvation threatens the kingdom. The king’s rule is in jeopardy, so it is the time for a supreme sacrifice; his favorite youngest daughter, Psyche, is called upon by the high priest to be offered as a sacrifice to appease the anger of the gods. This pagan response is the antithesis of that of the psalmist, who is being tested to put his trust intimately in the Creator, the “I AM”, in spite of the disastrous drought.

Cf. experience of Lord Jesus Christ: “He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him. “he trusts in god; let god rescue *him* now, if he delights in him; for he said, ‘I am the son of god.’” (Matt 27:41-43)

IV. Form:

A. Poetry: parallelism, terse, concrete imagery

B. Lament/Petition

Address: my righteous God	v. 1a
Lament: Turn my Glory to Shame	v. 2
Confidence: 7 admonitions	vv. 3-5
Petition: Favor, Harvests	vv. 6-7
Praise by confidence (goes to sleep)	v. 8

V. Rhetoric

Superscript: composition (genre and author)

I. To God: Address and introductory petitions:	1
A. Address: “righteous God”	
B. Introductory petitions	
1. Answer prayer...be gracious and hear	1a
2. Bring relief from distress	1b
II. To highborn:	2—5
A. Rebuke and first admonition	
1. Rebuke: Faithless to king and to God	2
2. First admonition (confidence): know your king	3
B. 2nd~3rd, 4th~5,th 6th-7th admonitions to encourage faith:	4-5
1. Tremble/do not sin	4a
2. Be silent/Let conscience confirm faith	4b
3. Offer sacrifices of righteous/trust <i>I AM</i>	5

III. To <i>I AM</i>	6—8
A. Petitions	6—7
1. By people for favor of I AM	6
2. By king for joy and year-round harvest	7
B. Confidence/praise of king	8

Subscript: liturgical performance

Part II: Exposition

Superscript: by King David

Opposed by highborn men
Has distinctive glory
Special grace in prayer
In corporate solidarity with his people
No reason to question authorship

I. Address to God and Introductory Petitions

¹ Answer me when I call [to you], my righteous God.
 Give me relief from my distress;
be merciful to me
 and hear my prayer.

A. Address and petitions to gain audience and find favor: 1a, c

“God”: אֱלֹהִים (Psa 4:2 WTT); transcendent, eternal, divine Being
“righteous”: an active, not static, attribute, that prompts God to set right those things that have gone wrong: righteous king is suffering. .
“my”: personal
“be gracious”: condescend to take note, feel goodwill toward—claims no merit—and implicitly has capacity to meet need:

“hear”: assess/ consider situation

“prayer”: A prayer (תְּפִלָּה) is a nominal abstraction of the root *pll*. The juridical background of this root can be observed in the nouns פְּלִי (‘‘a judgment,’’ ‘‘an estimation requiring a judgment,’’ Exod. 21:22; Deut. 32:31; Job 31:11) and פְּלִיָּה ‘‘decision’’. The verb פָּלַל *Piel* means ‘‘to intervene, mediate, judge’’ (1 Sam. 2:25; Ezek. 16:52; Psa.106:3). In *Hithpael* it means ‘‘to make intercession, intercede’’ on behalf of others (1 Sam. 2:25) or ‘‘to petition’’ for self. The noun functions as a cognate accusative with תְּפִלָּה (2 Sam. 7:27), ‘‘to petition, to pray’’ (2 Sam. 7:27; 1 Kgs. 8:28f. 54; 2 Chron. 6:19). In sum, תְּפִלָּה means ‘‘an intercession.’’ H.-P Staehli, assuming Wellhausen’s documentary hypothesis, notes prayer has four characteristics: (1) always directed toward God; (2) its object is normally Israel; (3) ‘‘usually occurs in the face of God’s wrath and punishment for sin’’; and (4) the interceders ‘‘in older texts are esp. the powerful men (of God): Abraham (...Gen. 20:7, 17 E [document], Moses (Num. 11:2 J [document] 21:7 E; Deut. 9:26, 26), Samuel (1 Sam. 7:5; 12:19,23; cf. Jer. 15:1 regarding Moses and Samuel), a man of God (1 Kgs. 13:6), Elisha (2 Kgs. 4:33; 66:17).’’¹⁹

His address to highborn men (vv. 3—5) and petitions by the people are probably literary fictions to be overheard by them in his prayer to God. He expresses his lament, confidence and petition through these literary/poetic fictions.

B. Escape the distress

1b

“distress” = being hemmed in by a narrow place “give me relief” = “make room for me,” “broad place” (e.g., “Now the Lord has given us room (*rachab*) and we will flourish in the land” (Gen 26:22).

II. To Highborn Apostates

2—5

² How long, highborn men, will you turn my glory into shame?

How long will you love delusions and seek false gods? Selah

³ Know that the I AM has set apart the godly for himself;

I AM will hear when I call to him.

19 H. -P Staehli, *TLOT*, 2. 992, s.v. *pll*.

A. Accusation and 1st admonition: worthless deities versus potent king 2—3

1. Accusation: apostasy 2

a. Against king: turn glory to shame 2aa

בְּנֵי אִישׁ: bene 'ish: “high born” versus בְּנֵי אָדָם (Psa 49:3) bene 'adam (cf. 49:2[3]: “low and high”

Hear this, all peoples! Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,

² both low and high [**גַּם-בְּנֵי אִישׁ** **גַּם-בְּנֵי אָדָם**], rich and poor together! (ESV)

⁹ Those of low estate [**בְּנֵי-אָדָם**] are but a breath; those of high estate [**בְּנֵי אִישׁ**] are a delusion (Psa 62:9 ESV).

Weiser calls attention to analogous Egyptian and Babylonian linguistic usage of the term to signify “wealthy and influential people.”

Apostrophe is part of literary fiction. Intimate “I-Thou” gives way to hostile “I-you”

How Long? Implies accusation; impasse has reached a critical state and cannot continue

“turn”: implied in preposition “to”

“glory”: luster in victory and power gives him social gravitas;

“shame” (**קִלְמָה**, ke limmah) degradation of person. Shame may refer to both subjective and objective (“insults”) degradation, but king never loss sense of self-worth for he knew God had bestowed glory upon him (cf. Ps 3:3). He is becomes subject to scorn, insults and mockery and is cut off from communication.

b. Against God: turn to false gods for relief

2ab—b

“love”: strong desire from one’s perception for someone or something that causes them to run after, seek, and remain faithful to that which is loved. // “Seek”: to strive to fulfill a wish/desire.

“Delusion” (lit. “empty,” “vain” and so “useless,” “worthless”): a metonymy for fertility deity, // “Lies”: metonymy for “false gods” (Baal, a rain-god)

Selah: meaning and function unknown.

2. First admonition: “know the king’s potency in prayer”

3

“Know that”: know objective fact; not the same as personal “know”

“Set apart”: Remarkably distinguished

Hasid: covenant partner/king

For himself: Love & serve each other

I AM: Israel’s covenant keeping God

Will hear when I call: see v. 1: Power in prayer is the royal escutcheon

B. Three pairs of admonition to encourage confidence

4-5

1. Dread the consequences of apostasy: Tremble and do not sin

4a

Rigzu: “tremble,” “shake” in trauma (in anger or in fear)

a. Be angry and do not sin (LXX, Eph. 4:26)?

“If you must be angry and discontented with my government, do not be carried away by passion into rebellion.” But

1) 3x out of 30 means “tremble” in anger

2) Would king exhort apostates to rail and rage silently against God’s rule? Or, “be angry with righteous indignation against topsy-turvy world.” But apostates love delusions and seek false gods. So unlikely that they are filled with righteous indignation.

b. Tremble out of fear of consequence of sinning

1.) Statistical probability

- 2.) Quiver in face of impending doom, better suits context
- 3.) Writers in Graeco-Roman era use citations to augment their arguments; not overly concerned with original intention.
- 4.) Modern preachers uses KJV for moral truth, not for exegetical precision.

2. Let your conscience confirm your faith: search your hearts and be silent **4b**

“Search.” *amar* elsewhere occurs absolutely (i.e., i.e. with content of what is said. In Akkadian, Ugaritic and Ethiopic it can mean “to see,” “to look into”

“Heart”: intellect, sensibility, will, Place of religious decisions

“Upon your beds”: quiet contemplation. In a group one is inclined to think and act rashly and hypocritically; whereas, when off stage and in the privacy of one’s own bed, one is more authentic.

“be silent.” Parallel suggests “out of dread” (Exod. 15:16’ Job 31:34//”tremble”

3. Offer sacrifices of righteous/trust I AM **5**

Offer sacrifices: communal meal.

Righteous” metonymy for the sacrificer, not of the sacrifice (cf (“gates of righteousness” (118:19), not a reference to the gates but of those who enter gates). Outward aspect cultus/liturgy. An implicit call to apostates to repent (see Psalm 1 for definition of righteous) and to participate in *I AM*’s cultus (cf. Exod. 34:6). .

“Trust”: Rely on *I AM* in face of danger. Commit self to promises of God (Exodus 34:6-7). Guilty do not live on the basis of his grace. Inward aspect of cultus/liturgy

III. Petitions **6–7**

A. By people for favor of *I AM* **6**

Many are saying,

"O that one would show us good?

Lift up the light of your face upon us, *I AM*."

“Many”: No antecedent. Not the apostates, so faithful Israel Israel who remain loyal to God’s chosen king and are praying to *I AM*, unlike apostates. King is part of faithful community.

“Who will show us” Or, “O that one would show us.” The former, a real question, could express doubt; the latter expresses faith. The parallel, a cohortative of desire, favors a wish/desire.

“one”: defined as *I AM* in 6b

“us” (2 times). No reason to think speakers change between 6a and 6b (*pace* NIV).

“lift up light of face”: Aaronic benediction (Num.6:25). In Babylon, El Amarna, and Ugarit “lift up upon us the light of your face” is a frequent metaphor and metonymy signifies a ruler lifting up his countenance to look with favor toward someone. Metaphor signifies prosperity and salvation. People pray according to God’s will.

“good”: rain.

B. By king for harvest

“Fill”: precativ perfective (*pace* ESV)

“My heart” ... “their” (i.e. “the many”): corporate solidarity of king with people

“joy”: whole disposition

“when [lie., “from the time of],” not “more than when” (*pace* ESV):1.) 1.) מִכֵּן elsewhere always temporal, never comparative (1 Chron. 9:25; 2 Chr 25:27; Isa 48:16; Ezek 4:10, 11; Dan 12:11). 2.) *Min* by itself after *simha* has temporal sense in Deut 28:47; 3.) If *min* is comparative no reason for joy is given; 4.) festive mirth for crops a common motif in OT (Deut 28:47; 29:22; Neh 8:12; passim); 5.) Comparative demands adding *tob* (Briggs); 6.) If *min* is comparative, antecedent of “their” is ambiguous.

“grain”: spring harvests

“new wine: fall harvests

“abound”: abundantly more than we can ask or think.

IV. Confidence & Praise to God

8

⁸ I will lie down and at once sleep in peace,
for you, I AM, make me dwell apart in safety.

A. King resolves to go to sleep (confidence)

בְּשֵׁלוֹם“ First (emphatic) word. Here means “to possess an inner contentment, delight and joy, especially with preposition *b* (Gerleman, *THAT*, 2.928

“at once”: lit. “together.” (i.e. together lie down and sleep”

“I will lie down”: cohortative of resolve.

“”and I will sleep”: demonstrates reality of inner peace

B. Reason for inner peace (praise)

“You, *I AM*,” emphatic by pronoun, repetition, position

“cause me to dwell in security” (cf. v. 5[6]: see Jer 32:37

“apart”: Most English versions think לְבַדְּךָ modifies יְהוָה (“you alone,” an exclusive action of God)—an accusative of state modifying the subject. לְבַדְּךָ has this sense in Deut 32:12. But: 1.) לְבַדְּךָ is not an accusative of state; 2.) form should be לְבַדְּךָ (several mss; Psa 83:19[19]; Jer 49:31; Num 23:9; Mic 7:14). 3.) Lacks a parallel. In favor of apart: 1.) normal Hebrew idiom; 2.) “apart” occurs commonly with verbs of “dwelling,” adding sense of security (Dt. 33:28; Jer 49:31; Num 23:9; Mic 7:14). 3.) parallel to *lebetah*.

Part III

I. Cross-references:

Isaiah 26:3

“For the king trusts in the Lord, And through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken.”

Psalm 21:7

“The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You.”

Phil 4:6-7

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

II. Vietnam Vet. to BKW

“In one of the battles I fought in Viet Nam there were dead and wounded all around me. Having gone for three days without sleep my ability to make wise decisions was at a dangerously low level. At 3:00 A.M. I found a hole in a jungle base, virtually under a battery of canons. The heat of the jungle night combined with that of the canons, which fired volleys about every twenty second, was insufferable. Even in the stench of the gun-powder, the mosquitoes relentlessly pursued their blood thirst duty. As I lay there, this verse of Scripture

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came to me as audibly as any human voice: 'I will lie down in peace and I will sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.' I think I had the best two hours sleep in my entire life.

5. Hebrew Poetry and Psalm 23

Part I: Introduction

I. Importance of subject

"Nothing can be of greater avail to the proper understanding of any writer, than a previous understanding of his general character, and the peculiarities of his style and manner of writing" (C.E. Stowe, 1829,166)

II. Extent of Poetry in OT:

- A. Job, Psalms, Proverbs have distinctive accents in the received Hebrew text to accommodate their poetic form (see below). They are sometimes designated by the acronym: *t'm*, from the first letters of these three books as designated in the Hebrew canon: *t^ehellim* (= Psalms), *'iyyob* (= Job) and *mishle* (= Proverbs).
- B. Prophets. Sometimes the line between poetry and prose becomes attenuated.
- C. Old poetic pieces embedded in prose: Gn 49; Ex. 15; Dt. 32-33; Judg 5; etc.

N.B. About 1/2 of the OT and about 1/3 of the Bible is in poetry.

Part II. What is Hebrew poetry?

I. Definition of poetry

In contrast to prose, poetry is a more restricted form of speech: "A sustained rhythm in a continuously operating principle of organization" (Barbara Hernstein Smith).

II. Restrictions/Characteristics of Hebrew poetry

- A. Parallelism, the resemblance in grammar (phonology, morphology, syntax) and/or sense between two versets. The primary operating principle of organization in Hebrew poetry, which also gives it a sustained rhythm, is parallelism. It aims to give complex information in a unified way; one hears the message stereophonically.

N.B. Sometimes the line between prose and poetry becomes attenuated. Yet Kugel (1981, 59-95) is too extreme when he says the difference between prose and poetry is quantitative, not qualitative.

B. Terse expression: omission of particles and gapping; the focus is on parallelism.
Telegraph, not motion picture, style.

"And he [Sisera] said to her, 'Please give me a little water to drink because I am thirsty.'
And she opened a milk skin and gave him some to drink and she covered him" (Judges 4:19)

"Water," he asked,
Milk she gave;
In a princely bowl she offered curds (Judges 5:25).

C. Heightened style. Concrete images and all sorts of figures of speech

Israel's religious hymns are lofty and ethical, imaginative and arresting, attractive and alluring; they combine punch with clarity. In sentiments one feels uncommon elevation and majesty; in imagery uncommon taste and diversity; in language uncommon beauty and energy.

III. What it is not: neither patterned meter nor rhyme.

A. Proposed system of meter

1. Count accented syllables in each verset: So Freedman
2. Count syllables in each verset: So Cross
3. Syntactic constraints: So O'Connor

"In contrast ... to parallelism, the occurrence and basic nature of which are recognized by all, there is little consensus regarding meter. Its very existence is denied...; among those who affirm it there is only limited agreement as to its nature."²⁰

²⁰ P. B. Yoder, *Biblical Hebrew* (1972).

B. Some assonance (similar sounds) but not rhyme. Psalm 1: 'ashre 'asher 'ish

Part IV. Parallelism

I. Bishop Lowth



Robert Lowth (1710-1787)

Both a Bishop in the Church of England and a professor of poetry at Oxford, Robert Lowth was the first to draw attention to parallel structures in the Hebrew poetry of the Bible. In 1753, he published *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum* ("On the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews"), which has since influenced virtually all future scholarship in the poetry of the Bible.

A. Definition:

The correspondence of one verse, or line, with another, I call parallelism. When a proposition is delivered, and a second is subjoined to it, or drawn under it, equivalent, or contrasted with it, in sense; or similar to it in the form of grammatical construction; these

I call parallel lines, and the words or phrases, answering one to another in the corresponding lines, parallel terms.²¹

Lowth's view of parallelism:

The swan upon Saint Mary's Lake floats double,
swan and shadow.

B. Lowth's three types of parallelism:

1. Synonymous: parallel verset refer to the same linguistic referents

He rebukes them in his anger
and
terrifies them in his wrath (Psa 2:5)

2. Antithetic: the parallel verset contrasts with the first

For the LORD knows the way of the righteous
but
the way of the wicked will perish

3. Synthetic: the parallel verset adds on to the first.

but who delights in the law of the LORD
and meditates on his law day and night. (Psa 1:2)

II. Post-Lowthian Refinements

A. Terminology never standardized:

Half-verse called "line," "stich (pl. stichoi)" or "hemistich" (when "stich" refers to a set of lines); "colon." The verse is composed of a bicolon (pl. bicola) or tricolon (pl. tricola). Half verse may be called a "verset."

²¹Cited by G. B. Gray, p. 48.

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners,
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

These three lines together form a single **tricolon**. Each separate line of the tricolon is a **colon**. These three **cola** form a **tricolon**.

B. Emphasis until Kugel and Alter on synonymy.

“So the poet goes back to the beginning again, and says the same thing once more, though he may partly or completely change the actual words to avoid monotony.”²²

C. Further types of parallelism:

1. Briggs: climatic, emblematic, formal

a. climatic:

Look! My slave will act wisely;
he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.

הִנֵּה יִשְׁפֹּל עַבְדִּי יְרוּם וְנִשָּׂא וְגִבָּה מְאֹד Isa 52:13

Micah 6:6—7

With what shall I come before the LORD
and
bow down before the exalted God?
Shall I come before with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with 10,000 rivers of oil?

²²T. H. Robinson, p. 21.

Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

Ascribe to the LORD, you heavenly beings,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.(Psa 29:1-2)

b. emblematic

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
² He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
³ he refreshes my soul. (Psa 23:1-2)

c. formal

I have set my king
upon Zion my holy hill (Ps. 1:6).

III. Kugel & Alter Reject Lowth's Restatement/Synonymity

A. Definition of parallelism: statement // related &/or, emphatic statement, not re-statement.

“Overall, Lowth's view has had a disastrous effect on subsequent criticism. Because of it, synonymity was often imposed where it did not exist, sharpness was lost, and the real nature of biblical parallelism was henceforth condemned to a perpetual 'falling between two stools.'”²³

The second verse strengthens and reinforces the first:

²³James Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Hebrew Poetry* (1981), p. 15.

“B was connected to A, had something in common with it, but was not expected to be (or regarded as) mere restatement..... It is the dual nature of B both to come after A and thus to add to it, often particularizing, defining, or expanding the meaning and harken [sic!] back to A and in an obvious way to connect to it.”²⁴

“What this means is simply: B, being connected to A—carrying it further, echoing it, defining it, restating it, contrasting with it, it does not matter which—has an emphatic, 'seconding' character, and it is this more than any aesthetic of symmetry or paralleling, which is at the heart of biblical parallelism..... To the state the matter somewhat simplistically, biblical lines are parallelistic not because B is meant to be a parallel of A, but because B typically supports A, carries it further, backs it up, completes it, goes beyond it.”²⁵

N.B. No taxonomy of parallels possible; B adds "that is" or "what is more." The precise nuance of the sharpening is ambiguous and left somewhat to the subjectivity of the interpreter.

N.B. Kugel's view:

The swan upon St. Mary's Lake floats double:
goose and gander.

B. Arguments in favor of Kugel over Lowth

1. Synthetic (i.e., "garbage can") parallelism is normal, not abnormal. The variety of possible relations between cola/stichoi is endless.²⁶
This parallelism has much variety and many gradations; it is sometimes more accurate and manifest, sometimes more vague and obscure ²⁷
2. Tradition: same rabbis who composed and developed Hebrew poetry differentiated "b" from "a" (cf. Mt 21:1-5; Jn 19:24)

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 51f.

²⁶ K. Budde, p. 4.

²⁷ Lowth, p. 157.

Part IV. Psalm 23

I. Translation

A psalm of David.

I AM is my shepherd,

I do not want.

²In green pastures he allows me to rest;

By choice²⁸ watering places he leads me.

³ My vitality he restores;

he leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk in a dark ravine,

I do not fear evil, for you are with me;

Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare before me a table in the presence of my enemies;

You anoint with oil my head; my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and kindness will pursue me all the days of my life,

and I will return to dwell in the house of the *I AM* for endless days,

II. Form and Structure

Song of trust.

God's covenantal name frames the psalm (vv. 1a, 6Ba).

Three vignettes vv. 1-4, 5, 6).

A. Two Allegories (figure of speech in which abstract ideas and principles are described in terms of characters, figures and events.)

1. Shepherd and pastoral scene: Summary (v. 1): food, water and rest (v. 2), guidance (v. 3) and protection (v. 4)

The metaphor is transmuted into an extended allegory that coheres by following the typical day in the life of a shepherd. In the morning he leads his sheep to green pastures and then, at noon, allows them to rest in the grassy pastures by cool and quiet

²⁸ GKC construe plural as signifying intensification/amplification (GKC, P. 124e). This is probably so because other genitives are singular.

waters. Renewed, the sheep resume their trek back to their sheepfold. The Shepherd leads his sheep from the sheepfold along safe paths to the green pastures and refreshing water and then back to the sheepfold. Should the Shepherd and his sheep confront an enemy, the Shepherd is fully armed with club and crook to beat them off. Upon return to the sheepfold the shepherd attends to his fevered and/or scratched sheep.

2. Host in a sheik's tent

The second vignette transforms the healing and protective sheepfold into the imagery of a festive banquet, where a rich host lavishly entertains his guest, while adversaries of the sheep-turned-guest look on helplessly, and so intensifies the “graces and “beneficences” of provision, restoration and protection. Better than being likened to a sheep under the care of a shepherd is that of being likened to a guest with a wealthy host who provides a table so abundantly laden with food and drink that the cup brims over; the host refreshes and heals his guest with oil on his head, and all of this while he protects his guest while enemies look on helplessly.

N.B. The two vignettes (1—4, 5) are also held together by shifting from 3rd person (addressed to

Congregation, vv. 1—3) to 2nd person (addressed to

God, vv. 4—5). Inclusio (addressed to congregation, v. 6).

B. Reality

1. Goodness and mercy
2. Return to temple

III. Within NT

Ezekiel predicted Messiah's role as shepherd (Ezek. 38:24), and so did Micah (Mic. 5:2, 4 [1, 3], fulfilled in Matth. 2:6). In the New Testament, Jesus Christ as son of David according to the flesh experiences the shepherding care of his Father in heaven, and as Son of God becomes the good shepherd providing, restoring, guiding and protecting his sheep. He is the “Good Shepherd” (John 10:1-16), the “Great Shepherd” (Heb. 13:20) and the “Chief Shepherd” (1 Pet. 5:4), forever provisioning them, providing them with rest, restoring their vitality, and safely guiding them to royal festivities at the end of days. He does so through all the means of grace at his disposal: the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures; the holy Church, and the holy sacraments. He loses none—even passionately exerting himself to find one lost sheep—except the one doomed to destruction according to the eternal plan of God and so prophesied beforehand. His sheep are not to fear the danger of deceptive attacks from within and overt

attacks from without (Mt 7:15; 10:16), and the certainty of undergoing great tribulation in the future (Mk 14:27). This is so because it is God who is giving them the kingdom (Lk 12:32).

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6–7. Form Critical Approach with a Focus on Hymns

Part I: Introduction

I. Survey of Academic Approaches

A. Traditional (superscripts credible): from Apostles to Wellhausen (1875)

B. Literary Analytical: 1875-1920

1. Men:

J. Wellhausen (1844-1918, Goettingen), C. A. Briggs (1841-1913, American Presbyterian scholar and later priest in the Protestant Episcopal Church),²⁹ T. K. Cheyne (1841-1915, an English divine),³⁰ and B. Duhm (1847-1928, Goettingen),³¹

2. Method

- a. Accepts dicta of historical criticism (e.g. skepticism, coherence, analogy)
- b. Denies superscripts are original and credible
- c. Reconstructs historical horizon by philological (late Hebrew) and theological evolution of religion (ala Wellhausen) typologies.
- c. By these so-called “scientific typologies” dated to Second Temple.

29 C. A. Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (ICC, 2 vols. Repr. Edinburgh: T. T. Clark, 1986-87)

30 T. K. Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms*: translated from a revised text with notes and introduction (London : Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1904).

31 B. Duhm, *Die Psalmen uebersetzt* (Freiburg: J. C. B. : Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1899).

3. Critical appraisal

- a. Dicta of historical criticism at loggerheads with theology of Scripture
- b. Ugaritic text showed language was early.³²
- c. Comparative religions evidence refuted simplistic evolution of religion
- d. Destructive to interpretation of the psalms; of no exegetical value.

C. Form Critical: 1900-Present

1. Men:

- a. Throughout the church's history some commentators recognized that psalms fell into various types, such as penitential psalms, and that they met differing emotional needs of the Church.
- b. Hermann Gunkel (1862-1932, Halle), the great champion of form-criticism, scientifically refined form criticism, first in an essay on selected psalms in 1904, then in his commentary of 1926 and finally in his and Joachim Begrich's magnum opus *Einleitung in die Psalmen: die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels* (Gottinger Handkommentar zum Alten Testament; Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, ⁴1985; ¹1933).³³ Accepted the conclusions of the "literary analytical approach, but modified it significantly. By form criticism he sought to establish the historical settings of psalms. He concluded the forms originated in the era of the first temple but the extant psalms, which imitated these early forms, belonged to the period of Second temple.

2. Method

- a. Sitz im Leben ("Setting in Life") where form circulated: temple (priests), city-gate (sage), home, etc. The form originated in the first temple, but the extant psalm belongs to the period of the Second Temple.
- b. Gattung (Genre > species/ form): categorize psalms by their common treasure of words, moods, ideas, motifs and other literary criteria. This approach gains support from analogies with ancient Near Eastern hymns that belong to similar categories as those of the Psalter.

32 M. Dahood, *Psalms: introduction, translation, and notes*, vol. 1 (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1966)

33 Herman Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*, translated by James D. Nogalski (Macon: GA: Mercer University Press, 1998).

- c. Conclusion: five principal [i.e., in terms of quantity] types of Psalms
- 1) Hymns of praise (Psalms 8; 19; 29; 33; 65; 67; 68; 96; 98; 100; 103; 104; 105; 111; 113; 114; 117; 135; 136; 145-150. In addition, one should include the related "Zion songs"): Pss 46; 48; 76; 84; 87; 122; and also the comparable "enthronement songs" (Pss 47; 93; 97; 99_); and the "thanksgiving songs of Israel" (Pss 124; 129).
 - 2) Royal psalms (Psalms 2; 18; 20; 21; 45; 72; 101; 110; 132; 144:1-11; cf. 89:47-52)
 - 3) Individual laments. Gunkel includes here Song of trust.
 - 4) Communal laments
 - 5) Thanksgiving [of individual or community]
- N.B. Refined by Westermann to public confession/praise
- Plus several minor types, such as pilgrimage song (122) and Torah. and torah (1, 19, 119).

3. Critical Appraisal

a. Of Sitz im Leben:

- 1.) Assumes historical criticism and disregards/ignores/does not debate evidence for traditional approach. The identification of "enemy" hotly debated.
- 2.) Gunkel regarded many individual psalms as later (i.e., Second Temple), spiritual imitations of types derived from First Temple). But see objections to "literary analytical." Mowinckel, Gunkel's student, dated the psalms to the era of the First Temple (see liturgical approach below).
- 3.) Assumes long oral tradition without empirical validation.
- 4.) Too speculative as shown by lack of consensus among practitioners.³⁴
 - a.) Erhard Gerstenberger (Psalms: Part I with an Introduction to Cultic Poetry [FOTL; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988], 5—34) associates many psalms with the extended family or with synagogue settings in early Judaism, in a time after the fall of Jerusalem in sixth century.
 - b.) Walter Brueggemann (Israel's Praise: Doxology against Idolatry and Ideology [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988]) is concerned with the connection

³⁴ Taken from William H. Bellinger, Jr., "Psalms and the Questions of Genre," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*, edited by William P. Brown (Oxford: University Press, 2014), 313—325).

between the psalms of praise and the monarchy, who used the articulation of the good life in the psalms of praise as a means of social control, while Israel's truest praise bears witness to YHWH who liberates from oppression.

- c.) Bruegemann ("Psalms and the Life of Faith: A Suggested Typology of Function" [JSOT 17; 1980]): 3-32 also proposed settings in the life of faith: orientation (life properly organized), disorientation (expresses anomalies that challenge traditional ideology) and re—orientation (thanksgiving psalms).
- d.) Gottwald (The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2002), 522—541): reads lament psalms from the context of socioeconomic oppression.
- e.) Martin Buss gives simultaneous attention to human life processes (social and psychological), to human thoughts and feelings, and to linguistic formulations.

b. Of Gattung:

- 1.) Chronicler (1 Chr 16:4) recognizes three types

וַיִּתֵּן לְפָנָי אֲרוֹן יְהוָה מִזִּבְחֵי הַלֵּוִיִּם מְשֻׁרְתִים וְלִהְזָכִיר וְלִהְדוֹת וְלִהַלֵּל לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

- a.) Petition (לְהַזְכִּיר hazkir, NIV (1984)/NRSV, not NIV (2010). But see Ps. 70: s/s

"Then he appointed some of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the LORD, to invoke, to thank, and to praise the LORD, the God of Israel" (ESV).

Pace

"He appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, to extol, thank, and praise the LORD, the God of Israel" (NIV 2010)

But NIV 2010 glosses *hazkir* by "petition" in Psalm 70s/s

"Of David. A petition". (לְדָוִד לְהַזְכִּיר) (Psa 70:1 N10)

- b.) Public Praise (הוֹדוֹת hodot < yadah "confess")
- c.) Praise (הַלֵּל hallel)

N.B. Distinction between individual and community often false; mixture resolved by royal interpretation (see “liturgical approach”).

- 2.) Three types confirmed empirically (see below)
- 3.) Distinction between individual and community somewhat flawed by failure to recognize extensive royal interpretation (i.e., involve individual king (“I) and people (“we”).
- 4.) Royal not a distinct type:
 - a.) Not a form but a topic: based on mention of “king,” not by literary criteria.
 - b.) Book of Psalms demands extensive royal interpretation. Why are these psalms so scattered throughout the Book of Psalms? (see “liturgical approach.”
- 5.) Minor types: Songs of Zion (Psalm 137:1: “sing us one of the songs of Zion”).
- 6.) Has hermeneutic/exegetical/literary values:

Among other merits, the recognition of a psalm’s form is important for philology and literary analysis. For example, words mean different things in different genres (cf. the meaning of “ball” on the sport page versus the social page; cf. *peti* (“simple,” “open” = “fool” in Proverbs; “pious” in Psalms). Moreover, recognition of forms guides one’s reading strategy. The reader expects to read the Book of Revelation symbolically but a Pauline letter more woodenly. Also significantly—as it helps to interpret a sonnet by recognizing its distinctive form—the recognizing of a poet’s motifs assists exegetes in their interpretation of a poem (cf. *todah* sacrifice in Psalm 51:16[18]). Variations from a typical form can also be significant.
- 7.) May bring praise to scholar, not to God. Without spiritual disciplines, academia may be destructive to spiritual/devotional life.

Part II. Praise Psalm

I. Two types

A. Hymns: Praise in general (e.g. creation, salvation history)

B. Thanksgiving: Grateful praise: specific answer to prayer. (Difference between English « thanksgiving, » and Hebrew *hodah* :

«In praise the one being praised is elevated ... ; in thanks the one thanked remains in his place. 2. In praise I am directed entirely toward those whom I praise....In thanks I am expressing *my* thanks. 3. Freedom and spontaneity belong to the essence of praise ; giving thanks can become a duty. 4. Praise has a forum and always occurs in a group ; giving thanks is private, for it need concern no one except the one thanking and the one being thanked. 5. ...Praise can never, but thanks must often, be commanded. 6. The most important verbal mark of difference is that thanksgiving occurs in the speaking of the word, 'thank you' ... ; genuine, spontaneous praise occurs in a sentence in which the one being praised is the subject : 'thou has done' or 'thou art.' » (Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 27—28).

II. Hymns³⁵ (general)

A. Motifs (sometimes irregular) :

1. Introduction: Call to praise
2. Body: Cause for praise

35 Common designations [in Hebrew versification] are: *shir* (Pss 40:4; 46: 1; 149: 1; 2 Sam 6:5 (1 Chr 13:23); Isa 26: 1; 30:29;); *shirah* (Exod 15:1; Ps 18:1); *mizmo'r* [*todah*, Ps 100:4]); *rinnah* (2 Chr 20:22; cf. Sir 50: 19). The most common and apparently the most characteristic expression is *tehilla*, "to praise, a praise, a song of praise (cf. Pss 22:26; 33:1; 34:2; 35:28; 40:4; 65:2; 66:3; 71:8; 100:4; 106:12; 119:71; 145:1,21; 147:1; 148:14; 149:1). The leading word belonging to that expression is *hillel*, "sing a hymn" (cf. 1 Chr 16:4; 235, 30; 25:3; 2 Chr 5:13; Ezra 3: 10; Sir 47:8,10; etc). (Gunkel and Begrich, 40f.)

3. Conclusion : Often renewed call to Praise

Praise the LORD, all you nations;
extol him, all you peoples.

For great is his love toward us,
and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.

Praise the LORD. (117:1-2)

³³1 Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

² Praise the LORD with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.

³ Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy.

⁴ For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.

⁵ The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.

⁶ By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.

⁷ He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; he puts the deep into storehouses.

⁸ Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere him.

⁹ For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

¹⁰ The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.

¹¹ But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

¹² Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance.

¹³ From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind;

¹⁴ from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth—

¹⁵ he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do.

¹⁶ No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength.

¹⁷ A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save.

¹⁸ But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,

¹⁹ to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine.

²⁰ We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield.

²¹ In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.

²² May your unfailing love be with us, LORD, even as we put our hope in you. (Psa 33:1-22)

1. Introduction: Call to praise³⁶

Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous;
it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

² Praise the LORD with the harp;
make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.

³ Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy.

a. Imperative mood

- 1) « You » (2nd Person : (200x) accents fundamental mood : « rejoice » « exult, » « be happy, » or the like
- 2) jussive form: « May the people praise you » (Ps 67 :3) never stands first.
- 3) Cohortative form : « Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation” (Ps 95:1).

N. B. C. S. Lewis, troubled at first by God’s demand to be praised, helpfully mused:

“What do we mean when we say that a picture is admirable? ... The sense in which the picture ‘deserves’ or ‘demands’ admiration is ... this; that admiration is the correct, adequate or appropriate, response to it, that, if paid, admiration will not be “thrown away”, and if we do not admire we shall be stupid, insensible, and great losers.”

Lewis then moves from the demand to admire objects in Art and Nature to the demand to praise God:

36 Psalm 8 has no call to praise. It praises the name of the LORD in the midst of resolves to praise (8:1):

^{7:17} I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness; I will sing the **praises of the name** of the LORD Most High.

^{8:1} LORD, our Lord, **how majestic is your name** in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens.

^{8:9} LORD, our Lord, **how majestic is your name** in all the earth!

^{9:1} I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

² I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing **the praises of your name**, O Most High.

Ps 114 has no call to praise but may be a communal song of grateful praise.

He is the Object to admire which (or, if you like, to appreciate which) is simply to be awake, to have entered the real world; not to appreciate which is to have lost the greatest experience, and in the end to have lost all. The incomplete and crippled lives of those who are tone-deaf, have never been in love, never known true friendship, never cared for a good book, never enjoyed the feel of the morning air on their cheeks ... are faint images of it.”³⁷

N.B. Praise *I AM* in all circumstances: cf. Psalm 95

- ¹ Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
- ² Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.
- ³ For the LORD is the great God,
the great King above all gods.
- ⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.
- ⁵ The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.
- ⁶ Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;
- ⁷ for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care. Today, if only you would hear his voice,
- ⁸ "Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah,
as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness,
- ⁹ where your ancestors tested me;
they tried me, though they had seen what I did.
- ¹⁰ For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said,

³⁷ C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1958), 78—79.

'They are a people whose hearts go astray,
and they have not known my ways.'

¹¹ So I declared on oath in my anger,

'They shall never enter my rest.'

N.B. Psalm 22:1 (“My God, why have you forsaken me”) in context of Psalm 22:22 (“in the assembly I will praise you). Protest of Psalm 44:17—22 in context of praise (44:1—8); Cf. Psalm 73:1—2: “Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. ² But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold”

b. Mood of enthusiasm is underscored by

- 1) form of performance with instruments— « sing, » « play, » « strike the drum » (Ps 81 :3, « blow the horn » (Ps 81 :4)
- 2) with movement performed by those singing: « Enter before him in his gate » (Ps 100 :2, 4), « clap your hands » (47 :1). Praise the LORD, all you servants of the LORD who minister by night in the house of the LORD. ² Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the LORD.
- 3) Main words which are accented through their position in the hymn designate the mood: “rejoice, “exult,” “be happy,” or the like.
- 4) Main words presuppose the meaning of the poem: “Rejoice,” “thank,” “give honor and praise”: (Ps 29:1; 96:6f. ⁷ Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. ⁸ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts. (Psa 96:7-9
- 5) “Hallelujah”: "Hallelujah" is preserved as subscription or superscription in 104—106; 111-113; 115-117; 135; 146-150 (in the Greek translation only as superscription). It was originally voiced by all the people at the end of the song of praise, as evidenced in Ps 106:48; 3 Macc 7:13; 1 Chr 16:36 (Ezra 3: 11).

c. Performed by:

1.) choirs and/or congregation:

a. summoned by the lead singer.

Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, with timbrels and dancing.

Miriam sang to them: "Sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. (Exo 15:20-21

b. Frequently mentioned specifically.

The situation of the performance, and thereby the origin of the style, stands out very clearly when the temple choir (Pss 118:2-4; 135:19f) "that stands in the temple of *I AM*" (Pss 134:1; 135:2). In other places called: "the servants of *I AM*" (Pss 113:1; 134:1; 135:1), "sons of Jacob" (Ps 105:6), or "the sons of Zion" (Ps 149:2; Joel 2:23).

c. Receive all kinds of names of moral honor

"*I AM*'s pious ones" (Pss 30:5; 145:10; 149:5), "the righteous" (32:11; 33:1; 68:4; 140:14), "upright ones" (33:1), "upright in heart" (32:11), "those fearing *I AM*" (Ps 22:24), "those who love his name" (Ps 5:12), "those who love his salvation" (Ps 40:17), "those who seek him" (Pss 22:27; 40:17; 105:3), "those who hide themselves in him" (5:12).

N.B. God does want worship but not without ethics (cf. Exodus 24—25):

Psalm 50: A psalm of Asaph.

The Mighty One, God, the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to where it sets.

² From Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth.

³ Our God comes and will not be silent; a fire devours before him, and around him a tempest rages.

⁴ He summons the heavens above, and the earth, that he may judge his people:

⁵ "Gather to me this consecrated people, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

⁶ And the heavens proclaim his righteousness, for he is a God of justice.

⁷ "Listen, my people, and I will speak; I will testify against you, Israel: I am God, your God.

⁸ I bring no charges against you concerning your sacrifices or concerning your burnt offerings, which are ever before me.

⁹ I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens,

¹⁰ for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills.

¹¹ I know every bird in the mountains, and the insects in the fields are mine.

¹² If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it.

¹³ Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?

¹⁴ "Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High,

¹⁵ and call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."

¹⁶ But to the wicked person, God says: "What right have you to recite my laws or take my covenant on your lips?

¹⁷ You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you.

¹⁸ When you see a thief, you join with him; you throw in your lot with adulterers.

¹⁹ You use your mouth for evil and harness your tongue to deceit.

²⁰ You sit and testify against your brother and slander your own mother's son.

²¹ When you did these things and I kept silent, you thought I was exactly like you. But I now arraign you and set my accusations before you.

²² "Consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces, with no one to rescue you:

²³ Those who sacrifice thank offerings honor me, and to the blameless I will show my salvation."

2.) *All the world:*

"all the world" (33:8; 66: 1,4; 96: 1,9; 98:4; 100: 1), "the earth" (97:1); "the many islands" (97:1); "the ends of the earth" (67:8), "all the inhabitants of the world" (33:8), "all flesh" (145: 1), "all that breathes" (150:6), "the families of the nations" (22:28; 96:7), all "peoples and nations" (47:2; 66:23; 67:4, 5, 6; 117:1; 148:11; Deut 32:43), "the kingdoms of the earth" (68:33), all "kings and princes" (138:4; 148: 1 1), even the "enemies of *I AM*" (66:3).

^{66:1} Shout for joy to God, all the earth!

² Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious.

³ Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you.

⁴ All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing the praises of your name."

3.) *All creation*

"all creation" (145:10) loves to proclaim the hymn: heaven and earth, the sea and its fullness, field and trees (96:11f), heaven and the depths of the earth, mountain and forest (Isa 44:23), even the sons of God and the angels (29:1; 103:20-22; 148:2),"

4.) *"I" calls himself to sing (Gunkel counts about 100 such forms).*

Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.²
Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits— (Psa 103:1-2)

"my heart rejoices, my horn is exalted, my mouth opens wide, and I rejoice"
(1 Sam 2:1);

"my [Mary's] soul exalts, my spirit rejoices" (Luke 1:46). \

2. Main body : cause praise (see « Theology : recurring themes):

- a. Introduced by « for » or « who » (expands introduction).
- b. *I AM's* qualities, limbs, works, endowments, or anything belonging to him (« hand is strong », « word is pure »).³⁸
- c. Qualities and essences that belong to *I AM* (« yours is the kingdom, power and glory »).³⁹

38 Examples include: YHWH'S "hand is strong" (Ps 89: 14); and "his right hand" "is exalted" (89:14), "full of righteousness" (48:11), "majestic in power" (Exod 15:6); YHWH'S "words are pure words" (12:7); "His word" "is purified" (18:3 1; cf. 119:140), "is upright" (33:4); "endures forever" (119:89; "His 'speech' remains forever" (119:90). And thus the hymn treats YHWH'S eye and eyes (Pss 11:4; 33:18; 34:16; 66:7); his face (Ps 34:17); his name and memory (Pss 8:2; 76:2; 102:13; 111:9; 113:3; 135:3, 13; 148:13; Luke 1:49); his way and his ways (Pss 18:31; 25:10; 77:14; Deut 32:4); his actions and his works (Pss 33:4; 66:3; 86:8; 92:6; 104:24; 111:2,3,7; 139:14); his judgment (Pss 36:7; 105:7; 119:7f, 39,54, 151); his council and his thoughts (33:11; 92:6 [139:17]); his dominion (145:13); his kingdom (103:19; 145: 13); his throne (Pss 11:4; 93:2); his majesty and power (Pss 68:35); his majesty and splendor (Pss 8:2; 113:4; 138:5; 148:13); his praise (Pss 48:11; 111:10); his greatness (1 45:3); his indignation (Nah 1 :6); his mercies (Pss 119:156; 145:9; Luke 1 :50); his favor, grace, and faithfulness (Pss 31:20; 36:6, 8; 57:11; 63:4; 86:13; 89:3, 15; 100:5; 103:11, 17; 108:5; 117:2; 118:1-4, 29; 119:90, 136; his righteousness (Pss 36:7; 111:3; 119:142); his understanding (Ps 147:5); his fear (Ps 111:10); his law and commandment (Ps 119:72, 98, 142); his laws, commands, ordinances, and speeches, etc. (Pss 111:7f; 119:39, 54, 86, 103, 137, 143, 151); his testimonies (Pss 93:5; 119:129, 144); his words (Ps 12:7); his signs and wonders" (Ibid., 34).

39 Other examples include: 36:10; 74:16; 89:12, 14; 95:4f; 100:3; 115:16; 1 Sam 2:8c) The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, "for yours is the kingdom and the power and glory" (Matt 6:13) takes this form. (Ibid., 37).

- d. *I AM*'s actions (« looks down from heaven »)
- e. All kinds of portrayals of rejoicing, trust or fear stand in main part.⁴⁰
- f. Further, the enthusiasm for the majesty of God flows in many rhetorical questions: "How majestic is your name!" (Ps 8:2, 10); "How precious is your grace!" (36:8); "How awesome are your deeds!" (66:3); "Who can stand before you!" (76:8); "Who is a God greater than our God!" (77: 14); "*I AM*, how great are your works, how powerfully deep are your thoughts! (92:6); "Who can speak of *I AM*'s powerful deeds, or proclaim all his splendor!" (106:2).
- g. Incomparable ("All the gods of the heathen are nothing, but *I AM* created the heavens" (Ps 96:5)). The heathens' gods are only silver and gold, the work of man's hands. They have a mouth, but cannot speak; they have eyes but cannot see; they have ears but cannot hear. There is also no 'breath in their nose.' Those who make them, whoever trusts them, will be the same" (Ps 135:15-18).⁴¹

N.B. Must distinguish between these religious statements/commands and theological statements/confession (cf. Deut 4:39 "there is no other [god]"; cf. 1 Cor 8:1—7)

- h. Warning not to trust princes: "Do not rely on princes, on a man in whom is no help. His breath departs. He returns to dust. In that day, his thoughts perish." Pss 146:3f. Cf. 33:16f; "Let no defiant speech, no presumptuous word, come out of your mouth" (1 Sam 25).⁴²

⁴⁰ Examples include: "Tabor and Herrnon rejoice at your name" (Ps 89: 13); morning and evening (65:9); the cities of Zion and Judah (48: 12; 97:8); Israel (89:17); the righteous (68:4); all people (76: 11); "from the rising and setting" (75:7); everything is glad and rejoices. "Our soul boasts about you" (Pss. Sol. 17:1). "The occupants of the temple praise him" (Ps 84:5); "In the' heavens, they praise his wonderful deeds" (Ps 89:6); "With my lips, I tell of the ordinances of your mouth" (1 19: 13); "One pays the vow to you; to you all flesh 'brings' the matters of sin" (65:32); "Our soul looks forward to YHWH" (33:20); "We hope on God, our savior" (Ps 17:3); "We trust in his holy name" (Ps 33:21). "All eyes wait on YOU" (145:15; 104:27).

"The whole earth is afraid before **YHWH**" (33:8; 65:9; Sir 16:18f), trembles (68:9), and is terrified (Jer 10: 10); "The host of heaven falls down before him" (Neh 9:6); "Even your enemies must extol you" (66:3). Also here comes the enumeration of the one praised (Pss 75:7; 89:6).

⁴¹ Other examples include: Jer 10:3-5,8f, 14f; Dan 4:32; cf. also Pss 97:7; 1 15:4-7; Isa 40: 19f; Jer 16: 19f; 5 1 : 17f.

⁴² Other examples include: Pss 75:5f; 76:12; Isa 26:4; cf. Pss 46:9,11; 665; Nah 1:9.

3. conclusion :

- a. Frequently manifests the forms of the introduction⁴³
- b. A lot more to say (139:18)
- c. “Contribution formula”: singer lays his creation before the throne of God, hoping the words of his mouth are pleasing to God (Ps 19: 19, hoping his meditation will be sweet to God (104:34).

B. Performance. See Liturgical Approach

C. Theology: recurring themes

1. “The people of Israel primarily expressed their theology using the form of the hymn (with enthusiasm, adoration, reverence, praise and exaltation... It remains characteristic of Israelite religion and sign of its particular majesty that the fundamental moods are so dominant here: my first feeling is praise and thanksgiving” (Ibid. 47),

“In Babylonian and Egyptian poetry the petition was very frequently attached to the song of praise, making the petition appear to be that which the one praying really had in mind. It is all the more significant that the *hymns of the psalter very seldom have a petition attached* [original]” (Ibid., 47f.)

“Religious thought becomes stronger if it is powerfully expressed... However, one seldom considers the subjective side of the matter, if at all. One sings the hymn *for God only*” (Ibid., 48)

There are more than a few that tower above the majority of the ancient oriental poetry, in that they are distinguished by their inner, personal life and especially by their majestic power” (Ibid.)

43 “At times, the hymn concludes with an ‘expanded introduction’ in order to express the whole with flair (cf. Pss 68:35ff; 75:10; 103:20-22; 135:19-21. It is particularly beautiful when the introduction ends with the same introduction with which it began, thus rounding off the poem as a unit (cf. Ps 8: 10). (Ibid., 40)

2. Sketches a powerful image of God's incommunicable attributes (aseity, eternal, omniscient (knowledge, power, presence):

"YHWH, "you remain God forever; and you have been from before; before the mountains were born, before the earth and the world were brought forth. For a thousand years are like yesterday when 'they are past'" (Ps 90:2c, 1b, 2ab, 4ab). "You founded the earth before time, the heavens are the work of your hands. These will pass away, but you remain. They all fall away like a garment. You change them like a robe, but you remain the same, and your years have no end" (Ps 102:26-28). "YHWH, how many are your works. The earth is full of your creatures" (Ps 104:2ac). "He spoke, and it happened. He commanded and it stood there" (33:9). "They all wait on you, so that you offer food at the right time. You give it to them, they harvest it. You open your hand, and they are satisfied with goodness. You hide your face, they cower. You take their breath, and they expire and turn back to their dust" (Ps 104:27-29)

God is eternal (Pss 9:8; 10: 16; 29: 10; 66:7; 90:1, 2,4; 92:9; 93:2; 102:13, 26-28; 103:17; 104:31; 135:13; 145:13; 146:10), holy and awesome (Pss 89:19; 96:4; 99:5, 9; 105:3; 111:9; 1 Sam 2:2, highly exalted over all the world (Pss 46:11; 97:9; 99:2; 113:4), majestic and magnificent (Pss 8:2; 56:6, 12; 66:2; 96:6; 104:3 1; 108:6; 111:3; 113:4; 145:5; 148: 13). This God is powerful beyond measure (Pss 115:3; 135:6; 1 Sam 2:4; Dan 4:3 If), great in works and deeds (Pss 77: 13; 92:6; 104:24; 111:2; 135:5; 145:3; 150:2), unending in his knowledge (Pss 40:6; 104:24; 139: 17; 1 Sam 2:3), and incomparably wonderful (Pss 77: 12; 139: 14) (Ibid., 49)

3. Sketches a powerful image of God's communicable attributes (Exod. 34:6)

N.B. Incommunicable and communicable attributes must be held together. His grace assures us that he is not a despot; and his power assures us that he enact mercy and justice.

"His favor is over his pious ones as high as the heavens are above the earth. Let our sins be as far from us as the sunrise is from the sunset. YHWH has compassion on his pious ones as a father has compassion on his children" (Ps 103:11-13)."YHWH, your grace is 'like' the heavens, your truth reaches to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mountain of God; your ruling 'like' the great flood. You help humans and animals. Your grace is so precious" (Ps 36:6-8).(Ibid., 50).

4. Incomparable. Among the gods, there are none who are similar in holiness, power, wisdom, and grace.

"Who is like you among the gods, YHWH? Cf. Exod 15: 1 1 ; 1 Sam 2:2; Pss 18:32; 35: 10; 7 1 : 19; 77:14; 86:8; 89:7, 9; 113:5; Jer 10:6f;. He is "the king (God) of the gods" (Ps 95:3; Deut 10: 17; 136:2).

5. I AM's exalted dwelling and his rule in heaven

a. He is the Most High

"I AM established his throne in the heavens, and his majesty reigns over everything" (Ps 103:19).

b. Impressive image of his omniscience

"He looks down on the earth from his heavenly throne, from which the whole world lies at his feet. He sees everything that happens below with his peering eyes"

Cf. Pss 11:4; 14:2; 33:13f; 53:3; 66:7; 113:5f; 138:6; cf. further Pss 29:10; 68:34f, 35b; 80:15; 92:9; 93:4; 102:20; 115:3, 16. (Ibid., 50)

c. Creator and Preserver of nature.

Psalm 104

²⁷ These all look to you, to give them their food in due season.

²⁸ When you give it to them, they gather it up;

when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

²⁹ When you hide your face, they are dismayed;

when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

³⁰ When you send forth your Spirit, they are created,

and you renew the face of the

"It generally makes no difference in antiquity's observation of the world whether the events belong to our concept of "preservation" or to the actual "creation." Every new event appears as a new creation. YHWH changes darkness into morning, and darkens the day to night (Amos 5:8). He arranges the stars at daybreak (Job 9:7,9), and he calls the stars by name (Isa 40:26; Ps 147:4). Snow

and ice, and especially the rain, come from him (Pss 147:8, 16f; 65: 10-12). He causes the earth to quake (Ps 104:32) He pours the water down on the earth (Amos 5:8; 9:6) and stills the roaring of the rushing flood (Pss 65:8; 89: 10). In summary, he does great things that are not required and miracles that cannot be counted” (Ibid., 51)

d. Manifest himself in his creation:

Light is YHWH'S coat; the clouds his chariot; wind and flames his messengers (Ps 104:2-4). He marches over the high places of the earth (Amos 4: 13). If the earth quakes, it is because YHWH looked at it. If the mountains smoke, it is because YHWH touched them (Ps 104:32). When the change of seasons causes life and death to enter the world, the reason is that YHWH has inhaled and exhaled his life-protecting breath (Ps 104:29f). The Hebrew poet signifies the "harmony of the spheres" as the song that the heavens sing to honor YHWH. (Ibid).

Appearance in storm and weather, in fire and earthquake, with thunder and lightning. Psalm 29 adopts a hymn to Baal and adapts it to a hymn to *I AM* (see below).

6. Dominion over humanity

Divine omnipotence is seen in everything so that it can overthrow or exalt according to its pleasure. The hymn loves to describe both sides of the divine act in sharp contrast: "YHWH kills and brings to life, he takes down to Sheol and leads up; YHWH makes the poor and the rich; he humbles and exalts (1 Sam 2:6f; cf. also 4f; Pss 75:8; 107:33ff; 113:7f; 146:9; 147:6).

Not despotic but sovereignty operated and ruled with both grace and favor and with righteous retribution ((cf. Pss 1 1:5ff; 335; 66:7; 89:15; 92:10ff; 97:2,10; 98:9; 99:4; 103:6; 111:3; 145:20; 146:9; 147:6).

7. Love and faithfulness

The inexhaustible love and faithfulness of God toward his people Israel and toward the pious is even more dominant in the hymn (Pss 33:18f; 34:16, 20, 22; 68:36; 97:10; 100:3; 103:8-13; 117:2; 135:3f; 147:13f; 148:14; Jer 14:8; Mic 7: 18; Nah 1:3,7f). He blesses them with everything good and delivers them from all danger. His compassion is near to all the suffering and the weak (Pss 34: 19; 68:6f; 103:6; 107:41; 1 13:7ff; 145: 14, 19; 146:7-9; 147:3,6; 1 Sam 2:8; Job 5: 11) in their distress, but also to the sinners who will

turn to him (Pss 65:4; 103:9; Sir 17:29). His compassion is even near to all creation (Pss 33:s; 36:6-10; 136:25; 145:8f, 15f; 147:9; Job 38:39ff) which is completely directed toward him and his grace (Pss 65:3f; 104:27f). Thus, in nature, YHWH'S moral majesty appears along with the exalted character of YHWH “ ... The inexhaustible love and faithfulness of God toward his people Israel and toward the pious is even more dominant in the hymn (Pss 33:18f; 4:16, 20, 22; 68:36; 97:10; 100:3; 103:8-13; 117:2; 135:3f; 147:13f; 148:14; Jer 14:8; Mic 7: 18; Nah 1:3,7f). He blesses them with everything good and delivers them from all danger. His compassion is near to all the suffering and the weak (Pss 34: 19; 68:6f; 103:6; 107:41; 1 13:7ff; 145: 14, 19; 146:7-9; 147:3,6; 1 Sam 2:8; Job 5: 1 1) in their distress, but also to the sinners who will turn to him (Pss 65:4; 103:9; Sir 17:29). His compassion is even near to all creation (Pss 33:s; 36:6-10; 136:25; 145:8f, 15f; 147:9; Job 38:39ff) which is completely directed toward him and his grace (Pss 65:3f; 104:27f). Thus, in nature, YHWH'S moral majesty appears along with the exalted character of YHWH. ... Also, by praising divine compassion, the poets have found words of enduring depth and beauty (cf. Pss 30:6; 34: 19; 36:6-10; 103:8-13; 104:27f; 108:s). (Ibid., 51).

8. Glorifies past deed of I AM in creation,⁴⁴

- a.) Uses pagan imagery of Marduk's *chaoskamp* with Tiamat and of Baal's *chaoskamp* with Yam (Sea), Mot (Death), Rahab & Leviathan (Serpent). These mythological allusions occur only in poetry and add vividness and color to the poem.⁴⁵ They also function as a polemic against the pagan gods; the sublimities attributed to the pagan gods belong in fact to *I AM*.

¹² But God is my King from long ago;

he brings salvation on the earth.

¹³ It was you who split open the sea by your power;

you broke the heads of the monster in the waters.

¹⁴ It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan

and gave it as food to the creatures of the desert.

¹⁵ It was you who opened up springs and streams;

you dried up the ever-flowing rivers.

⁴⁴ Creation ideas also appear in Israelite hymns frequently: Pss 8:4-9; 19:1-7; 24:2; 33:6f,9; 65:7; 74:13-17; 89:11-13; 90:2; 95:4f; 96:5; 102:26; 104; 136:5-9; 146:6; 148:5f; 1 Sam 2:8; cf. also Ps 139: 13s.

⁴⁵ John L. McKenzie, “A Noe on Psalm 73 (74): 13—15,” *Theological Studies*, 2 (1950), 281.

- ¹⁶ The day is yours, and yours also the night;
you established the sun and moon.
- ¹⁷ It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth;
you made both summer and winter. (Psa 74:12-17)
- ⁸ Who is like you, LORD God Almighty?
You, LORD, are mighty, and your faithfulness surrounds you.
- ⁹ You rule over the surging sea;
when its waves mount up, you still them.
- ¹⁰ You crushed Rahab like one of the slain;
with your strong arm you scattered your enemies.
- ¹¹ The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth;
you founded the world and all that is in it (89:8-11)

Text *nt*: III. 38—39: “The crooked dragon,/ the mighty one of seven heads:

Isa. 27:1 “On that day God will visit,/ with his sword [that is mighty and great and powerful, Leviathan the evil serpent, even Leviathan the crooked serpent, and slay the monster that is in the sea” (Isa 27:1).

- b.) “The sea was the great enemy of order both in Mesopotamia and in Canaan. Its defeat was the essential element in creation and won the victorious god kingship and the right to a palace (or temple) of his own. Creation, kingship, and temple thus form an indissoluble triad; the containment of the sea is the continuing proof of their eternal validity.⁴⁶

“The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength; indeed, the world is established, firm and secure.

² Your throne was established long ago; you are from all eternity.

³ The seas have lifted up, LORD, the seas have lifted up their voice; the seas have lifted up their pounding waves.

⁴⁶ Jon Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 108f.

⁴ Mightier than the thunder of the great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea— the LORD on high is mighty.

⁵ Your statutes, LORD, stand firm; holiness adorns your house for endless days". (Psa 93:1-5)

3.) Psalm 29 adopts and adapts Hymn to Baal

A psalm of David.

Ascribe to the LORD, you heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

² Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

³ The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD thunders over the mighty waters.

⁴ The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is majestic.

⁵ The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

⁶ He makes Lebanon leap like a calf, Sirion like a young wild ox.

⁷ The voice of the LORD strikes with flashes of lightning.

⁸ The voice of the LORD shakes the desert; the LORD shakes the Desert of Kadesh.

⁹ The voice of the LORD twists the oaks and strips the forests bare. And in his temple all cry, "Glory!"

¹⁰ The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD is enthroned as King forever.

¹¹ The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.

4.) Psalm 104 adopts and adapts Hymn to Aton (or Aten)

9. Praise God who led his people in the past: cohabitation of I AM with his people⁴⁷

- a. “Has no counterpart in Babylonian and Egyptian literature” (Gunkel & Begrich, 54)
- b. “It is very remarkable that all of these allusions only treat the *very oldest history of Israel*” (ibid.).

10. Speak about his future reign (Pss 69:36; 86:9; 102:14-23; 147:2)

¹⁰ Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns." The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.

¹¹ Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it.

¹² Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.

¹³ Let all creation rejoice before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness (96: 10-13)

C. Songs of Zion (46, 48,76, 84, 87; 121; 122; cf. 137:3

1. For identification of Zion see Ps 2:6

2. Speaks of invincibility

3. UT (Collection of tablets dating from 14th century B.C. in a language akin to Hebrew.

“An acquaintance with the literature of Bronze Age Ugarit has proven essential to an understanding of Zion”⁴⁸ Baal dwells on “Zaphon,” and is referred to as “holy place,” “mountain of my heritage,” chosen spot,” hill of victory.” Cf.

Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, his holy mountain.

² Beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth, like the heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King. (Psa 48:1-2)

“mountain of my victory” (89:2)

⁴⁷ Pss 105; 114). Additionally, we find numerous allusions to those types of narratives (cf. Pss 8:3; 22:5f; 44:2-4; 66:6; 77:16-21; 80:9-12; 99:6-8; 103:7f; 105; 111:4, 6, 9; 114; 119:138; 135:8-12; 136:10R 147:19;

⁴⁸ Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 113.

4. Imagery, similarities to Zion

- a. cosmic (of an infinite and universal scope)
- b. meeting place of gods (cf. Ps 82:1)
- c. “Battleground of conflicting forces” [of nature/history]
- d. “meeting place of heaven and earth” (Axis Mundi). So preeminent locus of communication between God and humans. In exile, Daniel prayed toward this mountain, where God is still available.
- e. A Paradise (see 92:12—16 [cf. Psalm 1])

⁷ How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!

People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

⁸ They feast on the abundance of your house;

you give them drink from your river of delights.

⁹ For with you is the fountain of life;

in your light we see light. (Psa 36:7-9)

- f. “place where effective decrees are issued. :

D. Enthronement psalms (“Lord has become king/reigns”)

(Pss 47; 93; 96:7-13; 97; 99. See Liturgical approach.

III. Songs of Grateful Praise

A. Community Songs of Grateful Praise:

65 (hymn?), 67 (hymn?) 75, 107, 124, 136 (hymn?) 1 Sam 2:1—10

B. Individual Song of Grateful Praise

18 (= 2 Sam 22; royal thanksgiving), 21 (royal), 30, 32 (penitential psalm) 34, 40:1—11; 66:13—20, 92, 108 (= 57:5—11; 60:5—12), 116, 118 (royal), 138; Isaiah 38:9—20; Jonah 2:2—9.

8. Psalm 100

Part I: Introduction

I. Translation

¹A Psalm for Giving Grateful Praise.⁴⁹

Shout to / AM, all the earth!

²Serve / AM with rejoicing!

Come before him with a joyful shout!

³Know that / AM, he is God!

He himself has made us;

and indeed, we are his people,⁵⁰

and the flock he shepherds.⁵¹

49 Or, “for the sacrifice of grateful praise” (see v. 1, notes).

50 The Kethiv אֵלֵינוּ אֵלֵינוּ (“and not we ourselves”) finds support in the LXX (καὶ οὐχ ἡμεῖς) and fits the context as the opposite of “he himself has made us.” The *Qere reading* אֵלֵינוּ לָנוּ finds support in Aquila, Targum and Jerome, and “we are the sheep he shepherds” follows more naturally “we belong to him” than an apposition to “us,” jumping over the parenthetical remark “not we ourselves.” J. O. Lewis (“An Asseverative in Psalm 100:3?” *JBL*, 86 [1967] 216) argues for an original asseverative לָנוּ (= “and indeed we are his people”, for emphatic *lamed* see *IBHS*, P. 11.2.1i, p. 211). C. F. Whitley (“Some Remarks on *lu and lo*,” *ZAW*, 87 [1975] 202—4) argues better that אֵלֵנוּ, whether vocalized אֵלוֹר or אֵלֵנוּ, can mean either “surely/indeed” or, questionably, a causal “accordingly.” It could be an emphatic interrogative אֵלֵנוּ (2 Kings 5:26; cf. Jer. 49:9 with Obad 5); or it should be pointed as an emphatic אֵלֵנוּ (Gen. 23:13; 30:34) or אֵלֵנוּ (1 Sam. 20:14). I agree with Marvin E. Tate (*Word Biblical Commentary; Vol 20 Psalms 51—100* [Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1990], that אֵלֵנוּ is emphatic. This interpretation best satisfies the Hebrew syntax, removes the tautology of “we belong to him, we are his people”; may help to explain the Masoretic confusion, and involves only a change in accentuation.

51 מְרִעֵיטָה can mean either “the place of his shepherding” (i.e., “pastureland”) or “his shepherding,” for the *mem* prefix may indicate location or, as is usually the case with this noun according to BDB (p. 945), an abstraction of the root *r’h* (*IBHS*, P. 5.6b, p. 90). If the former, the genitive “his” is possessive; if the latter, the genitive is agency.

⁴Enter his gates with grateful praise;
his court with praise!
Give him grateful praise!
Bless⁵² his Name!

⁵For *I AM* is good;
His unfailing love [endures]⁵³ forever;
His reliability, throughout generations.

II. Form (mixture of hymn and grateful praise)

Gattung: Form of a praise psalm: call and cause. Rivets our praise on *I AM* by mentioning him in sixteen out of about forty words.⁵⁴

Sitz im leben: accompany the *todah* sacrifice. Rivets our praise on *I AM* by mentioning him in sixteen out of about forty words.⁵⁵

III. Structure: interlaces an alternating and a chiasmic structure.

A. Alternating structure:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| 1. First stanza: | 1—3 |
| a. Call to praise (resolve): | vv. 1b—2 |
| b. Cause (reason) for/ content of (<i>ki</i> / <i>^</i>) praise: | v. 3 |

52 The *Piel* is declarative-estimative (to esteem and to declare someone to be in a state of being, *IBHS*, P. 24.2f, p. 402).

53 Preposition phrase לְעוֹלָם is under the government of an elided verb (*IBHS*, P. 11.4.3d, p. 224).

54 YHWH (4x), Name (1x), pronoun (11x).

55 YHWH (4x), Name (1x), pronoun (11x).

- | | |
|---|------|
| 2. Second stanza: | 4—5 |
| a. Call to praise (resolve): | v. 4 |
| b. Cause (reason) for/ content of (<i>ki/</i> ^/>) praise: | v. 5 |

B. Sven imperatives demanding praise and confessing who *I AM* is in a chiasmic structure. Thus:

- A. Shout to *I AM*
 - B. Serve him ... with joy/shout
 - C. Come (אָבֹר) before him
 - X. Know that *I AM*
 - C.' Enter (אָבֹר) his courts
 - B.' Give him grateful praise with praise
- A.' Bless his Name

A/A' : reference his name. Possibly the joyful shout blesses his name.;

B/B' "with rejoicing/joyful shout; with grateful praise/ praise. Possibly "serve him" is clarified by "give him grateful praise" (B/B').

C/C/ אָבֹר ("come," and "enter") is chiasmically repeated as first word of v. 2a and the first word of 4b.

X Pivot/focus "Know that *I AM* is God and he has made us [Israel]." Both notions are introduced with an emphatic "he [himself]" (אָהוּ).

III. Rhetoric

A. Each "A" verset of the verse is either expanded or intensified by a "B" verset. Thus 3a (*I AM*'s being) is expanded in 3b (his salvific work), and 3b is intensified by matching "a" and "b" versets. Thus:

- A. Know that *I AM*, he is God;
 - Ba. He himself has made us;
 - Bbα Indeed we are his people,
 - Bbβ the sheep he shepherds.

B. Begins with universal space, “all the earth,” and ends with eternal time, “throughout all generations,” making a type of inclusio.⁵⁶

IV. Sitz im Buch

1. Similar to Psalm 95

- a. Both begin with a call for “shouts” of joy, using both *rua‘* and *rinna/’*;
- b. Both liturgies call the worshiper “to come/enter” (95:6a; 100: 2a, 4a);
- d. mention *I AM* has made us (95:6a-7; 100:3)
- e. the noun *to/’da/’* occurs only in these two psalms.

2. Psalm 95, 100 form a frame around 96—99.⁵⁷

Within canon: the anonymous author sings as an inspired, authoritative representative of believing Israel (v. 3) to the Church.

Part II: Exposition

Superscript:

1A

“A psalm”: a song accompanied with musical instruments that serves as a libretto to accompany the ritual of offering a sacrifice of grateful praise at some festival. Music affects our emotions (e.g. joy); causes us to empathize with the composer (e.g. his testimony in v. 3); and inspires us to action (e.g. to enter God’s court with grateful praise). Paul calls upon the Church to teach and admonish one another ... through psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts” (Col. 3:16).

“For grateful praise” (תְּהַלֵּל). *to/’da/’* from the root *ya/-/da/’* (100x): “to confess [sin]” or “to laud, praise.” Westermann explains the incongruity: “the concept that binds the two meanings could be rendered “to acknowledge” or “to confess”; one could speak of a “confession of praise.” This meaning accords well with his distinction *ya/-/da/’* and the

⁵⁶ Beat Weber, “Psalm 100,” *BN* 91 (1998): 90—97, esp. 93.

⁵⁷ David M. Howard, Jr., *The Structure of Psalms 93—100* (Ph.D. diss. University of Michigan; Ann Arbor: UMI, 1988), 175—6.

other principal root for praise, *halle*/-/l. “The profane use of the two verbs indicates... that *hll* pi. is the reaction to an essence, *ydh* hi., the response to an action or a behavior.”⁵⁸ And so in this psalm the nations respond in praise for who *I AM* is and what he has done for Israel. The two terms for praise overlap because God’s essence is known through his benevolent acts, and *mutatis mutandis*, his nature expresses itself in saving acts. The substantive *to*^/*da*^ occurs thirty-two times; thirteen times to the sacrifice that accompanies the word of praise (Lev. 7:11—21; 22:29). Cf. Jer. 33:10—11: “the rejoicing [*שִׂמְחָה*, cf. 100:1] voices of those who bring grateful praise offerings to the house of *I AM* (*בְּבָאִים תִּזְדָּה בַּיַּת יְהוָה*),” say, “Give grateful praise (*הוֹדוּ*, see v.4) to *I AM* Almighty, for the *I AM* is good; his love endures forever” (*כִּי־טוֹב יְהוָה כִּי־לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ*) (see v. 5). Delitzsch convincingly argues: “What is intended is not merely the *to*^/*da* of the heart, but the *shelami*^/*m-to*^/*da* [“fellowship offering of grateful praise”], A part of the grateful praise ritual included a meal. The psalmist call upon the Gentiles, who are reckoned as clean, to share in eating the sacrifice with Israel, while telling of God’s wonderful deeds (cf. Psalm 107:21—22). This sacrifice was highly esteemed in later Judaism: “In the time to come all sacrifices will cease, but the sacrifice of thanksgiving will not cease.”⁵⁹ The sacrifice of praise continues in the Church: “Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise the fruit of lips that openly profess his name” (Heb. 13:14).

I. Stanza 1

1—3

A. Call to praise

1—2

“*Shout*” (*הִרְיֵעוּ*). The loudness of the crying out and its strong emotion can be inferred by other uses of *rua*’. Battle orders rise to a dramatic climax, with the command that the attacking army give an anticipatory victory shout (cf. Josh. 6:10, 16; 1 Sam. 17:52; Amos 1:14; Isa. 42:13; Jer. 50:16). Shouts also accompany blasts on a trumpet to sound an alarm, causing people to tremble before impending doom. Here the verb occurs in with “rejoicing.” In sum, *rua*’ refers to a shout like that heard when the home-team scores a goal. Worship should not be like a funeral. The plural refers to all the individuals of the earth (see below).

“*To I AM*” (*לַיהוָה*). See Psalm 1. The name of Israel’s God in his own words is “I AM WHO I AM” (Exod. 3:14). That sentence name speaks of his eternal, unchanging Being. Israel’s God is an aseity; he is not a derivative of someone or something. Someone of

58 C. Westermann, *TLOT*, 2:503, *ydh* hi, praise.

59 Kimh/./i; H. Freedman, cited by Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21—36* (Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 2004), 536.

something simply is, and that someone is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: “As he was in the beginning, he is now and will be forevermore.” Whereas his Being is unchanging, he progressively reveals himself in the salvation history of his chosen people. He is holy, unlike anyone else, and the Book of Psalms celebrates his sublimities: his incommunicable and his communicable attributes. Paradoxically, his invisible, incommunicable attributes—those mortals cannot share—are clearly seen in his creation: “his eternal power and divine nature” (Rom 1:20). His communicable attributes—those mortals can share—are revealed in Scripture. He proclaimed his name to Moses, saying, “*I AM, I AM*, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness,⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.” The psalms, including Psalm 100, celebrate these sublimities (v. 5). But for those who reject his grace, “he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation” (Exod. 34:6—7). Climatically, he revealed himself in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is “the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb. 13:8), and the Holy Spirit convinces the world of Truth (John 4:24).

“*All the earth*” (כָּל־הָאָרֶץ). *Ha/-eres/,/* refers to the “the earth,” not “land [of Israel], for this is the sense of the similar call to praise in Psalm 98:4 (cf. 47:1). “Earth” may be a personification for all terrestrial objects (see “praise,” v. 4 below; Psalm 98:4—8), but it certainly functions as a metonym for the people inhabiting it. What *I AM* has done for Israel is for the benefit of every individual on Earth. None is excluded. *I AM* chose Abraham and his offspring as his mediatorial kingdom to bless all people, not to exclude anyone from his benefits: “You [Abraham] will be a blessing. I [YHWH] will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen. 12:2b—3). The Psalter is a missionary hymn book, calling upon all people to know and love *I AM* for their own good and for his praise. In the Old dispensation, however, Gentiles normally had to come to Israel’s temple to learn about *I AM*. Today God’s people go into all the world, telling others of what he has done for them through his Son. Micah (4:1—4) and Isaiah (2:2—4) with eagle eyes of faith see the last days when all nations will come before *I AM* and beat their swords into hoes.

“*Serve I AM*” (עֲבַדְוּ אֶת־יְהוָה). fundamentally means to be in subjection to or in a subordinate position to *I AM* as Master. Mortals serve some god; the only question is which master they serve. Deliverance entails a change of masters. *I AM* delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage to serve him as their new master. But *I AM*’s is a benevolent servitude that leads to peace, prosperity and life, whereas servitude to other masters, such as Pharaoh and idols, leads to wretchedness and death. Ironically, to free oneself from

servitude to *I AM* leads to slavery to oppressive masters.⁶⁰ More specifically, “to serve *I AM*” may be an ethical, comprehensive notion of regarding one’s whole life, one’s entire existence, in his service, as in Joshua’s famous confession: “As for me and my household, we will serve *I AM*” (Josh. 24:15; cf. 1 Kings 8:23). In the Psalter, however, it signifies a more narrow liturgical notion of serving him in the temple ritual. Goldingay reflects that “in English, talk about church *services* is a dead metaphor, and that is partly so when the OT uses ‘*abad*.’”⁶¹ But that interpretation of “serve *I AM* is questionable, for the celebrant brings an animal sacrifice along with his words of praise, and so participates with the priest in serving God in the temple. The six imperatives calling for praise by definition impose the psalmist’s will upon the celebrants, but their force is nuanced by the social setting. For non-worshipping people they are admonitory (cf. Psalm 2:11), but for worshipers they are more like the commands of a cheer leader. The plural signifies that all Gentiles should involve themselves in the liturgy. Implicitly, the psalm warns against serving other gods; this inevitable alternative runs throughout all of Scripture. Brueggemann notes: “*To praise is to reject alternative loyalties and false definitions of reality* [italics his]. Praise is relentlessly polemical.”⁶² The Lord Jesus taught: ¹³ “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money” (Luke 16:13).

“*With rejoicing*” (בְּשִׂמְחָה). *S’/imh/./a/* denotes gladness and joy with the whole disposition, as indicated by its association with the heart (cf. Exod. 4:14; Pss. 19:8[9]; 104:15; 105:3) and *nepes’* (i.e., desire and appetites [Ps. 86:4]). This joy is not a restrained, inactive disposition of the psyche, but joy expressing itself spontaneously in an elementary way: in joyful leaping (Jer. 50:11), stamping of the feet and hand clapping (Isa. 55:12), dance, music, and joyful shouts (1 Sam. 18:6; 2 Sam. 6:12, 14). Such “Dionysian exuberance” is found at marriage (Song 3:11; Jer. 7:34; 25:10), wine harvest (Isa. 9:3[2]; 16:10), reception of victors (1 Sam. 18:6), the coronation of a king (1 Sam. 11:15; 1 K. 1:40, 45), and holy days (Num. 10:10).⁶³ As these texts show, it refers to joy expressed at festivals, not to a sustained inward joy. *I AM* participates in this spiritual exuberance; he has no pleasure in formal, ritual religion without exuberance. The

60 David Daube, *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible* (All Souls Studies; London: Faber and Faber, 1963).

61 John Goldingay, *Psalms: Vol. 3 Psalms 90—150* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008), 135.

62 Walter Brueggemann, “Psalm 100,” *Int* 39 (1985): 65—69, esp. 66.

63 Ruprecht, *TLOT*, 3:1,274, s.v. *s’/mh/*.

narrative about David's bringing up the ark of the covenant to the City of David illustrates the kind of worship God desires (2 Samuel 6).⁶⁴

“Come before him” (בָּאוּ לְפָנָיו). *Bo*’ means “to enter” (antonym *ys/*’ “to exit”) and/or “to come” (antonym *hlk* “to go). *Liphne/*^/ here is a liturgical term and means substantially “in the sanctuary,” which is the locus of God’s presence.⁶⁵ Although God is omnipresent (Psalm 139:7—12), he is uniquely present above the ark of the covenant. His unique presence guarantees his protection and his eternal life. No one can escape his ubiquitous presence, but none can enter God’s unique presence in the sanctuary lightly or as a matter of right (cf. Psalm 15). Gentiles may come before him because they praise *I AM* for his benevolences to Israel and so bless Abraham’s mediatorial people (v. 3; cf. Gen 12: 3). Moreover, these worshipers, we should assume, “serve *I AM*” ethically and liturgically. Today Christians come without doubting to God’s throne of grace through the priesthood of Jesus Christ (Heb. 4:16).

“With joyful shouts” (בְּרִנָּה). *Rinna/*^/ means primarily a loud expression, and so shares in the same semantic domain as *rua*’ (“shout”). So this last word of the call to praise forms an *inclusio* with its first word (cf. Ps. 47:2). In the liturgy the credal confession of God’s saving acts are made with joyful shouts.

B. Cause for praise

3

Know that (דָּעוּ כִּי). Before entering the temple complex, the people must confess that *I AM* alone is God and that Israel is his chosen people. The imperative entails making a decision to believe in *I AM*, not in attractive alternatives. Israel’s testimony that their God is the living God and that they are his people “simultaneously expresses pride and humility, awe and trust.”⁶⁶ Their confession “dethrones and nullifies every other claimant.”⁶⁷ The combination of “know” with “that” may function as the “recognition formula.” That formula describes human knowledge that *I AM* is the true and living God. This knowledge is often attained by experiencing through the senses *I AM*’s historical acts.⁶⁸ Through experiencing the amazing exodus from Egypt, both Israel (Exod. 6:7) and

64 For this case study of worship see Bruce K. Waltke with Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Michigan, 2007), 659—60.

65 A. S. van der Woude, *TLOT*, II, 1,014, s.v. *pa/-/ni/*^/*m*.

66 Artur Weiser, *The Psalms* (Old Testament Library; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), 647.

67 Bruggemann, 66.

68 W. Schottroff, *TLOT*, II, 519, s.v. *yd*’

the Egyptians (7:5)—Pharaoh in particular (7:17)— know that *I AM* is God, the one who truly is *I AM WHO I AM*, and that there is none like him (8:6). After witnessing Elijah’s victory the prophets of Baal, the people confessed: “*I AM*, he is God” (1 Kings 18:39; cf. Deut. 4:35, 39). In prophecy the “recognition formula” is used with reference to future manifestations of *I AM*’s divine power and to the fulfillment of prophecies of these impending events as proof that “*I AM* is the *I AM*” (Ezek. 6:7, 10, 13, 14).⁶⁹ In Psalm 100, however, the recognition “*I AM* (YHWH), he is God” is attained through Israel’s testimony, as cited by the psalmist, not by the first-hand sensory awareness of the divine self-revelation in historical acts. Similarly, the Church does not ask Christ to descend from heaven, die, be buried, rise again and ascend to heaven each generation. Were that the case, salvation history would be cyclical, going nowhere. But salvation history is linear, having both a beginning, when *I AM* defeated the impenetrable darkness with light and bounded the chaotic sea by life-giving land (Gen. 1:3—4, 9—10, and also an end, when there will no sea and no night (Rev. 21:1, 25). The apostle Paul says that righteousness that is by faith says that the word [i.e., the Gospel⁷⁰] is near us, in our heart and in our mouth, and that faith comes through hearing the Good News about Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:6—17). Those sent by God proclaim the Gospel, and the elect receive it as it actually is, the word of God, not as a human word; it powerfully affects those who believe (1 Thess. 2:13).

“*I AM himself is God*” (אֲנִי הָאֱלֹהִים הַיְהוָה). The grammar emphasizes⁷¹ and focuses on⁷² YHWH and identifies him as God. אֱלֹהִים signifies the quintessence of a divine nature and eternal power (Rom 1:20), and the plural emphasizes that he is thoroughly characterized as such. His locus in the heavens scenically depicts his transcendence. Its antonym is *'a/-/da/-/m* (“the earthling,” a derivative of *'a/-/da/-/ma/* (“ground”).

“He himself has made us” (הוּא עָשָׂנוּ). In this bold confession to the world, “he” is emphatic. *‘asah*, the third most frequent word in the Old Testament, means “to make” or “to do”; here denotes the production of an object. The tense is perfect: a past act with continuing a result. *Us* has the unexpressed antecedent “Israel” or its equivalent, for the “us” refers to the “we are his people” (see below). The term “has made us” refers to the formation of the people of God (Isa.29:23; 43:1) whom he formed for his praise (43:21).

69 W. Zimmerli, “Knowledge of God According to the Book of Ezekiel,” in *I Am Yahweh*, tr. D. W. Stott (Atlanta: John Knox (1954) 1982), 30.

70 Derived from Old English “good” and “spell” (“story”).

71 By adding הוּא the subject is expressly resumed and therefore strengthened (GKC 141g), or UJ, to put it another way, .

72 *IBHS*, P. 8.4.1, p. 130.

Forming them entailed both electing the patriarchs as his family (see below) and making their descendants into a nation under Moses and Aaron and consummated under Joshua (Deut. 32:6—15; 1 Sam. 12:6 Isa 44:2). A nation consists of a numerous common people, a common law, a common homeland, and a common ruler. During *I AM*'s family's sojourn in Egypt *I AM* increased their number to be as numerous as the stars in the sky. He came to Sinai with myriads of angels and gave them his law in the form of a covenant, obliging himself to bless them for keeping his stipulations that rejoice the heart; he became, as it were, a husband to them, and they became his bride. By awesome plagues against Egypt, by giving his people in the barren wastes of the Wilderness bread from heaven and water from a rock, and by drying up the swollen Jordan and causing the thick walls of Jericho to fall, he brought them the Promised Land. Here he nourished them with honey from the rock, and with olive oil from the flinty crag, with curds and milk from herd and flock and with fattened lambs and goats, with choice rams of Bashan and the finest kernels of wheat. [They] drank the foaming blood of the grape" (Deut. 32:13—14). God was their ruler until he adopted the house of David as his chosen son to rule his people. Today, the apostle Peter says to the Church: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9—10).

"*And indeed we are his people*" (וְאַתְּמֵנוּ עַמִּי [וְלֵא] רְיָן, see n. 2) '*am* refers to relatives (cf. Ruth 1:15; 2 Kings 4:13). The whole earth belongs to *I AM* (Exod. 19:5), but he uniquely and sovereignly chose the clan of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as his family. He adopted them to be his son (Exod. 4:22, 23; Rom. 9:4). God's clan names are "Fear of Isaac" (Gen. 31:42) and "Mighty One of Jacob" (49:24); these names speak of his protection. He loved this clan and chose them (Deut. 4:37; 7:8; 10:15), a fundamental concept that resists further analysis. But his family as a nation experiences the blessings of their election on the condition that they trust him and so obey the stipulations of *I AM*'s covenant with them. At Sinai, *I AM* said to his family: "If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands...I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people" (Lev. 26:3—12). When he renewed the covenant on the Plains of Moab, he repeated this covenant formula: "Carefully follow the terms of this covenant, so that you may prosper in everything you do...You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the LORD your God, a covenant the LORD is making with you this day and sealing with an oath, to confirm you this day as his people, that he may be your God as he promised you and as he swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Deut. 29:9—13). *De jure* Israel is his people; *de facto* they enjoy the benefits of that relationship conditionally. The failure of God's adopted family to hear and keep their covenant obligations culminated in their eviction from the land (Jer. 11:4—8), and *I AM* disowned them as his people (Hos. 1:6—9). Nevertheless, God, because he is good, his unfailing love endures forever, and he is trustworthy, retained a remnant of Israel and brought them back from exile and of

them he always retains in sovereign grace a faithful remnant by giving them hearts to know and trust him (Jer. 24:7) until all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26). To them he added Gentiles who formerly were not his people but are now his people and made them one people (Eph. 2:24—33). Paul says, “He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves” (Eph. 1:5-6). He broke down the courtyard wall or marker in Herod’s temple that warned Gentiles not to proceed further under penalty of death. He tore in two the curtain that barred all but the High Priest entrance into the Holy of Holies (Matt 27:51), as a type that all Christians might enter his presence in the heavenly sanctuary; and he made Jews and Gentiles one people, one holy tree, whose roots are the patriarchs (Rom. 11:13—24). This is a God worthy of praise by all the earth.

“*The flock he shepherds*” (וְצֹאֵן מִרְעִיתוֹ, see n. 3). Those confessing themselves to be God’s people in Psalm 100 are living ethically in obedience to their covenantal obligations, for they are enjoying the blessings of the covenant, as conveyed by the imagery of *I AM* tending his flock of sheep. *Flock* (*s/.o’n*) denotes small cattle (consisting of sheep and goats), but usually translated “sheep” for stylistic reasons. *He shepherds* (see n. 3). The good Shepherd intimately causes his flock-like people to feed and rest, guides them and protects them. The classical conceptualization of this metaphor is Psalm 23,⁷³ and the classical expression of its reality is Christ as the Good Shepherd who laid his life for the sheep is John 10:1—18.

II. Second stanza:

4—5

A. Call to praise (resolve)

v. 4

“*Enter*” (בָּא). See “come” (v. 1B). Now that the peoples of the earth have been instructed in their confession they are invited to enter the sanctuary and join Israel in giving *I AM* the sacrifice of grateful praise. One does not barge into God’s holy presence; there are barriers to protect his holiness.

His gates. The temple, God’s house, was viewed as a palace. As such it had walls, gates, courtyards and the palace itself. God gave Moses the core design for his portable shrine. It featured a linen curtain-fence around the courtyard that surrounded the tent-shrine (Exod. 27:9—19); its entrance on the east side was also made of linen. Solomon’s temple

⁷³ See Bruce K. Waltke and James M. Houston with Erika Moore, *The Psalms as Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), pp.416—445.

of stone, cedar and gold followed this core design, but it was surrounded by two courtyards: an outer, “the great,” courtyard for all worshipers and an inner courtyard for the priests (1 Kings 6:6; 2 Chron. 4:9). The walls surrounding the two courtyards were made of three courses of large, high grade, pinkish white limestone surmounted with cedar beams. The doors of its gates were overlaid with bronze. Assuming the psalm envisions two courtyards, the psalm invites all worshipers to enter the great courtyard (cf. Jer. 19:14; 26:2).

With grateful praise (בְּתוֹדָה). See superscript

His courts (הַצִּדְוֹת). *His courts* could refer exclusively to the outer courtyard, and if so, the plural refers to that court’s inherent complexity.⁷⁴ More probably, however, since the priests will offer the sacrifice of grateful praise in the inner courtyard, the psalmist intends both without being too precise.

“*With praise*” (בְּתִהְלָה). Praise denotes a person’s verbal expression of sincere and deep approval and admiration of someone or something to others. God adopted Israel as his family that they might proclaim his praise (Isa 43:20; 1 Pet 2:10). They give God glory—that is to say, give him social weight—by extolling his greatness in his acts of creation and of salvation history (see v. 1, note on *I AM*). By “verbal expression” is meant that praise is intelligent. The call to heavenly and terrestrial objects to praise God in Psalm 148 personifies them, for they are given rational reasons to praise him: “for at his command they were created” and “they do his bidding.” Nevertheless, his mighty acts and his greatness are so great that none can fully proclaim them (Ps 106:1—2). By “sincere and deep approval and admiration” is meant that praise is spontaneous, not compulsory (cf. Psalm 9:1; 63). Paradoxically, the psalmist calls upon people to volitionally laud *I AM*, but to be true praise it must be spontaneous and joyful, as noted above (see v.1). The content of the psalm provides the fuel for praise and the call to praise the match that ignites it. “To others” entails that praise is congregational (Heb. 2:12, citing Psalm 22:22). By exalting God’s glory worshipers align themselves with God’s ways: his character and his purpose to establish his kingdom, where his will is done *ex animo* on earth as it is in heaven. Praising God is fitting and right.

Give him grateful praise (הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה). The worshipers who entered *I AM*’s courts with a word and sacrifice of praise for what he has done (see superscript), are now called upon to execute that worship. The future vocation of the redeemed in glory is to sing praise to God and the Lamb (Rev. 4:11; 5:12—14; 7:12).

⁷⁴ *IBHS*, P. 7.4.1c, p. 120.

Bless (בָּרַךְ). J. N. Oswalt says:

Its [blessing] major function seems to have been to confer abundant and effective life upon something (Gen. 2:3; 1 Sam 9:13; Isa 66:3) or someone (Gen 27:27f.; Gen 49).... (Notice that Michal, despising her husband's blessings, was afflicted with barrenness.).... The verbal blessings ... was normally futuristic. However, it could be descriptive, an acknowledgement that the person addressed was possessed of this power for abundant and effective living (Gen 14:19; 1 Sam 26:2). This address becomes a formalized means of expressing thanks and praise to this person because he has given out of the abundance of his life. Very commonly, the Lord is addressed in this way. It is significant that *hesed* "kindness" and *'emet* "faithfulness" are very frequently those attributes for which God is praised (e.g. Ps 31:21 [H 22]; 106: 48); [see Ps 100:5]. It is very clear, that for the OT the abundant life rests directly upon the loving and faithful nature of God."⁷⁵

"*His name*" (שְׁמוֹ). Names in the ancient Near East provide insights into the nature, character, prospect, hope, and destiny of the person bearing the label; they are not merely euphemistic labels of identification. See v. 1 for the meaning of "*I AM*." Moreover, as William Sanford LaSor, says, "to learn a person's name is to enter into a relationship with his very being."⁷⁶ In connection with revealing to Moses his sentence name, "*I AM WHO I AM*" (see v. 1), God added: "This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation" (Exod. 3:15; cf. Neh 9:5—6a). Today he wants to be served and worshiped in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (see "message," below).

B. Cause (reason) for/ content of (*ki/^*) praise:

5

"*For*" (כִּי). *Ki/^* may be emphatic ("surely") or causal ("for"). The former points to the content of praise;⁷⁷ the latter to the basis of praise.

"*Good*" (טוֹב). "Good" frequently introduces the liturgical list of God's praiseworthy attributes, especially in later literature (Jer. 33:11; Psalm 106:1; 107:1; 118:1, 29; 16:1; Ezra 3:11; 1 Chron. 16:34; 2 Chron. 5:13; 7:3). "The purpose of the list was not so much to enumerate the various events as to interpret them,"⁷⁸ albeit in Psalm 136 they are

⁷⁵ John N. Oswalt, *TWOT*, 1:132, s.v. *berek*.

⁷⁶ William Sanford LaSor, David A. Hubbard, and Frederick Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form and Background of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 134.

⁷⁷ See F. Cru^zemmann, *Studien zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus und Danklied in Israel* (WMANT 32. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), 105—25; for rebuttal see A. Aejmelaeus, *The Traditional Prayer in the Psalms* (BZAW167. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986), 78—79. The flow of thought here favors the causal sense.

⁷⁸ A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms Vol. II 73—150* (The New Century Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 700.

enumerated. David also celebrated these attributes (cf. Ps 56:9 [11]; 54:8), but not in this liturgical list. Three issues should be addressed when speaking of God's goodness: its definition, its basis, and its entailment. The adjective broadly denotes what is beneficial to and so desirable; its antonym is evil—what is baneful. But what is its basis? Plato in his Dialogue called *Euthyphro* posed a moral problem in its classic form: "Is what is commanded by God because it is morally good, or is it morally good because it is commanded by God?" On the one hand, if there are moral standards independent of God's will, then God is not sovereign over the standard but himself subject to a higher eternal standard independent from him. On the other hand, if something is good simply because God commanded it, then what he commands could be arbitrary, capricious, despotic and tyrannical. There would be no meaningful distinction between good and bad, and morality would no longer be based on reason and on conscience. The confession that God is "good" cuts through the nonsense. The basis of goodness is God himself. God does what is in the best interest of others because that is his inherent nature, not because he must conform to a standard independent of himself. And because he is "good" he does not command what is detrimental to another; he wills only what is beneficial. The confession that God is good, however, is a judgment statement by the faithful. Who has not been disturbed by the catastrophes of war and the excesses of humanity? But the faithful recognize their limitations. We can only decide whether a matter is good or bad when it is seen holistically and so clearly. No one has ascended to heaven and has seen the whole picture. The psalmist's foot of faith almost slipped off the path of godliness when he saw the prosperity of the wicked and the plight of the pious. His perplexity, he says, lasted "till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their [the wicked's] final destiny" (Psalm 73). What he saw in the sanctuary were symbols to live by faith in God's benevolences. Finally, God's communicable attributes entails community: love, fidelity, grace, goodness have no existence apart from their being exercised toward another. God himself is Being in Community. The three persons of the Trinity benefit one another with no taint of damaging another in self-interest. So also in God's community with humankind, his thoughts, words and deeds always benefit people. There is no evil in his Being; such is the confession of true worshipers (cf. Deut. 32:4).

His unfailing love (יְרֻחֵם). The ten liturgical lists cited above supplement God's goodness with his *h./seed*. *H./seed* entails a relationship between two parties, one of whom meets the need of the other for deliverance or protection. The stronger party does so out of the intrinsic motivation of his or her nature that is characterized by loyalty, fidelity, love and kindness; not out of an extrinsic, self-serving motivation. When the time drew near for Israel to die, he called for his son Joseph and said to him, "Show me *h./seed*. Do not bury me in Egypt, but when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried" (Gen. 47:29f.). Obviously, Israel could not bury himself; he had to depend on his son's kindness to him. Moreover, Israel does not threaten Joseph or offer

to reward him for his “responsible keeping of faith.”⁷⁹ Joseph fulfills his promise to his father out of his godly nature, his *h/./esed*. God’s *h/./esed* includes forgiving his people when they repent and renounce their sin (Prov. 28:13), as David requested when he committed adultery with Bathsheba (Psalm 51:1 [Heb. 3]).

“Forever” (לְעוֹלָם). E. Jenni says: “With the exception of a few later passages in Koheleth, ‘o/./la/-/m in the Old Testament has the meaning ‘the most distant time,’”⁸⁰ and that is within some historical framework. With the prepositions *min* (“from”) and *l^e* it refers to the remote past and to a final duration respectively. But with reference to God, who transcends time, it has the theological and philosophical notion of eternity (“forever, ever, always”; cf. Psalm 90:2; 92:8 [9]; 102:12 [13]).

“His reliability” (אֱמוּנָה). *mu/-/na/./* derives from *mn*, whose root meaning is “to be firm.” This fundamental sense of firmness occurs literally in Exod. 17:12: “When Moses’ hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained *mu/-/na/./* till sunset.” From this is derived the figurative meaning “dependable, faithful, reliable.” But, as Jepsen says, “*emunah* is not so much an abstract quality, ‘reliability,’ but a way of acting which grows out of inner stability, ‘conscientiousness.’ Whereas *emeth* is always used in relationship to something (or someone) [such as words] on which (or whom) one can rely, *emunah* seems more to emphasize one’s own inner attitude and the conduct it produces.”⁸¹ Albeit Jepsen here is speaking of *emunah* “with reference to man,” what he say can also be said “with reference to God.” God’s *emunah* denotes his conduct which is inseparably connected with his honesty, faithfulness and reliability. He is a God who can be counted upon when repelling off a cliff, as it were, into the chasm of the unseen future.

“throughout generations” (וְעַד-דָּוָר וְדָוָר, lit. “until generation and generation”). The repetition of a singular noun in Hebrew may single out the members composing the aggregate and since “generation” is temporal word, the distributive repetition singles them out diachronically.⁸² In other words, the static ‘o/./la/-/m “forever” is now broken

79 K. D. Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of H/./seed in the Hebrew Bible* (Harvard Semitic Museum 17; Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1978), 233.

80 E. Jenni, *TLOT*, 2:853, s.v. ‘o/./la/-/m.

81 Jepsen, *TDOT*, 1: 317, s.v. ‘a/-/man.

82 *IBHS*, P. 7.2.3b, pp. 115f.

down into dynamic, successive generations. However, since in the eschaton there is no marriage, the temporal horizon is to the end of history as we know it.

Part III Message

The psalmist calls all the earth to come before *I AM* in his temple and to bring him a sacrifice of a grateful offering, while enthusiastically singing his praise. Brueggemann helpfully reflects: "When a community praises, it submits and reorders life. It is not only a moment of worship but is also embraces a doxological life, which is organized differently [than a self-grounded life]." By "self-grounded" he means a "life of autonomy and self-invention, which imagines that one is self-made, need answer no one and rely on no other."⁸³ The doxological life is grounded in faith, faith in Israel's testimony that *I AM* is God, that he has made Israel, and that he is good and kind and reliably so.

Israel's call to the Gentiles to praise their God and their election to be his people makes sense in the light of the Abrahamic covenant: "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you [Abraham/Israel]" (Gen12:3).

That promise is sure because God is trustworthy. His faithful adherence to it in salvation history gives even more reason to trust (cf. 2 Pet. 1:19). Later in that history Jesus Christ identified himself as *I AM*: "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). Today more nations praise *I AM* as known in name of Jesus Christ than participate in the United Nations or in the Olympic games. For over two millennia the Church has testified to the world: "Know that Jesus Christ is God's Son, our Savior," from whom all blessings flow. Whatever the Church does, whether in word or deed, it does it all in the name of the Lord Jesus (Col. 3:17). She prays in his name (John 14:13f.) and preaches "there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). God predestined the Church "to the praise of his glorious grace" (Eph. 1:6);

God's earthly temple is a shadow of the heavenly temple (Heb. 12:22). Today all peoples baptized into the name of Jesus Christ enter the LORD's heavenly sanctuary with continual praise to Jesus Christ, because in God's goodness and unfailing love he gave them Jesus Christ, the True Israel, who died for their sins, was buried, was raised from the dead and has ascended into heaven.

God revealed to the apostle Paul that the Gospel unites Jew and Gentiles as one people, one body, in Jesus Christ (Eph 3:6).

⁸³Walter Brueggemann, "Psalm 100," *Interpretation*, 39 (1985): 65.

9. Psalm 8

Part I: Introduction

I. Translation

LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!
you who have set your splendor upon the heavens.
From the mouth of children and nursing infants
you have laid the foundation of strength
on account of your foes, to eliminate the enemy and the avenger.
When I consider your heavens, the works of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
what is a mere mortal [אָנוּשׁ] that you are mindful of him,
a common human being [בְּנֵי-אָדָם]⁸⁴ that you care for him?
You made him lack a trifle from heavenly beings,
and you crown him with glory and honor.
You cause him to ruler over the works of your hands;
you put everything under his feet:
all flocks and herds,
and even the wild animals;
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
the one that swims the paths of the seas.
LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

84 Lit.. “son of man.” In Hebrew grammar a construct noun such as “man,” or “son of” is used with a specifying noun to represent the nature, quality, character, of condition of the person (*IBHS*, p. 149). But the writer of Hebrews did consider it a title for the Lord Jesus Christ, not as a conventional idiom.

The writer of Hebrews uses and adapts the psalm to refer to the career of Jesus Christ

Now it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come,⁸⁵ of which we are speaking. It has been testified somewhere,⁸⁶

"What is man, that you are mindful of him,
the Son of Man,⁸⁷ that you care for him?
You made him for a little while⁸⁸ lower than the angels;
you have crowned him with glory and honor,
putting everything in subjection under his feet."

Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.⁸⁹ But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor. because of the suffering of death,⁹⁰ so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone."

Christopher Stanley (*Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* [Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 74; Cambridge: University, 1992], 342-347) argues that the New Testament authors either quote texts verbatim or adapt them to coincide with the point they are making. He argues from comparative Graeco-Roman literature that such adaptations were perfectly obvious and in reality well understood and perhaps even anticipated by ancient audiences.

85 F.F. Bruce, "The world to come, which is our theme' is the new world-order inaugurated by the enthronement of Christ at the right hand of God, the world-order over which He reigns from that place of reality which replaces the preceding world of shadows."

86 S.J. Kistemaker, He wants to call attention not to the historical context, "but to the content and meaning of the citation."

87 An allusion to Daniel 7:13, the eschatological Son of Man.

88 "Lower" in Psalm 8 refers to social status; here it refers to temporal status.

89 Jesus Christ's reign *commenced* in the past with his exaltation to God's right hand, *continues* in the present through the Holy Spirit and will be *consummated* at his Second Advent.

90 Because of his humiliation, suffering and death, Jesus has been invested with heavenly glory.

II. Rhetoric

A. Inclusio of theme and alternating parallelism to develop theme

I. Theme Stated: <i>I AM's</i> Name Majestic in All the Earth	v. 1a [2a]
II. Theme Developed:	vv. 1b-7 [2-8]
A. Splendor in Heavens, and “Infants” defeat God’s foes	vv. 1b-2 [2b-3]
1. Creation: Displays Glory in Heavens	v. 1b [v. 2b]
2. Redemption: Uses “Mouths of Infants” to Annihilate Wicked	v. 2 [v. 3]
B. Glory in Heavens and Splendor in Mortal’s Rule of All the Earth	vv. 3-7 [4-8]
1. Glory in Heavens at Night and Stoops to Help Mortals	v. 3-4 [4-5]
a. Creation: Glory in Heavens at Night	v. 3 [4]
b. Redemption Stoops to Help Mere Mortals	v. 4 [5]
2. Crowned Mortals to Rule all the Earth:	vv. 5-6 [6-7]
a. Mortals Crowned with Splendor	v. 5 [6]
b. Mortals Commissioned to Rule All the Earth	v. 6 [7]
3. Ruled Creatures	vv. 7-8 [8-9]
a. Land Creatures	v. 7 [8]
b. Air and Water Creatures	vv. 8 [9]
III. Theme Restated: <i>I AM's</i> Name Majestic in All the Earth	v. 9 [10]

B. Chiastic Structure pivots on the human being

A *Inclusio*: How majestic your name in all the earth

B First Quatrain: Splendor upon the **heavens**

C Second Quatrain: Work of your fingers . . . you have set in place

X. *Pivot Quatrain*:

You made a mere mortal almost a divine being and care for him to empower him to rule all creatures [cultural mandate]

C.’ Third quatrain: Work of your hands . . . you put

B' Fourth quatrain: birds of the **heavens**

A' *Inclusio*: How majestic your name in all the earth

Part II: Exposition

I. Frame

1, 8

LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

A. Exegesis:

LORD: I AM who I AM. Israel's eternal and incomparable covenant keeping God.

Lord: Ruler. Sovereign. Lord of Creation and Lord of history

Majestic: addir: mighty/splendor in power: Red Sea; Dominion over storm sea; right arm shattered Egyptian picked troops

Name: Today: Father, Son, Spirit. Illustration of musical chord. God wants to be known by the name of his Son. We are to pray in his name (John 15:16: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit— fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name"; we are saved by that Name (Acts 2:21; 4:12); baptized in that Name (Acts 2:38) and the apostles healed (Acts 3:6; 4:10) preached and testified to his Name (Acts 8:12; 9:15).

B. Theological reflection:

1. Without praise God dies. Epistemological versus ontological knowledge..

Luke 19:37-40 ³⁷ When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: ³⁸ "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" ³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" ⁴⁰ "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

2. Language of praise: With regard to creation: "Creator," not "Mother Nature": with regard to history: "Providence," not "Lady Luck."

3. We were born to Praise the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. See 7:17; 9:1, 2

II. Theme Developed:

vv. 1b-7 [2-8]

A. Splendor in Heavens, and “Infants” defeat God’s foes

vv. 1b-2 [2b-3]

^{1b}You who have set your glory upon the heavens.

² From the mouth of children and infants

you have laid the foundation of a strong bulwark in order
to [eliminate] your foes,
to eliminate the enemy and the avenger.

N.B. God’s rule over heavens is immediate; his rule over earth is mediated through human beings.

1. Displays Glory in Heavens

v. 1b [v. 2b]

a. Exegesis

Hod “splendor” (often glossed “glory”); used exclusively of a righteous ruler
‘al “upon” (often glossed “above”). In its four other occurrences of the same
collocation it means “upon.” This sense matches parallel (v. 3)

Shamayim “heavens”: what we call “sky”; ancients saw the sky as a transparent
dome (see Gen. 1:6-8; Psalm 19:1)

Reflections:

1. Beyond comprehension/imagination

Incomprehensible size

Size of our galaxy

Size of other galaxies



First we see the Galaxy Hat, also called M 104 in the Messier catalog, distance of about 28 million light-years it is considered the best photograph taken by Hubble



Now the famous nebula MZ3, called Fourmi, between 3000 and 6000 light years

Incomprehensible speed

Rotation of Earth

Orbit of Earth

Orbit of sun in our galaxy

Expansion of space

Incomprehensible to atheist as seen in anthropic-cosmological principle

“What is incomprehensible is that it is comprehensible” (Einstein).

On the basis of the hypotheses of the Big Bang and of evolution, some secular and Christian scientists have abducted the anthropic cosmological principle. According to this principle, physical qualities such as a strong nuclear force constant, a gravitational force constant, the expansion rate of the universe, the average distance between stars, and the values of other physical quantities had to be so precise to effect thinking creatures who could reflect upon their origins. Accordingly, the best explanation is that there was this intent and design from the beginning. Nobel laureate professor Steven Weinberg, though a skeptic, notes, “Life as we know it would be impossible if any one of several physical quantities had slightly different values.”⁹¹ Roger Penrose, professor of mathematics at Oxford University and Wolf Prize winner for his analytic description of the Big Bang, finds these quantities so fine-tuned for life that an intelligent “Creator” must have chosen them.⁹²

One constant that requires fine-tuning has to do with the energy of the Big Bang. Weinberg quantifies the tuning as one part in 10^{120} . Michael Turner, a widely quoted astrophysicist from the University of Chicago, describes that tuning with a simile. “The precision is as if one could throw a dart across the entire universe and hit a bull’s-eye one millimeter in diameter on the other side

- 1.) size of the proton is 1.836 larger than the electron.
- 2.) distance from sun
- 3.) water: expands

91 Steven Weinberg, “Life in the Universe,” *Scientific American* (October 1994)

92 Roger Penrose, *The Emperor’s New Mind* (New York: Penguin, 1991)

- 4.) earth's reflectivity
- 5.) ozone magnetic field

Aristotle: "Should a man live underground, and converse with the works of art and mechanism, and afterwards be brought up into the day to see the several glories of the heaven and earth, he would immediately pronounce them the work of such a Being as we define God to be."

Paul: The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness,¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse (Romans 1:18—20).

2. Uses "Mouths of Infants" to Annihilate Wicked

v. 2 [v. 3]

From the mouth of children and nursing babies you have laid the foundation of a strength
to [eliminate] your foes,
to eliminate the enemy and the avenger

a. Exegesis:

Mouth: metonymy for petition and praise

Children and nursing babes: Luther rightly interpreted children and nursing babies as a figure [hyperbole] to describe the kingdom of God's unique character of humility.

"Strength": Lit "strength," metonymy for citadel (place of protection). Cf. Matth 16:18

Avenger: faithless who do not petition God to avenge wrong

b. Reflections

1. Psalm assumes hero (protagonist) in spiritual battle against enemy (antagonist). Protagonists: Praise *I AM* "Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger"

(Psalm 8:2) Antagonists: Do Not Praise *I AM* Avenge themselves instead of trusting God

2 Spiritual battle of faith versus force:

Praise the LORD.

Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints. Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the people of Zion be glad in their King. Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp.

For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation. Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds.

May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, to carry out the sentence written against them. This is the glory of all his saints.

Praise the LORD. Psalm 149

“The faithful prayer and praise of God’s people—not necessarily their eloquence—commences the work of slaying the foe. What majesty accrues to God when He brings on the field of battle the poor in spirit against the arrogant hordes of wickedness in order to slay their intolerable pride in the dust.” (Calvin)

B. Glory in Heavens and Splendor in Mortal’s Rule of All the Earth vv. 3-7 [4-8]

The second stanza (vv. 3-7), as an alternating parallel, re-enforces and expands the first. The nation’s celebration of *I AM* as Creator and Ruler is now narrowed down

From:

“our” (people) to “I” (king)

“heavens” to moon and stars housed in the heavens

“elimination of enemies” to “rule over all the earth

The prayers of the meek are matched with *I AM*’s stooping down to care for the mortal.

“How majestic” elaborated by:

First stanza

Order of creation: Majestic splendor upon heavens

Order of redemption: Majestic through answered prayer

Second Stanza

Order of Creation: Majestic splendor of moon and stars

Order of Redemption: majestic through caring for meek

I AM's majesty more awesome by contrasting obvious splendor in creation with majesty in redemption through answering prayers of mortals.

1. Glory in Heavens at Night and Stoops to Help Mortals

v. 3-4 [4-5]

a. Glory in Heavens at Night

v. 3 [4]

When I consider your heavens, the works of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

“*Consider*”: “When man gazes up at the illimitable expanse of the heavens studded with stars, the difference between God and man is revealed in all its magnitude, and the whole contradictory quality of that difference is made manifest” (Weiser).

“Your heavens, work of your fingers”: owner as Creator

“set in place”: (*Kun*) connotes permanence, firmness. Like the strong bulwark that withstands attack, the moon and stars stand firm at their stations in the night sky.

b. Stoops to Help Mere Mortals

v. 4 [5]

“What is a mere mortal that you are mindful of him,
a common human being that you care for him?”

1.) Exegesis

“*a mere mortal*”: “Mere mortal”: Heb *'enosh* (man in weakness)

Contra. *'adam*, “human being” (generic)

Contra. *'ish*, “individual” (within society)

Contra. *gibbor*, “strong man”

“*Mindful of (tizkerenn*, lit. “remember him”), “The essence of God’s remembering lies in his acting toward someone because of a previous commitment” (Childs). Remembers his vice-gerent whom he commissioned to rule all creation. (Gen. 1:26)

Human being”: (*Ben- 'adam*, woodenly, “the son of a human being.” Best interpreted as “son” with the qualifying genitive, “human being,” to represent the nature, quality, character, or condition of the son as human. As in Job 25:6, also parallel with *'enosh*, the term points to the weakness and frailty of the mortal.

⁵ If even the moon is not bright and the stars are not pure in his eyes,

⁶ how much less a mortal, [אֲנוּשׁ] who is but a maggot— a human being, [בֶּן-אָדָם] who is only a worm!" (Job 25:5-6)

In pre-exilic Hebrew the collocation is never a technical term for the Messiah as it became in later Jewish literature and as re-interpreted by the writer of Hebrew.

You care for him (tipqedennu). *Paqad* means “to visit” in the sense to take careful notice of one’s situation and to act appropriately, not to come into someone’s presence. NIV sometimes renders the verb “to come to the aid of.” When God committed to his human image the rule of his creation, he did not abandon them. Implicitly, by his taking careful note of his vice-gerent’s situation and acting appropriately “he visits” with salvation those who in child-like meekness depend on him.

2.) *Theological Reflections:*

“What is man?” “The most powerful of all spiritual forces is man’s view of himself, the way in which he understands his nature and his destiny; indeed, it is the one force which determines all the others which influence human life.”
Emil Brunner

Without revelation mankind is confused about its identity. Schopenhauer; Animal of various types (Aristotle, Burke, Franklin); Less than an animal (Robert Louis Stevenson, Gilbert); Beyond Dignity (B. F. Skinner): loss address, no longer master, and intelligence demoted

David: “If one were to imagine a scale of 1 to 10 with living creatures such as beasts as 1 and God as 10, then, so high is the writer’s estimation of humanity, he should have to put him at 8 or 9. It is God, and not animals, who is man’s closest relative.” (E. Martens, *God’s Design*)

Placing of huge and heavy crown on Queen Elizabeth’s young and inexperienced head symbolized the human situation (C. S. Lewis)

2. Crowned Mortals to Rule all the Earth:

vv. 5-6 [6-7]

a. Mortals Crowned with Splendor

v. 5 [6]

“You made him lack a trifle from the heavenly beings
and you crown him with glory and honor.”

“lack a trifle” *me‘at*, a small quantity and/or quality, ” Writer of Hebrews, in connection with his interpreting “son of man” as the eschatological Messiah—the Lord Jesus Christ—interprets Greek *braxu ti* to mean “for a little while” (Heb. 2:9). Ancient writers adapted quotations according to “how well the original wording coincided with the point the later author wanted to make in adducing the passage.” (Christopher Stanley)

Heavenly beings. The king said to her, “Have no fear; what do you see?” The woman said to Saul, “I see a divine being coming up out of the ground.”

וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־תִּירָאִי כִּי מִה רָאִית וַתֹּאמֶר הִיאֲשֵׁה אֶל־שָׂאוֹל אֶל־הַיָּמִים רָאִיתִי עַל־יָמֵי־מָוֶת
הַמֶּלֶךְ:

Glory (kabod) means literally “weight,” a metonymy for the social esteem that his status as king over the creation gives him. The term is often used of a leader, but never of an unrighteous ruler

Honor (hadar) signifies splendor, majesty, glory and grandeur, a visual display of majesty and splendor.

b. Mortals Commissioned to Rule All the Earth

v. 6 [7]

You made them rulers over the works of your hands;

you put everything under their feet:

1.) *Exegesis*

“Rule over works of your hands”: paraphrase of “and let them rule over the fish...” (Gen. 1:26)

“Put under feet”: figure of “subdue” (Gen 1:28)

“everything”: including Serpent and Dragon

Verbs imply mortal must struggle to win dominion over creatures: horse, to pull chariot; oxen, to plow fields; flocks, to give milk and fleece.

2.) *Theological Reflections:*

1. Elaboration of cultural mandate in Genesis 1

2. Two aspects to cultural mandate

To subdue physical world: Genesis 1

To subdue spiritual world: Genesis 3

3. Success in physical: Communication, Energy, Medicine, Travel

4. Tragic failure in spiritual: Communication, Energy, Medicine, Travel

5. Pair Psalm 8 (after 3—7, five psalms) and Psalm 14 (after 9—13, five psalms)

By David.

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.

² The LORD looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.

³ All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

⁴ Do all these evildoers know nothing? They devour my people as though eating bread; they never call on the LORD.

⁵ But there they are, overwhelmed with dread, for God is present in the company of the righteous.

⁶ You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor, but the LORD is their refuge.

⁷ Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD restores his people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

3. Ruled Creatures

vv. 7-8 [8-9]

"all flocks and herds [life],
and the animals of the wild [death],
birds in the sky, fish in the sea [life]
the one that swims the paths of the seas [death].

a. Land Creatures

v. 7 [8]

All: Includes clean and unclean

Merism: domesticated (7a) and wild (v. 7b)

And even: emphasizes the latter. Includes the Serpent

b. Air and Water Creatures

vv. 8 [9]

“The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
the one that swims the paths of the seas.

“The one”: plural to sing. Metonymy for Leviathan (cf. Ps. 104:26), the dreaded dragon who in pagan thought of the ancient Near East rivaled the gods. As the “wild animals” in v. 7b contrasts with the domesticated animals, so also “the one that passes through the paths of the sea” in v. 8b probably stands in opposition to non-threatening, life-giving fish.

III. Theme Restated: I AM’s Name Majestic in All the Earth

v. 9 [10]

Part III: Conclusion

The inclusio, “*I AM*, our *I AM*, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” sets the psalm’s boundaries and sounds its theme (verses 1, 9) and the rest of the psalm develops that theme in two stanzas, first pointing to God’s splendor seen in his creation and then by pointing to the grandeur of humankind, who by their dependence upon God fulfill their mandate to rule over all the earth.

The psalm paradoxically praises God by celebrating the grandeur of the mortal. Irenaeus put it succinctly: “The glory of God is man fully alive.” Amandus Polanus, sixteenth-century Basel professor and Reformer, stated the complementary truth: “the glory of man is the living God.”

The poet’s vision encompasses the whole drama of human history from the creation to the eschaton, from the triune-God’s original commission to human beings to rule the earth (Gen. 1:26-28) to the consummation of that mandate when human beings will have put all things under their feet (v. 6). Jesus Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, has already fulfilled that encompassing vision and is fulfilling it through his church.

Lecture 9

The psalm may be likened to a play:

Playwright and Director: Triune God

Hero:

Protagonist: King/Lord Jesus Christ

Antagonist: Satan

Supporting Cast:

Protagonist: Church, who praises God

Antagonist: World, who praises the mortal

Plot:

Protagonist and cast : Rule by Faith in Triune God

Antagonist and cast: Rule by Lies and Force

The hero of the play: “Who are you”?

A mere mortal in an incomprehensible cosmos

Created to make the name of the Triune God majestic in all the earth

By praising him as Creator and Covenant Keeper

By subduing the earth (in arts and sciences)

By subduing the Triune-God’s enemies through prayer and praise

10. Grateful Songs of Praise and Psalm 92

Part I: Introduction

I. Translation

A psalm. A song. For the Sabbath Day.

¹It is good to give grateful praise to *I AM*,⁹³

To sing praise to your Name, Most High;

²To proclaim in the morning your unfailing love,

And your reliability during the night,

³Upon the ten-stringed lute,

Upon the soft sounds with the lyre.

⁴Surely, you, *I AM*, cause me to rejoice in your deeds,

I shout cries of joy for the works of your hands.

⁵How great are your works, *I AM*,

Your thoughts are exceedingly profound.

⁶A brutish person does not know,

And a fool does not understand this:

⁷When the wicked flourished like grass,

And all evil-doers blossomed,

It led to their being exterminated forever.

⁸For you are on high forever, *I AM*!

⁹For look! Your enemies, *I AM*,

For look! your enemies perish;

All evil-doers are scattered.

⁹³ The change of addressees, signaled by the change of pronouns in v. 1[2]a,b, is not uncommon in poetry (cf. Ps 93:1—2).

¹⁰You exalted my horn like a wild-ox;

Which I rubbed with rich olive oil.

¹¹And my eyes gazed in triumph at those who tried to ambush me;

My ears will hear of the destruction of the wicked who attack me.

¹²A righteous person flourishes like a palm tree,

He or she⁹⁴ grows like a cedar of Lebanon,

¹³Planted in the house of I AM;

In the courts of our God they flourish.

¹⁴They will still thrive in old age;

They will be full of sap and thick with leaves,

¹⁵Proclaiming that I AM is upright,

My Rock, in whom there is no injustice..

II. Form

A. Poetry

B. Psalm: a song to be sung with the accompaniment of instruments

C. Song of grateful praise. Introduction (vv. 1—4) mixes two forms:

1. Introduction mixes two forms:

a. Hymn (vv. 1—3)

b. Grateful praise (v. 4): resolve of individual to give praise (v.4).⁹⁵

⁹⁴ The so-called Hebrew masculine is in fact an unmarked form and sometimes refers to a female being (*IBHS*, P. 6.5.3a). For example, a so-called masculine pronoun, a misnomer, is used for the antecedent “a Nazarite,” who could be of either sex (Num 6:2ff.).

⁹⁵ So also H. Gunkel and J. Begrich, *Einleitung in die Psalmen*, P. 7, 1, n. 2; 8, n. 125., Gunkel thinks the rejoicing and triumph of the psalm is strongly personal and genuine by a great poet (P. 7. 9).

2. Narrative: recounts saving acts: “my eyes gazed in triumph at those who attacked me” (v. 11[12]).

3. Shifts from a particular act of salvation to a universal truth about God’s attributes.

In Psalm 92 those universals seem to be expressed as aphorisms, which by definition express universal truths (vv. 12—14[13-15]). (Verses 6—7[8—9] may be a historicized aphorism.) Like the authors of Psalm 37, 49, 73—so-called wisdom psalms—our psalmist gives serious thought to the prosperity of the wicked, but unlike them he resolves the problem of theodicy from his personal salvation. The psalmist is an ear and eye witness that in the end the righteous triumph over the wicked.

4. Sitz im Leben.: temple

- a. To be assumed: N. H. Snaith says: “It may safely be assumed ... that verses 2-3 [1—2] are an invitation to worship in connection with sacrifice,”⁹⁶ and Sarna says “there is much evidence to support his view.”⁹⁷ He provides the evidence that the “coordination of the vocal-musical recitation with the regular offering was rooted in first Temple usage” in a brilliant essay, “The Psalm Superscriptions and the Guilds.”⁹⁸
- b. Psalm’s content points to its temple setting.
 - 1.) Addresses congregation (1a); addresses God (1bff.)
 - 2,) Refers to I AM as “our God” (v. 13[14]).
 - 3.) Refers to temple instruments (v. 3[4]) and to singing day and night (cf. Num 24:4, 8).

5. For Sabbath day: origin uncertain

- 1.) Mishnah: Levitical choir in the second temple chanted a psalm each day of the week; successively: Psalms 24, 48, 82, 94, 81, 93, 92.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ N. H. Snaith, *Studies in the Psalter*, 73.

⁹⁷ Sarna, “The Psalm for the Sabbath Day,” 158.

⁹⁸ N. M. Sarna, “The Psalm Superscriptions and the Guilds,” in *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History*: FS Alexander Altmann, edited by Siegfried Stein and Raphael Loewe (University, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1979): 281—300.

⁹⁹ According to the Mishnah Psalm 92 was sung at the libation of wine offering which accompanied the sacrifice of the first lamb of the Sabbath burnt offering (Num 28:9, 1).

- 2.) LXX designates five of these psalms for Sabbath¹⁰⁰
- 3.) First temple a possibility. Torah designated the Sabbath day as the day of rest (Lev 23:3). Robert Alter says: “It is reasonable to suppose that this psalm was actually sung as part of the temple rite for the Sabbath.”¹⁰¹

D. A royal psalm

Who other than the king says “my horn is exalted like a wild-ox” (v. 9[10]) and “my eyes gazed at” and “my ears hear of” the rout of the evil doers “who attack me” (vv. 10—11)?

E. Eschatological-Messianic psalm

1. The king’s past victory an earnest of the triumph of the righteous in the coming kingdom of God.
2. Jewish interpretation
 - a. Targum (v. 8): “But you are high and supreme in this age, O LORD, and you are high and supreme in the age to come.”¹⁰²
 - b. Mishnah Tamid 7:4 comments on “for the Sabbath”: “A psalm for the future, for the day that is completely Shabbat [tranquil] for all eternity.”
3. Historic king and his report of victory typify Jesus Christ and his victory over Satan, sin and death. The universal covenant community identifies itself with this King.

IV. Sitz im Buch

91:8: “with your eyes you will look (תִּבְיֵט, lexeme נָבַט) and see the retribution of the wicked”; 92:11[12] “my eyes gazed (וַתִּבְיֵט, lexeme נָבַט) in triumph at those who tried to ambush me.”

100 Psalms 23[24], 47[48], 93[94], 92[93], 91[92].

101 101 Robert Alter, *The Book of Psalms: A Translation and Commentary* (New York & London: W. W. Norton, & Company, 2007), 325.

102 Another Targum reads: “And you, *your hand is supreme to punish the wicked in the age to come, in the great day of judgment, O LORD; and you, your hand is supreme to give a good reward to the righteous in the age to come, O LORD.*”

V. Rhetoric

A. Chiastic Structure

A. King praises *I AM* 1—4[2—5]

B. Praise for God's great work and profound thoughts 5—6[6—7]

C. All evil doers eliminated (tricolon) 7[8]

X. *I AM* is on high forever (4 words) 8[9]

C.' All evil doers perish (tricolon) 9[11]

B.' King rejoices in victory 10—11[11—12]

A.' Righteous and king praise *I Am* 12—15[13—16]

N/B/ Terse center line of 4 words between two tricola divides psalm into two halves of seven verses each.¹⁰³

N.B. The Name YHWH occurs 7 times: 3x in each half; and 1x in center line. ((vv. 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 13, 15)

A/A' Four verses of praise: by the psalmist (vv. 1—4[2—5]), and by the righteous and the psalmist (vv. 12—15[13—16]). Each stanza ends with an infinitival construction: the first (v. 7[8]b) explaining the covert purpose behind the short-term flourishing of the unrighteous, to wit, their extermination; the second (v. 15[16] explaining the purpose behind the long-term flourishing of the righteous, to wit, their praise of God (v. 15).

B/B' catchwords "all evil-doers" and "exterminated/perish" (vv. 7, 9[8, 10]). The framing strophes of four verses each pertain to praise God's great work and profound thought that allowed the wicked to flourish for the moment and then be eliminated (vv. 5—7[6—8]),

C./C': God's great work and profound thought that allowed the wicked to flourish for the moment and then be eliminated by a human agent (vv. 5—7[6—8]) is matched by the king's triumph over them (vv. 9—11[10—12]). "The events of the past referred to in v 8[7] are those described in v 10[9]."¹⁰⁴;

¹⁰³For the view that v. 8 is the center line see Jonathan Magonet, "Some Concentric Structures in the Psalms," *Heythrop Journal* 23 (1982), 365—76 (esp. 369—72).

¹⁰⁴Sarna, "A Psalm for the Sabbath Day," 162.

B. Inclusio:

Catchwords “to proclaim” (לְהַגִּיד, vv. 2, 15) + *I AM* (יְהוָה) and the use of “I/my/me”.

C Catchwords

“works (מַעֲשֵׂי, vv. 4, 5[5, 6]) links the first two strophes; “all evil doers” (כָּל־פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן) links the second and third strophes; “on high” (מְרוֹם) and “you raise up” (וַתָּרִם)—both words derive from the Hebrew root רוּם (“to be high”)—link the third strophe to the center line; and the catchword “flourish” (פָּרַח) links the second and fourth strophes (v. 7, 12—13[8,13—14]).

D. Semantic (logical) outline sketch of the psalm

First Stanza (vv. 1—7)

I. Introduction: tireless praise for God’s work	1—4[2—5]
A. First Introduction: inform of corporate praise of <i>I AM</i> ’s sublimities	1—3[2—4]
1. Summary statement: good to praise with music	1[2]
2. Elaboration of words of praise	2[3]
3. Elaboration of music of praise	3[4]
B. Second Introduction: in form of personal praise of <i>I AM</i> ’s work	4[5]
II. Greatness of God’s works and thoughts	5—7[6—8]
A. Summary statement	5[6]
B. Fools Don’t Understand	6[7]
C. Wicked prosper to be eliminated	7[8]
1. Wicked prosper	7[8]a
2. All evil-doers eliminated	7[8]b
III. Center Line: <i>I AM</i> on high forever	(v. 8[9])

Second Stanza (vv. 9—15[10—16])

IV. All evil-doers eliminated	9—11[10—12]
A. God’s enemies perish	9[10]
B. The King victorious over evil-doers	10—11[11-12]
1. The King’s great strength	10[11]
2. The King sees and hears of the rout of his enemies	11[12]
V. Righteous flourish in temple proclaiming God’s justice	12-15[13-16]
A. Righteous flourish in temple	12—13[13—14]
1. Righteous flourish like palm trees and cedars of Lebanon	13[14]
2. Righteous flourish in temple courtyards	14[15]
B. Righteous flourish in old age proclaiming <i>I AM</i> ’s justice	14—15[15—16]
1. Righteous flourish in old age	14[15]
2. Proclaiming <i>I AM</i> ’s justice	15[16]

Part II: Exposition

Superscript [1]

“*Psalm*” (מְזִמֹּר)

1. In headings of 57 psalms.
2. Signifies the music of instruments that accompany the song (Ps 33:2; 98:5a; 144:9; 147:7): Amos mentions “the music [מְזִמֹּר] of your lutes” (5:23). Occurs in parallel with (“to sing” [a song]; Judg 5:3; Ps 33:2—3; 68:4[5]; 105:2; 144:9) and in s/s/ often with a **song** (שִׁיר).
3. Instruments are commonly lute (harp?) and/or lyre; Psalms 81:2[3]; 149:3 add a timbrel to the lute.
4. Used all types of psalms, for all psalms contain praise. Even in the dark Psalm 88, Heman the Ezrahite speaks of God as the one “who saves me” (88:1[2]). Leslie Allen

notes: “In laments the verb (זמר) is found in a closing promise to give thanks, if God answers prayers (Ps 7:17[18], 57:7—9[8—10] = 108:1, 3[2, 4]; 59:17[18]; 61:8[9]; 71:22—23; 144:9 [cf. 21:13[14]; 75:9[10]).

5. Function: is a studied means to make one’s praise of God glorious and to persuade hearts and minds of other people to join in. Luther said: “Come, let us sing a Psalm and drive away the devil.”¹⁰⁵

For the Sabbath day (לְיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת).

I. First Stanza **1—7[2—8]**

A. Introductions: tireless praise for God’s work **1—4[2—5]**

Two introduction: First, hymn of corporate praise (cf. 10:6:1; 107:1; 118:1;136:1; 147:1),¹⁰⁶ albeit in the form of evaluation that praise is good unlike the typical imperatival call to praise (cf 95:1; 96:1; 97:1; 98:1; 100:1); celebrates God’s unfailing love and reliability. Second, personal praise for God’s acts in salvation history for the King (v. 4[5]).Spurgeon cites Aquinas: “We thank God for His benefits and praise Him for His perfections (*Filliucius of Aquinas*).”¹⁰⁷

1. First introduction: In form of hymn **1—3 [2—4]**

Develops reflections on praise analytically. Subject “to give grateful praise” in v. 1[2]a is elaborated in v. 2[3] by “proclaiming” his unfailing love and reliability day and night, and its compound subject “to make music” in v. 1[2]b is developed in v. 3[4] by naming the musical instruments

a. Summary statement **1[2]**

“Good” (טוֹב) word initial and emphatic.¹⁰⁸ Signifies beneficial in substance (i.e., advancing and enriching life) and beautiful in style (i.e., attractive),\

105 Cited by Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 821.

106 For inclusion of hymnic element in songs of grateful praise, see Gunkel, Introduction, P. 7, 8. .

107 Cited by Charles Haddon Spurgeon, updated by Roy H. Clarke (*The Treasury of David* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), 820.

108 See n. 2

- 1) pleasing (e.g., good-looking young woman [Gen 24:16], well-fed cattle [Gen 41:26]), a beautiful mantle of good quality [Jos 7:1]; a favorable promise [(Jer 33:14) or news (2 Sam 18:27))
- 2) ethically moral (e.g., a just, virtuous man [Prov 14:14]; a kind and helpful person [1 Sam 25:15]. Praise of God is “good,” for it is spiritually/psychology healthy, bears witness to God and is God and his people. “Nothing affords a surer test of the reality of worship than the worshipper’s joy in it”.¹⁰⁹

“*To give grateful praise*” (תִּתְּנֶנָּה, see Psa 100:4): The first service in the temple began: “Give praise to *I AM*, “proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done” (1 Chron 16:8).

“*to I AM*” (אֲנִי־אֵלֹהִים, see Psa 100:1)

“*And to make music* (וְלִשְׂרֹת, see מְזַמְּרִים in superscript) gilds the lily of praise (superscript).

“*Your name*” refers to *YHWH* in the parallel, not the title, “Most High”. His name signifies God’s existence—when a person’s name is cut off they cease to exist—and functions as a surrogate for the person himself, making him accessible.¹¹⁰

“*Most High*” (יְהוָה־עֶלְיוֹן, see Ps. 91:1) perhaps anticipates the center line.

b. Elaboration of words of praise

2/3]

To proclaim (תְּבַרֵּךְ) to communicate a *vitaly important* message,¹¹¹

In the morning (בְּבֹקֶר) “at daybreak” (cf. Ps 90:5). **Y**

Your unfailing love (אֱמוּנָתְךָ) to help the helpless out of a responsible keeping of faith (100:5). *Your reliability* (אֱמוּנָתְךָ): human fidelity cannot always be counted on.

During the night (לַיְלֵי־לַיְלֵי a merismus with “in the morning: “all the time.” priests attended the temple twenty-four/seven.

109 Maclaren, *The Psalms*. Volume III. Psalms xc.—cl. (Expositor’s Bible; Hodder & Stoughton; New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), 27f.

110 J. Gordon McConville, “God’s Name and God’s Glory,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 30 (1979), 156—47.

111 C. Westermann, *TLOT*, s.v. נָגַד ngd hi. to communicate.

c. Elaboration of music of praise

3[4]

“*lute*” (לַבַּלָּל) and “*lyre*” (כַּנְיֹה) are chordophone instruments, which produce a sound from the plucking or bowing of strings stretched over or into a sounding box. “The identification of the כַּנְיֹה with the lyre is very probable.” From archaeological evidence the lyre had two arms raised from ends of the sound box, supporting a yoke from which the strings (three to eleven in number) descend into or over the sound box. The identification of the לַבַּלָּל is less certain. It often occurs in conjunction with the כַּנְיֹה (2 Sam 6:5; 1 Sam 10:5; Pss 33:2; passim), but only the לַבַּלָּל is linked with תַּעֲשֶׂה (“ten” [strings?], see n. 5). Presumably it would be relatively large, albeit still portable (1 Sam 10:5). Possibly its name derives from the similarity of its shape or construction to a לַבַּלָּל, (a storing vessel having a bulging bottom), Spurgeon: fine music without devotion is a splendid garment on a corpse.”¹¹²

2. Second Introduction: In form of person praise for I AM’s work

4—5]

a. Subject who causes the action,

4a

“*You make me rejoice*” (שִׂמְחָה תַּגִּיד): to be in the state of spontaneously responding in joy for I AM’s saving deeds, like shouting for a sport’s hero in a stadium.

“*In your deed*” (מַעֲשֵׂיךָ) refers to actions (cf. Ru 2:12)

“*Works...*”: (מַעֲשֵׂיךָ), what is produced by the deed (Gen 40:17).¹¹³

“*of your hand*” (יָדְךָ): the appendage from the elbow to the finger tips (cf. מַעֲשֵׂי יָדַי “bracelets upon her hands” [Gen 24:22]); connotes power, rule, control, as in “hand of the dog” (Ps 22:20[21]) “I will deliver from the hand of Sheol” (Hos 13:14).

b. Subject who responds to the action

“*shout cries of joy*” (נִשְׂחָח, Hos 13:14), נִשְׂחָח is used for shouts in distress (Lam. 9:19) or in exhortation (Prov. 1:20), but mostly joy and exultation (Isa 12:6; Jer 31:7) and so occurs in parallel with מִשְׂמְחָה (“be glad,” cf. Pss 35:27; 92:4[5]; Pro 29:6; Zech 2:14).

¹¹² Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, 821.

¹¹³ CDCH wrongly cites Prov. 31:31 to support מַעֲשֵׂי means “deed, action,” but מַעֲשֵׂי refers to the product that brings her praise in the gate.

B. Greatness of God's works and thoughts**5—7[6—8]**

The catchword *עֲשָׂוֹת* (“works of”) and the repetition of the vocative, *I AM*, sutures the two strophes of the first stanza. The second strophe also begins with a summary of its content (v. 5[6]) and then unpacks it in vv. 6—7[7—8]. “Works of your hands” (v. 4[5]) is a poetic variation for “your works” (v. 5[6]).

1. Summary**5[6]**

“Man can neither measure the greatness of the divine works nor fathom the depth of the divine thoughts; he who is enlightened, however, perceives the immeasurableness of the one and unfathomableness of the other.”¹¹⁴

a. God's works**5a**

“*great*”: above the normal or average of magnitude and extent and of importance and eminence.

“*How*”: inexpressibly above normal

“*works*”: Link to v. 4. *Heilsgeschte*: (interpreted history of saving acts). Began in creation with *chaoskampf* and in Israel's history at the Exodus. Climaxes in King's victory.

“*I AM* (*אֲנִי*), see v. 4[5]). of magnitude and extent and, as here, of importance and eminence. Theologians refer to God's works as *Heilsgeschichte* (“interpreted historical saving acts”).

b. God's thoughts**5b**

“*your thoughts*”: creative calculations and plans to attain a goal (cf. Isa 55:8,9). Goldingay:: “They [his deeds] were no spur-of-the-moment, instinctive response to a sudden tricky situation. Yhwh coolly formulated some intentions and implemented them.”¹¹⁵

“*Exceedingly*” parallel to “how.”

“*Deep*”: (“to make deep” and so inaccessible. Think of planning a surprise party. Jeremiah (49:8), tells the inhabitants of Dedan to make deep their dwellings (i.e. to hide and so not be found). To vouchsafe the certainty of his Emmanuel

114 F. Delitzsch, *Psalms*, translated by Francis Bolton (Commentary on the Old Testament by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Volume 5; Peabody, Massachusetts, 1996; 1866—69), 607.

115. Vol John Goldingay, *Psalms 3: Psalms 90—150* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008), 55.

prophecy, *I AM* challenges Ahaz to make his request for a sign “as deep as Sheol or as high as heaven” (i.e. to make his request beyond human capability). As the wicked “go to great depths to hide their plans from *I AM*” (Isa 29:15), God goes to great depths to hide his plans from fools.¹¹⁶ “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!” (Rom 11:33). The notion of God’s hidden plans “lays the foundation for the rest of the psalm,” says Robert Alter.¹¹⁷ “‘My brethren,’ says Augustine as cited by Spurgeon, ‘there is no sea so deep as these thoughts of God, who makes the wicked flourish, and the good suffer; nothing so profound, nothing so deep. Every unbelieving soul is wrecked in that depth, in that profundity. Do you wish to cross this depth? Do not remove the wood of Christ’s Cross and you will not sink. Hold fast to Christ (Augustine, 353—429).’”¹¹⁸ The apparent lack of justice superficially gives the appearance that crime pays. Fools, lacking the moral disposition of those willing to do God’s will by faith, are incapable of understanding that the wicked are destined to eternal punishment and the righteous to everlasting life. “One must be a saint or senseless,” says Spurgeon, “there is no other choice. One must be either the adoring seraph or the ungrateful swine.”¹¹⁹

2. Fools Do Not Understand

6[7]

The synonymous parallels of v. 6 sound like an aphorism.

“*Brutish person*”: denominative from בְּעִיר “beast, cattle, animal.”¹²⁰ The idiom “refers to a stupid man who does not have the rationality that differentiates men from

116 Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer (*Tehillim: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources* [Brooklyn, New York: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 1982] 1150f., n. 1). calls attention to the striking explanation of the apparent success of the wicked such as Haman in the *Midrash (Esther Rabah 6:2)*: “Behold! The enemies of God are raised up to meet their downfall! This may be likened to the vile galley slave who viciously cursed the king’s beloved son. The king reasoned, ‘If I kill him, people will not take notice of it and they will learn nothing from it—for of what consequence is the life of a lowly galley slave?’ Therefore, the king first promoted the slave to the rank of captain, then he elevated him to the post of governor—general. Only then, after giving him prominence and renown, did the king execute the rogue for his crime.” The Midrash finds an analogy in the way God treated Pharaoh (Exod. 7:3—6; 9:16; Rom 9:15).

117 Alter, *The Book of Psalms*, 326

118 Cited by Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, 822.

119 Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, 823.

120 *HALOT*, 1:146, s.v. בְּעִיר

animals.”¹²¹ Fox comments: “Animal-like brutishness is his ear-mark.”¹²² Derek Kidner cites Samuel Johnson on those who ask no more of life than to be carefree: “‘It is sad stuff; it is brutish. If a bull could speak, he might well exclaim,—Here am I with this cow and this grass, what being can enjoy more felicity.’”¹²³

“*Does not know*”: the mental knowledge of a fact and the visceral experiencing of that reality” (see Ps 90:11)

“*Fool*”: deficiency in character, not necessarily in I.Q., and this deficiency prompts their irrational behavior. “They are blockheads because, deaf to wisdom, from their distorted moral vision, of which they are cocksure, they delight in twisting values that benefit the community.”¹²⁴ “*does not understand*” the act of giving heed and considering something with the senses in such a way that understanding about the object takes place within (i.e., he acquires and possesses its object). One can see or hear something and yet not “perceive”/ “understand” it (Isa 6:9). It is a matter of the disposition the heart, and a good heart is from God, from whom every good and perfect gift comes, including faith. Weiser comments: “Only through the relationship with God is man enabled to recognize ultimate truth and reality; without that relationship he lapses into a deceptive illusion” [cf. Pss28:5].¹²⁵

“*This*”: refers to v. 7[8], the cause and reason for their being annihilated. Kirkpatrick comments: “Only unspiritual men fail to perceive that the prosperity of the wicked is but the prelude to their ruin, while Jehovah sits enthroned on high forever.”¹²⁶ The stupid and fools think that flourishing through unrighteousness will have the last word in history.

3. Flourishing wicked to be exterminated forever

7[8]

What the wicked cannot understand is that when they flourished (v. 7[8]αα,β), they were doomed to annihilation (v. 7[8]b). Their godless prosperity itself brought about their destruction under the rule of the righteous God on high as surely as drinking poison brings death.

121 Chou-Wee Pan, *NIDOTTE*, 1:691, s.v. בָּעַר.

122 Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1—9* (Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 39.

123 J. Boswell, *The Life of Dr. Johnson* (Everyman Edn), I, p. 464, cited by Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73—50* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 1975, reprinted 2008), 367.

124 Bruce K. Waltke, *Proverbs 1—15* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 112.

125 Weiser, *The Psalms*, 615.

126 A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1982; original, 1902), 559/

“*When*”: the prosperous situation in which the doom of the wicked obtains (v. 7[8]b). The poet stresses their apparent flourishing in a morally-topsy-turvy world—part of God’s plans hidden from fools—by emphatic synonymous parallels in 7[8]α,β and by presenting it as a historical event, using the narrative form “*and*”

“*Wicked* (see 91:8) matches with “*all*” (i.e., without exception) “*who do*” (i.e., they execute, put into action the necessary means to secure the success of their enterprise) “*evil*” (i.e., misuse their power through deception and lies “in relation to a community or an individual with a negative effect or intention”¹²⁷). They flourished at the expense of others; their elimination is for the good of humankind.

“*Flourished “like grass”// blossom* (see Ps 90:6): “The wicked are like the green things that shoot up so bravely in the steppe after the late rains of spring, covering everything, but then break down just as fast beneath the hot desert wind or sun, dry out, and vanish (cf. 37:2; 90:5—6; 103:15—16).”¹²⁸.

“*Led to their being exterminated*”: in liturgical laws to ban someone from the cultic community and in holy war to ban someone from the land through physical destruction. Although *I AM* may be the Agent, says Vetter, “the original sense of the ban commandment is preserved when people execute the commandment (Num 33:52; Deut 2:12, 23; 7:24; 33:27; Josh 9:24; 11:14,20; 2 Sam 22:38; Psa 106:34).”¹²⁹ In Psalm 92 the ultimate Agent is *I AM* and the immediate agent is his King (see vv. 10—12[11—13]).

“*Forever*” (לְעוֹלָם). Although with reference to history the unforeseeable future may not be eternal in a philosophical sense, yet לְעוֹלָם (‘*o/-lam*’), the equivalent of לְעוֹלָם , with reference to God is eternal in a philosophical sense (see v. 8[9]). Since the eternal God reigns forever, the wicked were exterminated forever in a philosophical sense when God punished them. Goldingay says: “Thus the recognition that came parallels that in Psa 73, but it came not because the worshipper saw something by faith, as was the case there, but through seeing something actually happen.”¹³⁰ Most of the stories of the Bible, including the Exodus and the gospel of Jesus Christ, represent the final triumph of the righteous over the temporary prosperity of the wicked. Worldly kingdoms, from that of Sargon of Akkad to the Third Reich of Hitler, have all passed away, but God’s kingdom endures forever.

127 K. H. Bernhart, *TDOT*, 1:143, s.v. לְעוֹלָם ‘*a/-ven*’.

128 Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 51—100*, 439.

129 D. Vetter, *TLOT*, 3:1367f., s.v. *sⁿ/md hi* to exterminate.

130 Goldingay, *Psalm 90—150*, 56.

III. Center Line: *I AM is on high forever***8[9]**

The terse four word center line is framed by emphatic references to God and two core words predicating his transcendence over space (“on high”) and time “forever (עַלְמֵי עַד, see Ps 90:2; 100:5).

“*For you*” points to God on high as the ultimate Agent upholding justice.

“*Are on high*” is a metonymy for heaven (cf. Job 16:19; 31:2; Isa 33:5) to signify his transcendence over the earth and human activity and his impregnability against hostile forces. “It is the realm where God lives and works and from whence he sends forth his power and help for those who are in need, or against those whom he punishes (e.g., Ps 18:17; 93:4; 102:20...).”¹³¹

IV. Second Stanza**9–15[10–16]**

The second stanza begins where the first stanza ended: all evil-doers will be exterminated (vv. 9—11), a precursor of the eschatological age. The stanza closes with the righteous flourishing in old age. This justice happens because *I AM* is transcendent over salvation history, involving time and place.

A. All evil-doers eliminated**9–11[10–12]****1. God’s enemies perish****9[10]**

The synonymous parallels in 7[8]αα.β is matched by the synonymous, climatic¹³² parallels in 9[10]αα.β. These tricola that draw the first stanza to its conclusion and open the second stanza are also linked by the catch phrase *לְכָל עוֹשֵׂי רָעָה* (“all who do evil” are destroyed forever). H. L. Ginsburg¹³³ in 1945 noted that v. 9[10] owes its style and language to a combat myth reflected in the Ugaritic texts (ca 1300 B.C.).¹³⁴ In that myth Baal, god of fertility, and Yam, god of watery chaos, struggle for dominion. The craftsman god, Lothar wa-Khasis, encourages Baal:

131 Tate, *Psalm 51—100*, 467.

132Climatic parallelism designates a highly repetitive slowly advancing set of lines reaching toward a climax (cf. Ps 29:1—2 for a textbook example).

133 *H. L. Ginsburg, *BA* 8 (1945), 54f cited by Sarna, p. 160

134 Sarna (“A Psalm for the Sabbath Day,” 160) notes: “Cassuto established beyond a shadow of a doubt that a popular and independent epic [similar to the Enuma Elish] existed in ancient Israel in which the struggle between God and the mutinous forces of primeval chaos was inextricably interwoven with the brew ideas of creation” (

Now thine enemy, O Baal,
Now thine enemy wilt thou strike;
Now wilt thou cut off thine adversary.¹³⁵

“*For*”: continues the thought of verse 7[8], to wit, evil-doers will be destroyed forever.

“*look*” emotional exclamation asking *I AM* on high to join psalmist to take note of a situation on earth.

“*Your enemies*” (ַרְשָׁעִים) are identified in 10[11]b as “evil-doers” and in v. 6[7] as “the wicked.” “*I AM*”: links verse 8[9] and 9[10].

“*Perish*” (ַפָּרַח). “to disappear, vanish, and cease to exist”;¹³⁶ assonance with ַפָּרַח.

“*All evil-doers*” (ַפָּרַח לְכָל רְשָׁעִים, see v. 7[8])

“*Will be scattered*”: “to be divided/separated from each other”: of scales of crocodile (? Job 41:9); of bones [out of joint] (Psalm 22:15). A parallel with ַפָּרַח in Job 4:11: “The lion perishes (ַפָּרַח) for lack of prey, and the cubs of the lioness are scattered (ַפָּרַח).” When a community of cubs is broken up, it cannot reproduce itself. So also when the community of evil-doers is scattered, it can reproduce its thoughts, words and deeds to a next generation. So God’s enemies, the evil-doers, will vanish from the earth forever (cf. “forever” in v. 17[8]).

2. King victorious over his adversaries

10—11

United by returning to “You—I” relationship (v. 5) and logic of cause and effect.

a. The King’s great strength

10 [11]

The parallel lines point both to *I AM* as the ultimate Agent of the King’s victory (“you raise my horn” [10[11]a) and to the King’s enthusiastic participation in his elevation (“I rub [my horn] with rich oil” [10[11]b)).

¹³⁵*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, edited by James B. Pritchard (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1955), text III ABA, lines 7—9, p. 151.

¹³⁶ “They went down alive into the realm of the dead, with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they ַפָּרַח and were gone from the community” (Num 16:33).

“*You exalted: (אָרְבַּתְּ): I AM*, who is on “high” (root אָרַב) the ultimate Agent who destroys his enemies. The psalm studiously avoids identifying God as the immediate Agent (see “exterminates” in v. 7[8]b) “*my horn*” a metaphor for deadly strength and for dignity and honor (cf. Psa 112:9, 148:14). (Possibly the helmet of the king of Israel had horns on it, for on the victory stele of Naram Sin, king of Akkad (2254—2218 B.C.), the helmet of this grandson of Sargon of Akkad has horns.)¹³⁷ “*Like the wild*”: ¹³⁸ symbol of being fierce, strong and deadly (Num 23:22; 24:8; Job 39:9, 10). “ ‘The image is taken from the wild ox (Psa 92:11) who stands with uplifted horn feeling his full strength, challenging the opponent, an image also known to the Babylonians’ (Gunkel, *Psa.* HKAT [1926], 327).’ ”¹³⁹ Of Joseph, Moses predicted: “his horns are the horns of a wild ox. With them he will gore the nations” (Deut 33:17).

“*Which I rub with ...olive oil*”, making their goring more effective and making them “gleam with virility and health.”¹⁴⁰ By faith the King responds enthusiastically to his high calling to rid the earth of evil-doers.

“*Rich*” (intensifies the imagery of goring and gleaming horns.

b. *The King sees and hears the rout of his enemies* 11[12]

And (אָרְבַּתְּ), narrative waw continues the report in this royal psalm of grateful praise. The parallel lines in their outer frame match **my eyes** (אֵינִי) with **my ears** (אָזְנוֹתַי), and in their inner core “those who tried to ambush me “ is paired with “those who attacked me.” Both sight and sound, each in its own way, confirm his victory over evildoers.

“Gazed ...over”: see desire upon, gloat over¹⁴¹

“in triumph”: as they lay on ground beneath him.

“who try to ambush me”: “to watch closely,” pun with “gaze at.”

“will hear” the destruction of the wicked will continue to be heard into the eternal future (see vv. 7—8 [9—10]).

137 H. Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder* (1927), vol. 2, illustration 43).

138 A grand extinct wild animal. The aurochs was depicted in prehistoric cave paintings and described in [Julius Caesar's The Gallic War](#), Book 6, and Ch. 28.

139 Cited by H. P. Stahl/hli, *TLOT*, 3:1224.

140 Tate, *Psalm 51—100*, 467.

141 BDB, p. 613, s.v.

“The wicked” (קְרָעִים), “:a fixed expression for those who cause injury and harm and who stand in contrast to those who wait on God (cf. Psa 22:16[17].

“Those who attack me” “This is not a ‘blessing’ of the dictum that ‘revenge is sweet,’ but must be read as poetic dramaturgy meant to lead to the ‘teaching’ developed in the closing section of the psalm in vv. 13—16[12—15].”¹⁴²

Christians pray for the establishment of God’s kingdom and are told to rejoice at God’s judgment on the enemies of his kingdom (Rev. 18:20).

B. Righteous flourish and proclaim / AM is upright

12—15[13—16]

The flourishing and praise of the righteous occurs in conjunction with King’s eliminating wrong-doers. The psalm’s final strophe consists of two couplets: the righteous flourish (vv. 12—13[13—14]) and they do so into old age proclaiming that *I AM* is upright (vv. 14—15[15—16]).

1 Righteous flourish in the temple

12—13

The first couplet is unified grammatically by being a single sentence; rhetorically by its chiasmically structured catchword “flourish” (פָּרַח, 12a, 13b[13a, 14b], and semantically by an arboreal imagery. In v. 12 the righteous are singled out individually, and in v. 13 they are represented collectively. V. 12 focuses on the tree-simile, and v. 13 focuses on the temple as the source of growth.

a. Righteous flourishes like a palm tree and a cedar of Lebanon

13

In the almost synonymous parallelism the subject “a righteous person” is gapped in v. 13b[14b], “a palm tree” is matched with “a cedar of Lebanon,” and “flourish” with “grow.”

“*A righteous person*”: brings about right and harmony for all by submitting himself or herself to the Word (*Logos*) of God (i.e. to love God and neighbor). They serve *I AM* (Mal 3:18), are kind and generous (Ps 37:21; 112:6), honest and truthful (Pro. 13:5; Isa 45:23), and speak wisely (Pro 10:31); they are not involved in sin such as idolatry, sexual immorality, or social injustice (Ezek 18:5).

“*Flourishes*”: temporal and universal prosperity. The splendor and longevity of the stately palm tree and the towering cedar of Lebanon contrasts with the ephemeral flourishing of lowly grass (v. 7).

142 Hossfeld and Zenger, *Commentary on Psalm 51-100*, 440.

“like a palm tree”: Point:

- 1.) stately and regal appearance: tall (60’—70’), slender and knot-free, and has “plume-like foliage”¹⁴³ only at the very top. Isaiah 9:14-15 likens Israel’s dignitaries to the palm tree. Date palm trees grow as tall as 60—70 feet. In the Song of Solomon, the lover says to the most beautiful of woman (Song 6:1): “your stature is like that of the palm tree” (Song 7:8[7]a).
- 2.) Sustains human life: “It provided food in the form of the date, and its sap could be used as sweetener for making wine.”¹⁴⁴ “When it has attained its full size, it bears from three to four, and in some instances even as many as six, hundred pound of fruit.”¹⁴⁵
- 3.) Demands for abundant water (see v. 13[14]);
- 4.) its longevity (v. 14).

“*He or she grows*”: in its only other use refers to the increase of riches (Ps 73:12); entails an increase in righteousness and life. The increase of the righteous person’s prosperity is so great that he or she becomes

Like a cedar of Lebanon (לְכֶרֶם לְבָנוֹן), which may be over 120 feet tall. excels in beauty, height, value, fertility and longevity.¹⁴⁶ “The cedars of Lebanon represent the finest of earthly material. Solomon studied the lightness and strength of cedars (1 Kgs 4:33), bargained with Hiram, who ruled the area, and created a conscript labor force thirty thousand strong to log the Lebanon cedars for the temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 5).”¹⁴⁷ Kings competed in building their palaces with cedar and were willing to sell their souls for it (Jer 22:7, 14, 23).

b. Righteous planted in temple

14

The notion of growth is developed in v. 13 as can be discerned in its escalating framing words “planted” (14[15]a) and “flourished” (14[15]b). The verse’s inner core elaborates “in the house of *I AM*” by “in the courts of our God.” The single

143 Tate, *Psalms 51—100*, 467.

144 *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III, editors (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 1998), 623.

145 Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 608.

146 “Its beautiful branches overshadowing the forest; it towered on high, its top above the thick foliage” (Ezek 31:3).

147 *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 499.

righteous person of v. 13[14]) is now expanded to the worshiping community. By the addition of “our,” the direction changes from talking about the righteous to talking for them.

“*Planted*”: figurative language for righteous. “By an optical trick the poet superimposes the arboreal image on the upright person in the temple, and tree and person fade into each other and exchange features.”¹⁴⁸ Figure signifies

- 1.) Assumes an abundant supply of water (cf. Ps 1:2—3 “The palm tree has deep, water-seeking roots.” Because of this characteristic, it thrives in an oasis environment in the midst of the desert-like wilderness. “Jericho, built on the site of large oasis in the wilderness, was well known as the ‘City of Palms’ (Deut 34:3; 2 Chron. 28:15).¹⁴⁹ As for the cedars of Lebanon: ,

“The waters nourished it, deep springs made it grow tall; their streams flowed all around its base and sent their channels to all the trees of the field. So it towered higher than all the trees of the field; its boughs increased and its branches grew long, spreading because of abundant waters.... It was majestic in beauty, with its spreading boughs, for its roots went down to abundant waters” (Ezek 31:4—7).

The sequoia tree 300’ in height pumps 500 gallons daily.

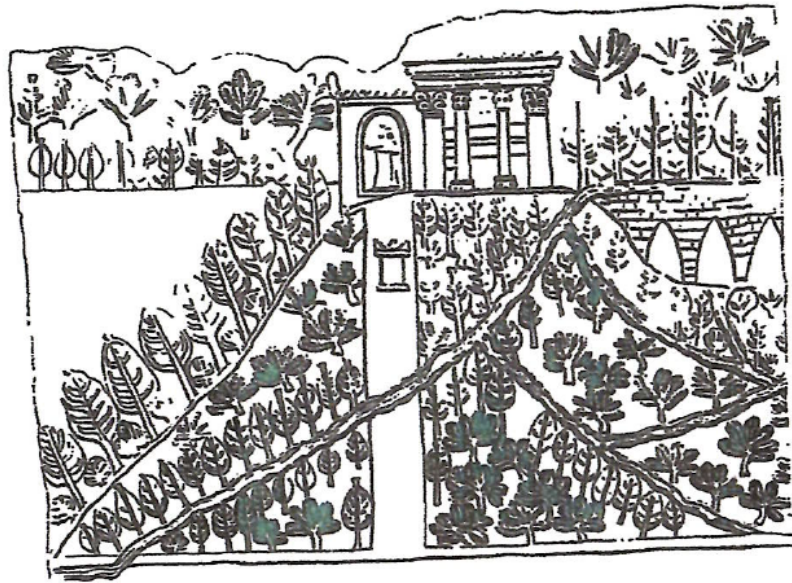
In short, the temple precincts provide an abundant amount of water for the trees.

- 2.) Allusion to God’s original temple on earth, the Garden of Eden, on the mountain of God (see Ezek. 28:13f). From the top of Mount Eden a river flowed through and nourished the trees of the garden with such an abundant amount of water that it became the headwater for four rivers that fructified the four corners of the earth.¹⁵⁰

148 Schaefer, *Psalms*, 231.

149 *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 623.

150 J. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985), 128—37.



Psalm 92, Plate 4:
This relief from the northern palace of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh (ca. 600 B.C.E.) shows a sanctuary on a mountain, surrounded by a park divided by canals of water. A *via sacra*, with an altar standing on it, leads to the sanctuary. In front of the sanctuary is a pavilion with the statue of a king at prayer. This relief combines the motifs of the paradisiacal garden of the gods and the temple as the realm of fertility and life. According to Psalm 92 the righteous are the park of paradise that blooms “in the courts” surrounding the house of YHWH. Source: Sketch by Hildi Keel-Leu.

The relief teaches that the trees in the paradisiacal garden surrounding the temple find their life and fertility from the river that flows from the temple in conjunction with the king’s prayer. In short, the life-giving water supply originates in the temple. As the luxurious ever-green trees find their physical nourishment in abundant water in the paradisiacal garden, the righteous, whom they represent, find their spiritual nourishment “*in the house of I AM*” more specifically in “*the courtyards*” where the people worshipped. The living God cannot be disassociated from his temple (1 Kgs 8:10—1). As the righteous worship him in his temple they draw their spiritual strength from the living God who was, and is, and will be forevermore. The righteous are characterized by dependence upon God, not by adherence to the law. Drawing their abundant spiritual life from communicating with him they figuratively flourish (see vv. 7 12 [8, 13]). It is probably an unintended oxymoron that their royal splendor of height and beauty is due to their humble dependence upon God. The water in the paradisiacal courtyard represents the Word of the Lord, revealed by Moses’s Torah and inspired prophets, sages and songwriters. Psalm 1:2—3 identifies the Torah as the water that makes the

righteous to be like trees whose leaves do not wither and who bear fruit in season. Isaiah and Micah envision that:

“In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.(Mic 4:1—4; Isa 2:2—3).

To be effective, however, the Word of God must be taught in conjunction with prayer and the Spirit of God (Isa 56:7; Jer 7:11; Mark 11:17). This point is well made in Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones. Ezekiel's preaching united the dry bones, but it was still a corpse until the Spirit of Lord brought it to life (see Ezekiel 37).

- 3.) Ecumenicity of righteous. “Planted” and “flourish” in v. 13 [14] are plural, suggesting both the palm tree and cedar of Lebanon grow together in the temple courtyard. But, as Prof. Warren Gage pointed out to me in a personal conversation, these trees do not naturally grow together any more than the wolf lives together with the lamb (cf. Isa 11:6—8). The locale of the palm tree is low and hot; that of the cedar of Lebanon, high and cold. Gage suggests the image of Psalm 92:12—13 is similar to Zion's promised glory: "The glory of Lebanon [i.e., the cedar tree] will come to you, the juniper, the fir and the cypress together, to adorn my sanctuary; and I will glorify the place for my feet" (Isa 60:13). These trees grow in different climates. The figure of these geographically distributed trees growing together in the temple courtyard represents the ecumenical unity of the righteous. Today Jew and Gentile who have been baptized into Jesus Christ worship together as one people at the true temple (Gal 3:26—29).

In the New Testament the earthly temple finds its reality in Christ (John 2:21). Today earthly mount Zion has been made obsolete by Jesus Christ (John 4:23f.) He sits in the heavenly temple at God's right hand, from where he poured out the Holy Spirit upon his Church so that she may worship in Spirit and in truth. She comes “to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. (Heb. 12:22). The Church is God's earthly temple, both corporately (1 Cor 3:16) and individually.

“*Our God*” (see 90:1, 17; 100:3): the King and worshiping covenant people. The personal pronoun empowers them to understand themselves to be like the stately palm and mighty cedar of Lebanon .

2. Righteous flourish in old age and proclaim God is upright

14—15

The second couplet of the final strophe retains the righteous (v. 12[13]) as subject and continues to impose the arboreal image upon the righteous in v 14[15] but not in v. 15[16]. The couplet itself is unified grammatically as one sentence.

a. Righteous flourish in old age

14[15]

The date palm tree can be as much as 200 years old and the cedars of Lebanon may be up to 3,000 years old. “That the cedars of Lebanon, even at the age of three thousand years, can still produce seed-bearing cones is in fact a phenomenon of astonishing fertility.”¹⁵¹

“*Still* (“continuance”)

“*Will thrive*” a synonym and a catchword with “flourish” in vv. 12—13[13—14]

“*In old age*” (lit. “grey hair”).

“*They will be full of sap*: figure of internal health and well-being

“*and thick with leaves*: figure of external health and vitality, like that of Moses (Deut 34:7) The imagery of vitality and fertility into old age is like the first gleam of light at day break. It was God’s purpose before the beginning of time to give his Church eternal life, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim 1:10; cf. John 11:24f.; 1 Corinthians 15). In that fulfillment clinical death is merely a fleeting shadow.

b. Proclaiming I AM’s justice

15[16]

In the inner core of the chiasmic parallels “*I AM*” is matched by “my rock” and in the outer frame “upright” is paired with its definition “no injustice.”. Using language drawn from the Song of Moses (Deut 32:4),¹⁵² this song of grateful

151 Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 51—100*, 449.

152 Allusions in Psalm 92 from the Song of Moses are noted in parenthesis: “He [*I AM*] is the Rock (הַצִּיּוֹר, cf. v. 15[16]b), his deeds (פְּעָלָיו, cf. v. 4[5]) are perfect, and all his ways are just. A reliable [אֱמוּנָה, see v. 2[3]] God who does no wrong (לֹא יִשָּׁר), cf. v. 15[16]b), upright (יָשָׁר, cf. v. 15[16]) and just [צַדִּיק, cf. v. 12[13]] is he.”

praise reaches its climax in this proclamation of praise. The righteous, drawing their life from the living God, stand in the temple courtyard in regal splendor and full of life and fertility.

“*Proclaiming that*” inclusio with v. 2[3])

“*I AM*” inclusio with v. 1[2]

“*Upright*”: Literally, “to be straight without a curve or bend,” or “level without a bump”: “I will lead them beside streams of water on a level [גָּדָל] path where they will not stumble” (Jer 31:9); “he led them by a straight [יָשָׁר] way to a city where they could settle” (Psa 107:7); also used of “straight leg” (Ezek 1:7) and “straight wing” (v. 23). Figuratively, faultlessly just and moral according to Torah-ethics. Often in conjunction with טוֹב “good”: “Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways” (Psa 25:25:8; cf. Deut 6:18; Josh 9:25; 1 Sam. 12:23). Achish said to David “As surely as the LORD lives, you have been upright and good [טוֹב וְיָשָׁר]. From the day you came to me until today, I have found no fault [אֵינִי מֵצֵא] in you” (1Sa 29:6). Sometimes in parallel with יָשָׁר “righteous”: “Rejoice in *I AM* and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!” (Psa 32:11; cf. 33:1; 64:11); the opposite of לַעֲשׂוֹת “to do wrong” (Deut 32:4). Righteousness and uprightness connected with justice: “You are righteous [יָשָׁר], *I AM*, and your judgments (:מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ) are right [יָשָׁר]” (119:137; cf. Ps 94:15). Also used with נָקִי “innocence” (Job 4:7) and טָהוֹר “pure” (Pro 20:11). God’s people trust *I AM* to do what is right; by faith they know he is moral and just, without blemish. The Sovereign over space and time takes life away from evil-doers (v. 7, 9 [8, 10] and endows the righteous with eternal, abundant life. “*My Rock*.” Varies in shape and size: a rocky wall, cliff, (Num 23:6; Isa. 2:10), a block of stone, boulder [as an altar] (Judg 6:21; 13:19); a monument stone [for inscriptions] (Job 19:24), 9:21); rocks in a ravine (Job 22:24), In poetry in parallel with “a stone”: “a stone (אֶבֶן) that causes people to stumble and a rock (צֶדֶק) that makes them fall” (Isa 8:14). “A stone” is a fragment of a rock. “A ready image of impervious solidity.”¹⁵³ God’s reliability and justice are as impervious as a rock and so never fail. As such he is the defense of his people: a refuge [צִלְעָה, Isa 17:10; נִוְיָה, Psa 31:3), a shelter (מִצְלוֹת, Psa 94:22). This imagery of a rock slides easily into seeing God as a Savior (Psa 62:2, 6[3,7]: 95:1) and redeemer (Psa 78:35). Though the wicked flourish, the King finds his security in his upright God.

“*And in whom there is no injustice*”: makes explicit the inherent notion of being “upright” (i.e., just/righteous without a flaw). יָשָׁר in synonymous parallel to

153 *Biblical Imagery of the Bible*, 732.

“evil-doers” (עֲשֵׂי רָע Psa 37:1, cf. 92:11[12]), “violence” (עָוֹן, Ps 58:3), “bloodshed” (שִׁמְרֵי, Mic 3:10) and “inequity” (לִנְיָ, Job 11:14) and as an antithetic parallel to “justice” (צְדָקָה, Isa 61:8) and “righteousness” (צְדָקָה, Job 6:29). “The righteous do not put forth their hand to do wrong” [לֹא יִשְׂרֹף, Ps 125:3]. Jehoshaphat instructed his newly appointed judges: “Judge carefully, for with the LORD our God there is no injustice (אֵין צְדָקָה, 2 Ch 19:7).

‘Sweet is the work, my God, my King,
To praise Thy name, give thanks, and sing;
To show Thy love by morning light,
And talk of all Thy truth at night’ (Isaac Watts).

11–12. Form Critical Approach with a Focus on Laments

Part I: Introduction

I. Nomenclature for genre: Lament, Complaint, Petition

II. Individual Lament Songs

A. Identification of:

Pss 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 9—10; 13; 14 (=53); 17; 22; 25; 26; 27:7-14; 28; 31; 35; 36; 38; 39; 40:12—17 (= 70); 42; 43; 51; 52; 54; 55; 56; 57; 59; 61; 63; 64; 69; 70 (= 40:13—17); 71; 86; 88; 89:38-51; 102; 109; 120; 130; 139; 140; 141; 142; 143

Lament/complaint/petition constitute the largest genre of psalms (50 of 150).. R.W.L. Moberley notes that “the predominance of laments at the very heart of Israel’s prayers means that the problems that give rise to lament are not something marginal or unusual but rather are central to the life of faith . . . Moreover they show that the experience of anguish and puzzlement in the life of faith is not a sign of deficient faith, something to be outgrown or put behind one, but rather is intrinsic to the very nature of faith.”

The gap between virtue and its reward is essential for spiritual life. Were prayers answered immediately the petitioner would confound pleasure with morality; we would selfishly use God. By gapping virtue and its rewards the spiritual life is developed.

“More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (Romans 5:3—5)

B. Identification of the “I”

1. The “I” is the poet (mostly David, the king):

“It was thus the gravest mistake that psalm research in general could have made, when they completely misunderstood such lively individual poetry and universally related the ‘I’ of the complaint songs to the ‘community.’” (Ibid.).

a. “So natural, even self-evident” (Ibid.).

b. “In every other worldly and religious poetry, the “I” is always the poet with very few exceptions (Ibid).

c. Superscript:

“Complaint song of one suffering, when he is despised, and pours out his concerns” (102:1). Cf. Mary’s “Magnificat” (Luke 1:46ff.)

d. “I” clearly differential from other Israelites:

“You have removed my friends from me (88:9).”

“I have become a stranger to my own brothers (69:9).” “Father and mother leave me” (27: 10).

“I was young and became old” (37:25).

I AM, when you save me, “I will tell your praise to my brothers (22:23).”

e. The king clearly speaks in Psalm 18

³² It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure.

³³ He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he causes me to stand on the heights.

³⁴ He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

⁴³ You have delivered me from the attacks of the people; you have made me the head of nations. People I did not know now serve me,

⁴⁴ foreigners cower before me; as soon as they hear of me, they obey me.

f. King’s loyal singer speaks (Ps 45)

My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer.

² You are the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever.

2. Community only “where the poet makes it explicit (Ps 129: 1; Isa 40:27; 49:21), or where the meaning demands such an interpretation (Mic 7:7; Isa 61: 10; Pss. Sol. 1)” (Ibid.).

“They have greatly oppressed me from my youth,” let Israel say”;

C. Life setting

1. Not easy to recognize because of general expressions and metaphors. [Most can be easily fitted into David’s sufferings at the hands of Saul, Absalom and foreign powers.

2. Several psalm passages place prayer in temple

“But I, by your great grace, may enter your house, and bow down in worship before you before your holy temple” (5:8)

“‘Look’ when I raise my hands to your holy sanctuary.” (28;2)

- a. Dawn, when sacrifice is incinerated (2 Kgs 3:29; 16:15; Amos 4:4; Ezek 46:13ff; also Exod 29:39; Lev 6:5; Num 28:4):

^{Ps 5}³ In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice;

in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.

- b. Evening, time of dough offering. (Exod. 29:41; Lev 6: 13; Num 28:4f; 1 Kgs 18:29, 36; 2 Kgs 16: 15; Ezra 9:4; Dan 9:21).

“May my prayer be set before you like incense;

may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice” (141:2).

3. Some psalms sung a considerable distance from sanctuary

N.B. Held captive by adversaries

- a. Ps[s] 42—43 A maskil of the Sons of Korah._

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.

² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

³ My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, “Where is your God?”

⁴ These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the Mighty One with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng.

⁵ Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

⁶ My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.

⁷ Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me.

⁸ By day the LORD directs his love, at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life.

⁹ I say to God my Rock, “Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?”

¹⁰ My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, “Where is your God?”

¹¹ Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

Psalm 43:1 Vindicate me, my God, and plead my cause against an unfaithful nation. Rescue me from those who are deceitful and wicked.

² You are God my stronghold. Why have you rejected me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?

³ Send me your light and your faithful care, let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell.

⁴ Then I will go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God.

⁵ Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

b. 61:3[2]: From the ends of the earth I call to you, as my heart grows faint;
lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

c. 120:5—6:

⁵ Woe to me that I dwell in Meshek, that I live among the tents of Kedar!

⁶ Too long have I lived among those who hate peace.

d. Desire for *I AM* and Zion.

“The singer painfully misses the marvelous surroundings of the holy temple. He would like to walk there and “see YHWH’S face,”¹⁵⁴ “go to the altar,”¹⁵⁵ and “be YHWH’S guest forever.”¹⁵⁶ He buries himself in the majestic reminiscence of earlier pilgrimage journeys,¹⁵⁷ etc. These and similar psalms could only be spoken at a site removed from the sanctuary, and thus it would be impossible that they accompanied a worship act.” (Ibid., 127)

4. Portrayal of enemies removed from sanctuary

“We hear that opponents surround him,”¹⁵⁸ seek him out, lie in wait for him,¹⁵⁹ gloat over his misfortune,¹⁶⁰ “taunt him, and laugh at him.”¹⁶¹ When we hear these things, we are not led to a worship service setting but to a situation of life outside where the one praying suffers, separated from YHWH’S help,¹⁶² where he cannot hide in YHWH’S protection, and where he feels “god has left him.”¹⁶³ All of these scenes transfer us to a place in the midst of life, but not in a worship service (Ibid.)

5. “Sick-bed” (and adversaries)

a. 6:6—8

I am worn out from my groaning.

All night long I flood my bed with weeping
and drench my couch with tears.

154 Ps 42:3,

155 Ps 43:4.

156 Ps 61:5.

157 Ps 42:5; (55:15); cf. Jonah 2.

158 Pss 22:13, 17; cf. 17:9, 11.

159 Ps 59:4, etc.

160 Ps 22:18.

161 Pss (22:7—9; 42:11; 102:9.

162 Ps 22:2.

163 Ps 22:2.

⁷ My eyes grow weak with sorrow; they fail because of all my foes.

⁸ Away from me, all you who do evil,
for the LORD has heard my weeping.

b. 41:5—9

⁵ My enemies say of me in malice,

“When will he die and his name perish?”

⁶ When one of them comes to see me, he speaks falsely,
while his heart gathers slander;
then he goes out and spreads it around.

⁷ All my enemies whisper together against me;
they imagine the worst for me, saying,

⁸ “A vile disease has afflicted him;
he will never get up from the place where he lies.”

⁹ Even my close friend, someone I trusted,
one who shared my bread, has turned against me.

6. Life and death situations

“These prayers do not treat everyday occurrences. Rather, they treat the *terrible decision between life and death*. The relationship between the enemies and the one praying also concerns who will live and who will die. They strive to kill him, and he wants to gloat over their destruction.” (Ibid., 131)

Several times the poet speaks about this mortal threat: “my days ‘stretch out’ like a shadow, and I wither like grass. Shortness of days is my lot.¹⁶⁴ The threat to life proceeds further from the words he cites from his enemies that wait on his death in order to bury him,¹⁶⁵ They are recognizable in the vocabulary of his petition.¹⁶⁶ Not infrequently, the poet speaks as though his life approaches the *underworld*: “My soul is full of pain. My

¹⁶⁴ Pss 102:12, 24, 25a; cf. further 109:23.

¹⁶⁵ Pss 13:4; 143:7.

¹⁶⁶ Pss 13:4; 51:16; 143:7.

life draws near to the underworld *Now is the last chance for YHWH to intervene if he wants to help.*” (Ibid.)

[They speak of Christ’s passions.]

7. Penitential: “sin”

a. And sickness

LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath.

² Your arrows have pierced me, and your hand has come down on me.

³ Because of your wrath there is no health in my body;

there is no soundness in my bones because of my sin.

⁴ My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear.

⁵ My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly.

⁶ I am bowed down and brought very low;

all day long I go about mourning.

⁷ My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body.

⁸ I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart.

⁹ All my longings lie open before you, Lord;

my sighing is not hidden from you.

¹⁰ My heart pounds, my strength fails me;

even the light has gone from my eyes.

¹¹ My friends and companions avoid me because of my wounds;

my neighbors stay far away.

¹² Those who want to kill me set their traps,

those who would harm me talk of my ruin;

all day long they scheme and lie.

¹³ I am like the deaf, who cannot hear, like the mute, who cannot speak;

¹⁴ I have become like one who does not hear,

whose mouth can offer no reply.

¹⁵ LORD, I wait for you; you will answer, Lord my God.

- ¹⁶ For I said, “Do not let them gloat or exalt themselves over me
when my feet slip.”
- ¹⁷ For I am about to fall, and my pain is ever with me.
- ¹⁸ I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin.
- ¹⁹ Many have become my enemies without cause;
those who hate me without reason are numerous.
- ²⁰ Those who repay my good with evil lodge accusations against me,
though I seek only to do what is good.
- ²¹ LORD, do not forsake me; do not be far from me, my God.
- ²² Come quickly to help me, my Lord and my Savior. (Psalm 38)

b. And brevity of life

A psalm of David. I said,

- “I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin;
I will put a muzzle on my mouth while in the presence of the wicked.”
- ² So I remained utterly silent, not even saying anything good.
But my anguish increased;
- ³ my heart grew hot within me. While I meditated, the fire burned;
then I spoke with my tongue:
- ⁴ “Show me, LORD, my life’s end and the number of my days;
let me know how fleeting my life is.
- ⁵ You have made my days a mere handbreadth;
the span of my years is as nothing before you.
Everyone is but a breath, even those who seem secure.
- ⁶ “Surely everyone goes around like a mere phantom;
in vain they rush about, heaping up wealth
without knowing whose it will finally be.
- ⁷ “But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you.
- ⁸ Save me from all my transgressions;
do not make me the scorn of fools.

- ⁹ I was silent; I would not open my mouth,
for you are the one who has done this.
- ¹⁰ Remove your scourge from me;
I am overcome by the blow of your hand.
- ¹¹ When you rebuke and discipline anyone for their sin,
you consume their wealth like a moth—
surely everyone is but a breath.
- ¹² “Hear my prayer, LORD, listen to my cry for help;
do not be deaf to my weeping.
I dwell with you as a foreigner, a stranger, as all my ancestors were.
- ¹³ Look away from me, that I may enjoy life again
before I depart and am no more.” (Psalm 39).

c. And guilt. Psalm 51

8. Internal distresses and desires

a. Desire to be with God (cf. Ps 42—43)

Psalm 63:1 A psalm of David. When he was in the Desert of Judah.

- You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land where there is no water.
- ² I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.
- ³ Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.
- ⁴ I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.
- ⁵ I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.
- ⁶ On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night.
- ⁷ Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings.
- ⁸ I cling to you; your right hand upholds me.

- ⁹ Those who want to kill me will be destroyed;
they will go down to the depths of the earth.
- ¹⁰ They will be given over to the sword and become food for jackals.
- ¹¹ But the king will rejoice in God;
all who swear by God will glory in him,
while the mouths of liars will be silenced. (Psa 63:1-11)

b. all kinds of heavy thoughts:

- How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
- ² How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?
- ³ Look on me and answer, LORD my God.
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,
- ⁴ and my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,”
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

Psalm 55 A maskil of David.

- ¹ Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea;
² hear me and answer me.
My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught
³ because of what my enemy is saying,
because of the threats of the wicked;
for they bring down suffering on me and assail me in their anger.
- ⁴ My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen on me.
⁵ Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me.

c. The distress and fate of his people concerns him

- ¹ The LORD is a God who avenges. O God who avenges, shine forth.
² Rise up, Judge of the earth; pay back to the proud what they deserve.
³ How long, LORD, will the wicked,
 how long will the wicked be jubilant?
⁴ They pour out arrogant words; all the evildoers are full of boasting.
⁵ They crush your people, LORD; they oppress your inheritance.
⁶ They slay the widow and the foreigner; they murder the fatherless.
⁷ They say, “The LORD does not see; the God of Jacob takes no notice.”
⁸ Take notice, you senseless ones among the people;
 you fools, when will you become wise?
⁹ Does he who fashioned the ear not hear?
 Does he who formed the eye not see?
¹⁰ Does he who disciplines nations not punish?
 Does he who teaches mankind lack knowledge? (Psa 94:1-10)

d. On Trial

Those who hate me without reason outnumber the hairs of my head;
 many are my enemies without cause, those who seek to destroy me.
I am forced to restore what I did not steal. (69:5)

Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,
 for false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations
(27:12).

9. Enemies. A major situation (see IV. Enemies)

III. Community Laments

Pss 12, 44, 58 ; 60 ; 74 ; 79 ; 80 ; 83 ; 85 ; 90 ; 94 ; 123 ; 126 ; 129 ; 137

IV. The Enemies

“The distress that takes up the most space by far in the complaint and petition is the contempt of the enemy.” (Ibid, 145).... The *enemies of the pious* are mentioned everywhere.¹⁶⁷

A. Extensive use of terms for enemy:

“The one praying calls his opponents “his enemies” most frequently. In addition, one finds designations like persecutor, adversary, slanderer, hater, opponent, etc.”¹⁶⁸

B. Extensive use of moral terms:

“Who do evil,” *po’ale’awen*,¹⁶⁹; “villains,” *mer’im* (Pss 22:17; 27:2; 64:3); “impudent”; *’azzim* (Ps 59:4); “arrogant,” *zedim* (Pss 54:5; 86:14); “haughty,” *ge’im* (Pss 59:6; 140:6a); “violent,” *’arsiim* (Pss 54:5; 86:14); “crooked,” *me’awel* (Ps 71:4), *homes* (Ps 71:4); “strong,” *ha’zak* (Ps 35:10); “lying witnesses,” *’ede sheqer* (Ps 27:12); “evil persons,” *’adam ra’* (Ps 140:2); “men of violence,” *’ish hamasim* (140:2, 5), *’ish hamas* (Ps 18:49); “deceitful and shifty men,” *’ish mirmawe*

167Ps:3:2f. 8; 5:9; 6:9; 7:2f, 6, 7, 13-17; 13:3, 5; 17:9-12, 13f; 22:8f, 13, 17-19; 23:5; 25:2, 19; 27:2f, 6, 11f, 315, 12, 14; 35:1-8, 11-21, 24-26; 38:20; 39:9; 40:15f; 41:6-9, 12; 42:4, 10f; 43:1; 54:5, 7, 9; 55:4, 13, 19-22, 24; 56:2-8, 10; 57:5-7; 59:2-6, 7-9, 11-14; 61:4; 62:4f; 63:10f; 64:2-7, 8f; 69:5, 10-12, 15-29; 71:4, 10f, 13; 86:14, 17; 102:9; 109:2-5, 6-20, 25, 28f, 31; 119:21, 42, 51, 53, 61, 69f, 78, 84-87, 95, 110, 115, 118; 121f, 134, 136, 139, 150, 155, 157f, 161; 120:2-4, 6, 7; 140:2-4, 5f, 9, 10-12; 141:9f; 142:4, 5, 7; 143:3, 9, 12; (144:10).

168 "My enemies," *'oyebay* (Pss 3:8; 6:11; [9:4]; 17:19; [18:4]; 25:2, 19; 27:2, 6; [30:2]; 31:16; 35:19a; 38:20; (41:3); 41:6; 54:9; 55:13; 56:10a; 59:2; 69:5, 19; 71:10; 102:9; 143:12), *'oyebi* (Pss 13:3, 5; [18:18; 41:12]), *oyeb* (Pss 7:6; 31:9; 42:10; 43:2; 55:4; 61:4; 64:2; 143:3), *saray* (Pss 3:2; 13:5; 27:2, 129), *soreray* (Pss 7:7; 31:12; 42:11; 69:20; 143:12); "my persecutors," *rodepay* (Pss 7:2; 142:7), *meraddepay* (Ps 31:16); "my adversaries," *mitqomemay* (Ps 59:2) *qamay* (Ps 18:49); "my slanderers," *shoreray* (Pss 5:9; 27:11; 54:7; 56:3; 59:11); "those hating me," *shone'ay* (Pss 35:19b; 38:20; 41:8; 69:5; 86:17), *meson'ay* (Pss 55:13; [18:41]); "my opponents," *yeribay* (Ps 35:1), *lohamay* (Pss 35:1; 56:2, 3); "those seeking my life," "those suing my soul," *sspteme ma[so]* (Pss 71:13; 109:31; and also Ps 109:29). This expression is ambiguous and could mean "sue" as well as "confront". Cf 1 Sam 29:4; 1 Kgs 5:18; 11:14, 23, 25); "those planning disaster against me," *hoshebe ra'ati* (35:4); "those seeking my disaster," *mebase ra'iti* (Ps 71:13); "those finding pleasure in my disaster," *hap e ra'ati* (Ps 40:15); "the one robbing me," *gozeli* (Ps 35:10); "the one mocking me," *meholeli* (Ps 102:9). (Ibid. 140).

C. Descriptions of Enemy

1. Portrayals of battlefield

An attacking enemy troop;¹⁷⁰ surrounded by an enemy army¹⁷¹ while arrows are shot at him.¹⁷² The enemies run against him as they would against an overthrown wall.¹⁷³ Correspondingly, the sword in the enemies' hand is often mentioned,¹⁷⁴ or their bows and arrows.¹⁷⁵

2. Images of being a hunted animal.

The opponents lay secret nets before the pious like those that one tends to lay in the animal's pathway.¹⁷⁶ They dig graves in his path so that the unsuspecting will fall into them.¹⁷⁷ Or, they chase him like one would chase a wild animal on a hunt.¹⁷⁸ (Ibid.).

3. Zoomorphic images of enemy

“Other passages speak of the enemies as they would about wild beasts, which allows the psalmists' fear of them to be recognized. They bear their teeth,¹⁷⁹ tear open their mouth,¹⁸⁰ and yearn to feed on his flesh.¹⁸¹ There are lions that threaten the one

170Pss 3:7; 27:3; 55:19b; 56:2; 59:5; 62:4; 109:3; 120:7; 140:3, 8

171. Ps 55:19

⁷ Ps 62:4

⁸ Pss 7:13; 37:14; (55:22); 57:5; 59:8; 64:4.

⁹ Pss 7:13f; 11:2; 37:14; cf. 57:5; 64:4; 120:4.

173 Ps 62:4.

174 Pss 7:13; 37:14; (55:22); 57:5; 59:8; 64:4.

175 Pss 7:13f; 11:2; 37:14; cf. 57:5; 64:4; 120:4.

176 Pss 9:16; 31:5; 35:8; 57:7; 140:6.

177 Pss 7:1 6; 35:7; 57:7; 141:6f.

178 Ps 22:17.

179 Ps 35:16; cf. 37:12.

180 Pss 35:21; cf. 22:14.

181 Ps 27:2

praying,¹⁸² as well as enraged bulls¹⁸³ or biting dogs.¹⁸⁴ May God crush their bite¹⁸⁵ and shatter their teeth.¹⁸⁶ (Ibid., 141f.)

4. Their crooked ways, their secret opinions, their disdainful words against the pious.¹⁸⁷

“They threaten him without any cause,¹⁸⁸ and they plan murderous attacks against his life.¹⁸⁹ Or, at the very least they wait for his death so they can bury him.¹⁹⁰ Most of the time, the psalmist fears the *thoughts and tongue* of the enemy: “There is no truth in ‘their’ mouth. Their insides are corrupt. Their throat is an open grave, but their tongue flatters.”¹⁹¹ They taunt and slander the suffering,¹⁹² and rejoice over his plight.¹⁹³ They do not speak of peace for those who are quiet in the land. On the contrary, they point to words of betrayal¹⁹⁴ and slander¹⁹⁵. They convey hateful speeches. They come apparently to comfort the sufferer,¹⁹⁶ but they only make him ill.¹⁹⁷ They accuse him falsely of a crime.¹⁹⁸ In short, they attribute everything wicked

182 Pss 7:3; 22:14; cf. 10:9; 17:12; 35:17.

183 Ps 22:13

184 Ps 22:17

185 Ps 58:7

186 Ps 3:8.

187 Pss 25:19; 27:12; 31:12; 35:15ff; 38:12ff; 41:10; 55:4f; 69:8; 88:9, 19;

188 Ps 38:20

189 Pss 31:5, 14; cf. 35:4; 40:15

190 Ps 22:19

191 Pss 5:10; cf. 55:22.

192 Pss 31:12ff; 35:15; 42:11; 55:13; 102:9; 109:25.

193 Pss 13:5; 35:15, 19, 26; 38:17.

194 Pss 35:20:36:4

195 Pss 4:3ff; 5:10; 27:11

196 Pss 3:3 ; 4:3ff; 51:0; 17:10; 41:6ff.

197 Pss 69:22; cf. 5:10; 28:3

198 Pss 27:12; 35:11; 69:5

to the loyal YHWH follower.¹⁹⁹ They rob him of all dignity and honor.²⁰⁰ (Ibid. 142). They mock his faith: “Where is your God now?”²⁰¹

5. Opposed to God

“They do not just stand in *opposition to the pious*, but also to *YHWH*. The psalmist often accentuates this fact in order to cause God to intervene. The enemies defy YHWH, and they pay no attention to his action.²⁰² They speak against him disparagingly and arrogantly: “He surmises nothing. He is no god.”²⁰³ They consider themselves secure before him, but they are far from his statutes.²⁰⁴ (Ibid., 143).

D. Precise identification of enemy

1. Mowinckel: magicians who inflict sickness.

Po‘alel ‘awen, which he defines as “workers of spells,” and so magicians who inflicted sickness on victims. He extends this interpretation to parallels and equivalent terms. Gunkel refuted this interpretation and Mowinckel is not followed today.

2. Gunkel: having “primitive feelings” (psychotic)

- a. Originally royal but were later adopted metaphorically for the common citizen (esp. for “sickness”): “This would be especially true for the statements about war. Taking them literally forbids one to interchange them with references of another type (cf. 7:13 with 7:3, 10, 15f; 55:19b with 55:22,24; 56:2 with 56:6f; and 57:5a with 57:5b-7; etc.). The fact is that those praying are not the great politicians, but are common private citizens. The model used for these utterances should be sought in the *royal complaint songs that are imitated by the individual complaint songs* [mine] (cf. 95,19). In the process, the individual complaint songs lose their literal meaning and become images and symbols” (Ibid., 144).

199 Ps 5:9f.

200 Pss 3:3ff; 4:3; 69:20ff

201 Ps. 42:4, 11

202 Ps 28:5

203 Ps 10:4; cf. 17:10; 10:13.

204 Ps 10:5

- b. Ps 91 “clearly mention these demonic] powers“ (Ibid., 147); but see exegesis of Psalm 91 below).
- c. Pray-er physically sick, sometimes pathologically and neurotically sick, what he calls “primitive feelings”: “The first thing one should realize is that the one praying characteristically sees himself surrounded by a world of enemies. This world cannot be explained solely on the basis of the passionate exaggeration of the one suffering. One comes closer to understanding when one proceeds from the original cause of the complaint song, extreme illness and terrifying mortal danger.” (Ibid., 148). Penitential psalms may be “an instinctive egotistical feeling of sin” (Ibid.). The conflict is due to class warfare (the pious are poor and against the rich) (Ibid., 149f.) and so religious contrasts, for the pious are “convinced rich *are wicked* [original] (Ibid. 149). With regard to family and friends the pray-er may also be primitive (psychotic): “One can understand if the terrible stress of the one praying makes known the oppressiveness of being left in a cruel manner, causing the one praying to utter wild curses concerning those who have so painfully disappointed him: ‘May they go ‘quaking.’ ‘Let death fall’ over them. May they go to hell trembling, traveling there in their horror.’” (Ibid. 152).

3. Plain sense: Enemies of Kingdom of God: of I AM, his King, his pious people.

- a. Enemies mentioned in the psalms: Absalom (Psalm 3); Cush (Psalm 7); Saul (Psalms 18 and 57); Abimelech (Psalm 34); Doeg the Edomite (Psalm 52); Philistines (Psalm 56).
- b. Gunkel admits original royal interpretation; liturgical approach confirms him.
- c. Enemies are mentioned abstractly so that any that oppose the psalmist, who embodies the kingdom of God, might be specified (contrast naming of enemies in Nehemiah's prayer: Neh. 6:14).

V. Motifs

Motifs not always in fixed order but clearly marked off. Cf. “but you” introduces “confidence”

A. Address (summons) to God

1. Among first words of the first sentence;²⁰⁵ less frequently elsewhere.²⁰⁶
2. An essential criterion of identification.

Passages where the psalm does not begin with the summons deviate so strongly from the normal style that the song should not be designated as an individual complaint song in the strict sense, even if it otherwise uses the motifs of the genre. (Ibid., 152).

3. Often placed with or within “introductory cry for help”
4. Brief portrayal of the praying

“I bow myself to you, YHWH. DO not let me be ashamed any more. Incline your ear to me. Hurry to save me.”²⁰⁷

5. Summons and cry for help can follow the complaint.²⁰⁸
6. Unlike Babylonian, honorific names are not heaped up²⁰⁹

“The Babylonian thereby desires to put his gods in a favorable mood, or to flatter them and seek to convince them to do what he implores. The Israelite acts differently to YHWH. From the outset, he trusts that YHWH will hear him and refuses to depend upon the external means of convincing by flattery.” (Ibid., 153)

205 Pss 3:2; 5:2; 6:2; 7:2; 13:2; 16:1; 17:1; 22:2; 25:1; 26:1; 27:7; 28:1; 31:2; 35:1; 38:2; etc.

206 Ps 42:2; 120:2; Isa 38:14. The observations of this footnote and the previous footnote also hold true for the communal complaint, as well as the prayer in general.

207 Jer 11:20.

208 Jer 20:11

209 Cf. Fr. Stummer *Sumerisch-akkadische Parallelen zum Aufbau alttestamentlicher Psalmen*, 1922, pp. 11ff, J. Begrich, "Die Vertrauensausserungen im israelitischen Klageliede des Einzelnen und in seinem babylonischen Gegenstück," *ZAW*, new series 5 (1928): 230; W. G. Kunstmann, *Die babylonische Gebetsbeschwörung*, *Leipziger Semitische Studien*, new series 2, 1932.

B. Lament/Complaint:

1. If not expressed, in the background: God absent; enemy too strong; psalmist at point of death.

2. See Sitzen im Leben above.

3. Two forms of:

a. narrative (present, not past):

“I waited for ‘a comforter, ‘but there was none. I waited for sympathizers, but did not find them. They gave me poison as bread for comfort, and made me drink vinegar for my thirst” (Ps 69:21f)²¹⁰

b. portrayal of distress highlights references to immediate present:

“Every night I wet my bed. My couch flows with tears.”²¹¹ My palate is as dry as a pot, and my tongue cleaves to my jaw.”²¹² The portrayals far outnumber the narrative references with which they alternate, which betrays the inner turmoil of the psalmists. Everything about which they complain is very close to them and the emotional fantasy, including death and the underworld.” (Ibid., 155)

4. Three common sub-motifs (see Psalm 3)

a. God appears to be absent

“I have been cast out from before your eyes;”²¹³ “The Lord will not hear me.”²¹⁴ “Why, YHWH do, you stand in the distance? Why do you hide in times ‘of distress?’”^{215~} “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

b. The enemy is too strong

c. “I” cannot cope and at point of death

210 Cf Ps 6:3, 4, 8; 22:13f; 27:10; 31:10, 12; 35:7; 38:3; etc.

211 Ps 6:7

212 Pss 22:16; cf. also 3:3; 5:10; 6:7; 10:2ff; 22:7f, 16-19; 31:10b; 35:11f, 20; 38:4f; etc.

213 Ps 31:23.

214 Pss 66:18; 116:10

215 Ps 10:1

5. Goal of motif: to move God to act

The goal of moving YHWH dominates the motif. The complaint should challenge YHWH'S honor (as with the complaint about enemies) and excite his anger, or the complaint should move him. Therefore, one should present the points of complaint as heatedly as possible. One prefers to choose the moment when everything stands under the blade of the knife. YHWH must now decide whether he will help. Otherwise, it will be too late." (Ibid., 155).

C. Petition

1. "The most significant part of the complaint song is the petition."²¹⁶
2. General: "Hear the prayer"; "look"; "wake up," "arise," etc.
3. Main point: "have compassion," "help me"; "deliver," etc.

N.B. *ysh*': military (rescue) and legal (right):

The root glossed *deliver* (*yās'a'*) plays a large role in the book of Psalms. Although its etymology is uncertain, it clearly denotes deliverance in both the military (cf. Jgs 12:2; 1 Sm 11:3) and juridical spheres (2 Sm 14:4). The two ideas coalesce, for the word denotes military or physical intervention because it is one's due or right (Dt 28:29, 31). J. Sawyer ("What I Was a *Moshia'*", *VT* 15 [1965] 479) notes that other words in the semantic domain of deliverance, such as *n.sl*, stress the idea of violent action, not invariably intervention on behalf of justice. He summarizes his argument that *mo'sia'*, the *nomen opificum* of the root *y's'*, has forensic sense: Negatively, (1) there are no cases in the Old Testament where a forensic meaning is impossible, and (2) there is no other word used so consistently in similarly contexts; and positively, (1) three quarters of its occurrences suggests...the language of the lawcourt, (2) the most probably [sic!] etymology...suggests a forensic origin for the root *y's'*, (3) there are other examples of forensic words appearing in wider and more general contexts, but still retaining forensic overtones, (4) the *mo'sia'* was always on the side of justice, (5) his activity seems to have been verbal rather than physical in many contexts,

216 Pss 3:8 ; 5:2f, 9, 11; 6:2, 3, 5; 7:2, 7, 9; 13:4; 16:1; 17:1ff, 6-9, 13, 14; 19:13-15; 22:12, 20-22; 25:4, 6, 7, 16-20; 26:1f, 9; 27:7-12; 28:1-4; 30:11; 31:2, 3, 10, 16, 17; 35:1-3, 22-24; 36:11; 38:2, 22, 23; 39:9, 11, 13, 14; 40:14, 18; 41:5, 11; 43:1, 3; 51:3, 4, 9-14, 16; 54:3, 4, 7; 55:2, 3; 56:2, 4, 8, 9; 57:2; 59:2, 3, 5, 6, 12, 13; 61:2, 3; 64:2, 3; 69:2, 14, 15, 17-19, 24, 25-28; 71:2-4, 9, 12, 18; 86:1-4, 6, 11, 16; 88:3; 102:2-4, 25; 109: 1, 6, 21, 26; 116:4; 118:25; 119:8, 10, 12, 17-19, 22, 25-29, 31, 33-40, 43, 49, 58, 64, 66, 68, 73, 86, 88, 94, 107, 108, 116, 117, 121, 122, 124, 125, 132-135, 144, 149; 120:2; 130:2; 138:8; 139:23f; 140:2, 7, 9; 141:1, 3, 4, 8; 142:7, 8; 143:1, 2, 7-12

unlike its synonyms, and (6) there was a place in ancient Israel for an “advocate” or a “witness for the defense,” as also for a “witness for the prosecuting.”

The responsibility to deliver for the cause of justice fell particularly upon the king (1 Sm 1:27; 2 Kgs 6:26) and above all upon *I AM*. If God fails to help the innocent sufferer, the afflicted is put to shame (Ps 44:8). The wronged party, however, has the responsibility to cry out, as in the case of rape (Dt 22:23–27). This is why the psalmists frequently emphasize that they have raised their voice (see 3:4). In response, *I am* is counted upon to uphold the course of justice. God’s help belongs especially to the king (Ps 20:6 [7], 9[10]), who in turn delivers the poor and needy (Ps 72:4; 109:31). This is so because in the legal process the king is the authority to whom one can address a legal claim (2 Sm 14:2; 2 Kgs 6:26). “This is why,” says F. Stolz, “the lament of the psalm is structured basically like profane legal contests.” In the case of the king, however, only God can deliver the wrongly afflicted monarch.

4. Specific, observable references: “illumine the eyes,” “raise him up,” “The feeling of the nearness of death and the abandonment to the underworld are expressed on occasion: “Do not gather me up in half of my days,”²¹⁷ “Save me from the land of silence.”²¹⁸
5. Seeks justice before the judge’s bench. “Judge me.”²¹⁹ “Vindicate me.”²²⁰ “Take my case.”²²¹
6. Introductory petitions: brief (see # 2 above) and alongside of address.

217 Ps 102:25

218 Ps 51:16

219 Pss 7:9; 35:23, 24; 43:1; 54:3.

220 Ps 26:1

221 Pss 119:154; 43:1

7. Peculiar/specific petitions

a. Confessional petitions.

“Forgive all my sins.”²²² “Blot out my wickedness.”²²³ “Forgive me, O YHWH, forgive me. Do not snatch me up with my sins. Do not be angry with me forever. Do not preserve my wicked deeds.”²²⁴

b. Petitions of the innocent

“Test me.”²²⁵ “Examine my kidneys and heart.”²²⁶ He urges the divine judge, “vindicate me.”²²⁷ The one praying beseeches YHWH to recognize his innocence, and not to leave him to fall to the fate of sinners.²²⁸

c. Conversion and protection against sin and assistance for new life

“The pious one begins to see that he is not capable of avoiding future sins, and he petitions that YHWH himself should give him teaching and instruction. “Teach me your statutes.”²²⁹ “Let my heart not incline to wicked words.”²³⁰ “Put a guard on my mouth,”²³¹ It is characteristic of these petitions that they petition for *protection from sin*. Other petitions lead even deeper. They do not remain stationary at this point. Rather, they seek YHWH’S *assistance* for a *new life*. “Let me walk in your truth.”²³² Teach me to do your will.”²³³ “Assist me with the spirit of obedience.”²³⁴ Finally, the ultimate and deepest petition comes very close to the New Testament: “YHWH, create in me a clean heart. Give me a new, steadfast spirit in my breast.” “Do not take your holy spirit from me.”²³⁵

222 Ps 25:18

223 Ps 51:3

224 Ps 25:11; 51:11

225 Ps 26:2.

226 Pss 26:2; cf. 139:23.

227 Ps 7:9; 26:1; 35:24; 43:14, 16

228 Ps 26:9; (28:3).477

229 Ps 119:12, 26, 64, 124, 135.

230 Ps 141:4.

231 Ps 141:3; similar petitions are found in 5:9; 25:4; 27:10, 11; 86:11; 90:12; 119:10, 18, 19, 29, 36, 43, 66, 68, 108, 125, 133; 143:8.

232 Ps 25:5; cf. 86:11.

233 Ps 143:10.

234 Ps 51:14.

235 Ps 51:12—13.

8. Wishes

- a. Normally in 3rd person
- b. Content similar to petition in 2nd person

“Let your hand come to help me.”²³⁶ “May he reach from heaven and help me.”²³⁷

“Let not the foot of pride trample on me.”²³⁸ Examples of the use of the first and second person include the following sentences. “May your light and your faithfulness lead me, and conduct me to your holy mountain.”²³⁹ “I want to be saved.”²⁴⁰ “I would like to be a guest in your tent forever.”²⁴¹

- c. Two special elements distinguish wish from petition

- 1.) Praising YHWH’s favor and grace and singing the thanksgiving song for him. These also stand at the conclusion of the complaint song or one of its components. Characteristically in 1st person.

“May I rejoice and shout over your grace.”²⁴² 5o7 “May I always

rejoice and multiply all your praise.”²⁴³ 5o8” May I proclaim the great deeds of YHWH.”²⁴⁴

- 2.) Wishes for friends at the end of the complaint song.

At the end of the complaint song, when the complaint and petition have been completed, the thoughts of the one praying turn to the friends and include them in the wishes. These wishes seek to create trust and hope for other poor and suffering people from the same happy deliverance of the one bringing the complaint. “May your pious ones turn to me.”²⁴⁵ “Let those rejoice who want my victory, and let them always say, ‘Great is YHWH who desires the salvation of his servant.’”²⁴⁶

236 Ps 119:173.

237 Ps 57:4.

238 Ps 36:12.

239 Ps 43:3.

240 Ps 119:17.

241 Ps 61:5.

242 Ps 31:8

243 Ps 71:14

244 Ps 71:16 Cf. also 35:9, 28; 43:4; 51:10, 16; 63:6; 71:15; 109:30; 119:171, 172.

245Ps 119:79.

246 Ps 35:27; C. also 5:12; 40:17; 52:8; 69:7; 119:74; 142:81.

9. Petitions and wishes directed against the enemies of the pray-er (see “imprecatory psalms” below).

a. Desire for vengeance (? See below)

"In the petitions all the pain of the one complaining surges forth in an inexorable desire for vengeance. The mildest form which one encounters is that YHWH intervene on behalf of his pious one: “Strive against those who strive against me. Draw forth spear and hatchet against my persecutors.”²⁴⁷ The following even appears relatively reserved: “Let their plots fail.”²⁴⁸ It is typical that these petitions are relatively difficult to find, for the psalmist shows no compassion in desiring the downfall of his opponents. “Pour out your curse on them.”²⁴⁹ “Destroy my enemies.”²⁵⁰ “Exterminate all those who are feuding with my soul.”²⁵¹, simply expressing his thoughts of rage do not calm the rage of the one complaining. In gory detail, he paints a picture of how YHWH will kill them. “Appoint over him a wicked judge.”²⁵² “Break the arm of the wicked.”²⁵³ “ Let their loins ever stagger.”²⁵⁴ His desire for vengeance even follows the descendants of his opponent: [“ Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is the one who repays you according to what you have done to us. Blessed is the one who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.”²⁵⁵] He petitions YHWH not to forgive his opponent’s guilt. Reckon their wickedness.”²⁵⁶ “Strike them ‘according to’ the quantity of their sins.”²⁵⁷ “DO not forgive their sins.”²⁵⁸ It is even more terrible when the one praying does not stop there, but petitions YHWH to deliver their guilt even deeper into guilt: “pile guilt on top of guilt.”²⁵⁹

247 Pss 35:1, 3; cf. 17:13.

248 Ps 5:11; cf. 7:7 9a.

249 Ps 69:25.

250 Ps 143:12.

251 Ps 143:12; cf. also 17:14; 54:7.

252 Ps 109:6.

253 Ps 10:15.

254 Ps 69:25

255 Ps. 137:8—9/

256 Ps 28:4.

257 Ps 5:11.

258 Jer 8:23; cf. also Pss 10:15; 59:6; Jer 15:15.

259 Ps 69:28.

.....

“It should be noted that the *wishes against the enemies* just about double the *petitions* against the enemies. The wishes deliberately provide more possibilities for the psalmist’s pain and seeking vengeance. The manner of destruction is portrayed here in blazing colors, by far more blazing than in the petitions. It is thus all the more remarkable that the wishes against the enemies *almost never mention YHWH*. The enemy and that which belongs to the enemy are the subject of the sentence and the jussive is the predicate that relates to the enemies’ judgment and downfall. It is frequently wished that the enemies and their plans will experience bitter disappointment. “May those who wish my misfortune retreat and be ashamed.”²⁶⁰ “Let them be dressed in disgrace and shame.”²⁶¹ “May those despising me not raise their head.”²⁶² Wishes that only want to avert the opponents enjoyment of their pain sound somewhat milder. “They should not rejoice on my account.”²⁶³ “Stop them from’ cursing and lying.”²⁶⁴ “May the evil of the wicked come to an end.”²⁶⁵ Typically, these milder sentences are relatively few. Reserved response toward the enemies does not come easily for the Israelite. On the contrary, the Israelite wishes them death and destruction. “May their days not be complete.”²⁶⁶ “May they go shaking down to hell.”²⁶⁷ “Let them be blotted out of the book of life.”²⁶⁸ “May the godless come to disgrace, may they be silenced in the underworld.”²⁶⁹

.....

”The bitterness does not stop with the relatives and the descendants of the opponent. “The body of their sons will be filled’ with their inheritance (sins and curse). ‘May they be full’ of that and still leave the rest to their own children.”²⁷⁰ (Ibid., 165—167)

260 Ps 40:15

261 Ps 35:26

262 Ps 140:10; cf also Pss 6:11; 31:18; 35:4; 40:16; 56:10; 71:13; 86:17; 109:29; 119:78.

263 Pss 35:24; 38:17.

264 Ps 59:13.

265 Pss 7:10; cf. further 25:2; 35: 19, 24, 25.

266 Ps 55:24

267 Ps 55:16

268 Pss 69:29; cf. 9:18

269 Ps 31:18; cf. also 63:10.

270 Ps 52:7.

See below (Part II. Imprecatory psalms) for a Christian interpretation for these prayers against the enemy.

10. Not primitive-magic thought that curses work by themselves and require no other power.

Gunkel thinks they were originally magical but not within their context: “The fact that these formulas [wishes against enemy without mentioning YHWH] were not thought to be more than self-actualizing is seen first in their locations within prayers, which turn to YHWH and further in the fact that the petition and wish stand so close together and can be interchanged” (Ibid., 167).

11. Reproachful question

The complaint seeks the solution to the tormenting question “why?,” the petition impatiently looks for the end of the suffering condition. The question “when?” is characteristic for it. “When will I come and see YHWH’S face?”²⁷¹ “When will you act rightly toward my persecutor?”²⁷² “When will you comfort me?”²⁷³ It is instructive to observe how complaint and petition mix together in precisely these ardent questions. The material belongs to the former while the form belongs to the latter: “How long, YHWH will you continually forget me? How long will you hide your face from me? How long shall I bear the cares of my soul, or the grief of my heart day and night? How long will my enemy triumph over me?”²⁷⁴ (Ibid., 169)

N.B. In the old dispensation undeserved suffering unexpected (cf. Deut 28; Lev 26); in NT undeserved suffering expected. Nevertheless, in the old dispensation many saints (e.g., Abel, Job, Moses, Jeremiah), suffered, like the psalmists, for being faithful. Several Old Testament stories recognize the spiritually formative value of suffering. In the Wilderness Israel learned what living with the LORD meant. Through causing Israel to hunger and then feeding them, the LORD taught them to be teachable (Exodus 16:4; Deuteronomy 8:2—4). By allowing the Canaanites to remain the land he taught holy warfare to the descendants of Joshua’s generation (Judg. 3:1-2).

271 Ps 42:3.

272 Ps 119:84.

273 Ps 119:82.

274 Pss 13:1—3; see also 6:4; 35:17.

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me” (John 15:18—21).

12 Rationale for divine intervention

a. God’s benevolent attributes:

“Lead me according to your righteousness.”²⁷⁵ “Help me on account of your grace.”²⁷⁶ “Do away with my wickedness according to your abundant compassion”²⁷⁷; etc.

b. So enemies will not prevail

“Lead me . . . on account of my enemies.”²⁷⁸ “Lead me on a level path on account of those slandering me.” ... “For my enemy does not say, ‘I have overcome him.’ My opponents do not rejoice that I have wavered.”²⁷⁹

c. Confidence

“Confidence in YHWH is the preferred and the most frequently stated reason why the poets of the complaint songs offer their petition.” These are frequently attached by *ki*(for) because of the causal relationship in which they stand to the petitions. Very frequently the psalmist speaks in simple and therefore very moving words: “I trust in you.”²⁸⁰ Or, the psalmist accentuates how incessantly he depends upon YHWH. “I keep YHWH before me always.”²⁸¹ “My eyes always look to YHWH.”²⁸² The following assurance sounds even more certain: “My soul still belongs to YHWH.”²⁸³ “I say to the

275 Ps 5:9

276 Ps 6:5

277 Ps 51:3; see also 25:7, 11; 31:2f; 35:24; 69:14, 17; 71:2; 109:21; 119:25, 28, 40, 58, 107, 116, 169, 170.

278 Ps 27:11.

279 Ps 13:5.

280 Pss 13:6; 25:2; 26:1; 31:7, 15; 55:24; 56:4; 119:42, 66; 143:8; see also 16:1; 57:2.

281 Ps 16:8

282 Pss 25:15; see also 119:82; 141:8.

283 Ps 62:2.

LORD, “You are my God.” Hear, LORD, my cry for mercy.”²⁸⁴ (Ibid., 170—171).

d. Brevity of life

“One presents the *brevity of human life* to YHWH, so that YHWH can do something and the one praying will not be taken away before his time. “‘I make’ known to you my end.”²⁸⁵ “I incline myself toward you like a shadow. I go forth, but am blown away like locusts ‘and am no more.’”²⁸⁶ “Consider ‘how I go forth forever.’ Have you created all human children for nothing?”²⁸⁷

e. God loses praise in death

“In death, one does not think of you.”²⁸⁸ “What good is my blood to you so that I should go to the grave? Can dust thank you or proclaim your faithfulness?”²⁸⁹

D. Confidence (see Psalms 23, 91)

N.B. Gunkel subsumes this motif under petition, but most treat it separately.

1. Expressions for what God is to the psalmist

YHWH is designated as “my God” extremely frequently.²⁹⁰ For the one praying, different expressions declare that God is the confidence,²⁹¹ the hope,²⁹² “the God of

284 Ps 140:7.

285 Ps 39:5.

286 Ps 109:23.

287 Pss. 89:48; see also 39:6; 119:8f, 83.

288 Ps 6:6.

289 Ps 30:10; see also 88:11—13.

290 Pss s 3:8; 7:2, 4, 7; 13:4; 22:1, 11; 25:2; 31:15; 35:23; 38:16, 22; 40:18; 42:7, 12; 43:4, 5;

59:2; 63:2; 69:4; 71:4; 109:26; 140:7; 143:10.

291 Pss 22:10; 71:5.

292 Ps 71:5.

his life,²⁹³ and his salvation,²⁹⁴ his light,²⁹⁵ his savior and redeemer.²⁹⁶ The innocent one turns to his just God,²⁹⁷ the one who is shamed calls God his honor.²⁹⁸ Different expressions describe YHWH as the psalmist's help.²⁹⁹ Indeed the expressions also select comparisons. YHWH is a "place of refuge,"³⁰⁰ a "steep mountain,"³⁰¹ a "cliff,"³⁰² a "fort,"³⁰³ a "strong tower,"³⁰⁴ or even a wonderful, all encompassing shield.³⁰⁵

2. Expressions of what God does for the psalmist:

"If I cry aloud to YHWH, he, will hear me."³⁰⁶ "You will answer me."³⁰⁷ In addition, all kinds of sentences appear which say that the one praying is supplied by God with his help, grace, and intercession. "YHWH keeps me."³⁰⁸ He will help me."³⁰⁹ "He will hide me in 'his' hut on the day of judgment. He provides me with shade in the shadow of his tent, and raises me high upon the cliffs."³¹⁰

293 Ps 42:3, 9.

294 Pss 25:5; 27:9.

295 Ps 27:1

296 Pss 19:15; 40:18;a 70:6.

297 Ps 17:1.

298 Pss 3:4; **also** 16:1, 5, 6; 31:6; 43:2; 54:6; 142:6.

299 Pss 22:20; 27:1, 9; 35:3; 38:23; 40:18; 42:6, 12; 43:s; 70:6.

300 Pss 61:4; 142:6.

301 Pss 31:4; 71:3.

302 Ps 19:5; 28:1; 31:3

303 Pss 31:3, 4; 71:3; **cf.** 59:10.

304 Ps 61:4.

305 Pss 3:4; **cf.** 7:11.

306 Ps 3:5.

307 Pss 38:16; 17:6; **cf.** 4:4; 55:19.

308 Ps 3:6.

309 Ps 55:17.

310Pss 27:5; **see also** 16:11; 23:3, 4, 5, 6; 25:15; 27:4; 31:6; 55:11; 59:9; 119:6, 50; 140:6,

3. Reasons for confidence

a. *God's being: see hymns*

“He can only establish himself on YHWH’S deeds, and can only comfort himself by reflecting upon YHWH’S being. Thus he looks at everything from above, not from the perspective of the pious one’s experience.” (Ibid., 174)

1.) “Goodness”:

“YHWH is good to those who hope in him.”³¹¹ “YHWH is good and true.”³¹²
“YHWH is the one helping the honest heart.”³¹³

2.) *omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence*

“YHWH, you know all their deadly plans against me.”³¹⁴

3.) *forgiveness*

“Forgiveness is with him so that he might be feared.”³¹⁵

b. *Personal experience (see Psalm 22)*

“I have been cast to you from my mother’s womb. You have been my God since I was on my mother’s lap.”³¹⁶ “You have been a help to me. ‘I found my nest’ in the shadow of your wings. My soul clung to you. Your justice kept me upright.”³¹⁷ “YHWH, you have taught me since I was a youth.”³¹⁸

311 Lam 3:25.

312 Ps 25:8.

313 Pss 7:11; see also 7:12; 25:6, 8, 9, 10, 14,

314 Jer 18:23; cf. 12:3; Psalm 139:1—12

315 Ps 130.

316 Ps 22:11.

317 Ps 63:8—9

318 Pss 71:17; cf. 35; 4:2; 119:50, 65, 71, 73.

c. King knows his election: (see Psalm 3)

d. Godless find no place with I AM

“You have no pleasure in wickedness. No evil one may be a guest of yours. Fools may not appear before your eyes. You hate all those doing wrong, those speaking lies, the man of deceit. And ‘you shy away from’ murder, YHWH.”³¹⁹ ...”I will think of this and my soul shudders within me, so that I might one day go to the ‘tent of majesty, ‘ to YHWH’S house, with the sound of rejoicing and thanksgiving, ‘the noise’ of the pilgrims.”³²⁰ Or, one remembers how the lot almost would have been different if YHWH had not helped. “They had almost abandoned me to the earth.”³²¹ “Had YHWH not been my help, my soul would already lay in the land of silence.”³²²

e. Rationale of the innocent (see Psalm 22, 44)

“None who wait on you will come to shame.”³²³

“The innocent one places his pious conviction before YHWH. “I am pious.”³²⁴ He knows nothing of wicked deeds: ‘I did not overstep’ your command regarding bloody’ deeds. . . My step does not tread on the path of the robber. I did not deviate from your tracks.”³²⁵ Conscious of his innocence the one praying laments. “They hate me without reason.”³²⁶ “Though I am not guilty and have not erred, they run at me and make me an example.”³²⁷ It is quite sufficient for him that he may enter YHWH’S house. That is also proof of his innocence: “But I may enter your house by your great grace, and cast myself down in fear before you in front of your holy temple.”³²⁸ ...The psalmist portrays his *humility*: “I am mute. I do not open my mouth, for you have done it.”³²⁹ Or, he is zealous for YHWH and his

319 Pss 5:5—7; cf. 31:7.

320 Ps 42:5; [cf. Ps 77]

321 Ps 119:87

322 Pss 94:17; see also 94:18; 119:92.

323 Ps 25:3; 71:6, 17

324 Ps 86:2.

325 Pss 117:23—5; see also 26:4—5.

326 Ps 35:7, 19.

327 Ps 59:4.

328 Ps 5:8; see also 26:6—8.

329 Ps 39:10; similarly 39:2—4.

honor. “Zeal for your house consumed me.”³³⁰ “My zeal kills me because my enemies forget your words.”³³¹ He calls himself to strive for good: “They feud with me because I search out good.”³³² (Ibid., 176)

N.B. Conviction of innocence necessary for conviction of deliverance.

f. rationale for penitent (see Psalm 51)

“The *rationale of the penitent one* is completely different. It contains no reference to innocence and lawfulness, no self-conscious citation of good deeds. The one confessing stands under the convicting conscience of *God’s righteous anger over his sins*. This can be expressed in the petition itself. “Forgive me my guilt even though it is great.”³³³ Generally, the confession of sin is expressed in a particular sentence. “I confess my wickedness.”³³⁴ “My faults go over my head.”³³⁵ “My sins have hemmed me in, and I cannot bear them. They are more than the hairs on my head. My courage has left me.”³³⁶ (Ibid., 176f.)

E. Conclusion

1. May end in complaint³³⁷

2. More often in petition and especially wish

- a. Rarely for self³³⁸
- b. Friends and pious in general³³⁹
- c. All humanity

330 Ps 69:10

331 Ps 119:139.

332 Ps 38:21.

333 Ps 25:11.

334 Ps 51:5.

335 Ps 38:5.

336 Pss 40:13;cf. 32:5; 38:19; 88:17.

337 Ps 120:5—7.

338 Ps 17:12; 141:10; similarly 43:3—4.

339 Pss 6 3:10f; 86:14ff; 35:27; 142:8.

“May all humanity be afraid, interpret his action, and recognize his work.

May the righteous rejoice in YHWH, and may all pious hearts triumph.”³⁴⁰ May the pious “always” have cause to celebrate.³⁴¹ (Ibid., 179).

3. Supplication transformed into certainty of being heard

a. Data

“I trust your grace,”³⁴² “I am like a green olive tree in the house ‘of YHWH.’ I trust ‘YHWH’S’ grace for ever and always.”³⁴³ “You bless the righteous, YHWH, ‘with salvation’ and ‘protect him’ like a shield. You crown him with favor.”³⁴⁴ “‘YHWH’ is my shield ‘that protects me, ‘the helper of the honest heart.’” “‘YHWH’ judges the righteous and ‘repays the one who’ curses every day.” “You guarantee ‘the supplication’ of those who fear your name.” These words precede the following: “for you, YHWH examine my vow.”

Examples from Jeremiah will illustrate: “But YHWH the Lord judges rightly. He examines heart and soul. I will see my vengeance on them, for I have cast my matter to you.”³⁴⁵ “But YHWH is with me like a mighty hero, therefore my opponents must stumble.”³⁴⁶ The material of the petition appears here, but it is no longer received in the form of the imperative or the wish. Rather, it appears in the form of certain expectation.” (Ibid. 181).

b. Explanation of transformation

- 1.) Priestly oracle 1 Sam 2; Ps 5:4. Gunkel refuted this and explanation not followed
- 2.) Psychology of faith

“In the prayer itself, a wonderful metamorphosis is completed unconsciously and unintentionally, often quite suddenly. The feeling of uncertainty and reservation is dissolved by the happy awareness of protection and being

340Ps 64:10—11 729

341 731

342 Ps 13:6.

343 Ps 52:10; cf. 55:24

344 Ps 5:13.

345 Jer 11:20.

346 Jer 20:11.

hidden in the hand of a protective higher power. Certainty breaks through doubt and questioning. From the fear comes confidence, and from the anxiety and timidity comes the courage of rejoicing in the future. Desires and wishes become internal assets and possessions.”³⁴⁷ From this experience, Luther writes to Melancthon, “I have prayed for you. . . . I have felt the amen in my heart.”³⁴⁸ From this experience, Calvin formulated the rule of prayer: “In the midst of misgivings, fear, and wavering, we should force ourselves to pray until we find illumination which calms us. If our hearts waver, and are disturbed, we may not give up until faith proceeds victoriously from the battle.”³⁴⁹ (Ibid., 183f.)

N.B. But not all psalms end with certainty of being heard. Is their inspiration less than perfect?!

4. The vow: “the expression of the feeling of thankfulness which has welled up.”

“I will freely bring you offerings.”³⁵⁰ “Your vows are incumbent upon me, YHWH. I will pay you with a thanksgiving offering.”³⁵¹

Part II. Imprecatory Psalms

I. Psalm 137: a song of Zion (Pss. 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122, 132) reversed into a song of lament. A case study.

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion.

² There on the poplars we hung our harps,

³ for there our captors asked us for songs,

our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said,

"Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"

347 Fr Heiler, *Das Gebet*,⁴ 1921, p. 380.

348 L. Enders, *M.Luthers Briefwechsel*, vol. 8, p. 52; vol. 3, pp. 85ff.

349 Heiler, *Das Gebet*,⁴ 383.

350 Ps 54:8.

351 Ps 56:13; cf. 61:9. In Ps 27:6 the offering of jubilation appears in place of the thanksgiving offering, though it does not belong to the complaint songs in the strictest sense.

- ⁴ How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?
⁵ If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill.
⁶ May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you,
if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy.
⁷ Remember, LORD, what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell.
"Tear it down," they cried, "tear it down to its foundations!"
⁸ Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction,
blessed is the one who repays you according to what you have done to us.
⁹ Blessed is the one who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.

A. Congregational lament (vv. 1-4): we/ past tense/ pathos/ lament

1. The fact: refusal to sing of Zion in Babylon (v. 1-2)
2. The reason: taunt of Babylonians (v.3)

B. Imprecations (vv. 5-8): I/ present tense/ indignation/petition

1. Against self should he forget Zion (vv. 5-6)
 - a. against hand (v. 5)
 - b. against tongue (v. 6)
2. Against Edom for gloating at Zion's defeat (v. 7)

N.B. If the poet will remember Zion how much more should God.

3. Against Babylon for razing Zion (vv. 8-9)

N. B, Some say it is not fit for the praise of God. Kenneth Slack, for example suggest that "We need not regret that the whole [of Psalm 137] was included, providing that we do not say that this is all the word of God." He later calls it "this grotesquely beastly blessing."³⁵² Hossfeld and Zenger suggest only as a 'poetic metaphor' are we

³⁵² Kenneth Slack, *New Light on Old Songs: Studies in the Psalms in the Light of the New Translations* (Naperville, IL: SCM, 1975), 22.

able to “pray and sing Psalm 137 ... today when we are aware of the problematic nature of images of violence”³⁵³

N.B. Zion is the place of God's saving presence on earth (Pss 9:11; 76:2; 87:3; 132:13; cf. Ps 137:5a, 67b). The passion that throbs in his imprecations is not mere nationalism but zeal for God's kingdom.

N.B. Oriental warfare spared neither women nor children. The prayer is for strict justice. The practice aimed to terminate further revenge. But there are exceptions if condemned repent. Cf. Dt. 7:1—2 with Joshua 2:12—13. “When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you—² and when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy (Dt. 7:1—2).¹² “Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign¹³ that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them—and that you will save us from death.”¹⁴ “Our lives for your lives!” the men assured her. (Jos 2:13-14 N10) (Jos 2:12-13).

II. The Problem of "imprecatory psalms"

A. Definition:

One in which the psalmist prays that God will avenge the wrongs done to him by the enemy by punishing him. They are not prayers for revenge.

B. Problem for the Christian.

They are inconsistent with Jesus' teaching (Mt. 5:39-42, 43-48; 6:14; Ac. 7:60).

C. Unacceptable solutions to problem

1. Imprecations are prophetic (Barnes, Augustine, Spurgeon, et. al.). Objection: grammatically tenuous.

353 (2011: 523; cf. Zenger, 1996:47—50).

2. Non-Christian and therefore spiritually tarnished.

a. Extreme

The imprecations are composed by "mean spirited individuals who thought only of thirst after conquest and revenge"³⁵⁴

“Even more devilish in one verse is the otherwise beautiful 137 where a blessing is pronounced in anyone who will snatch up a Babylonian baby and beat its brains out against the pavement. . . They are indeed devilish. But we must also think of those who made them so.”³⁵⁵

b. Moderate

“David in the ‘twilight’ spiritually³⁵⁶

"God's wholly committed man, yet a man who was estranged from God's spirit."³⁵⁷

“What actually occurred in the mind of the Psalmist and are preserved to us is an illustration of human nature partially sanctified.”³⁵⁸

c. Objections: theologically tenuous

- 1) In the case of some, the doctrine of inspiration is disregarded.
- 2) No indication in the psalms themselves that the Spirit censored these portions of them.

354 R. Kittel, *The Scientific Study of the Old Testament* pp. 102, 143.

355 C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, pp. 23, 27.

356 J. W. Beardslee, "The Imprecatory Element in the Psalms," *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, 8 (1894) 491.

357 John Bright, *The Authority of the Old Testament*, p. 236-37

358 Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament: The Book of Psalms*, l.xxxvii-xl.

- 3) Moses prayed that Yahweh scatter enemies (Nu. 10:35). Prayers of judgment are also found in prophets. (Jer 11:18f; 15:15f; 17:18f; 18:19f; 20:11f).
- 4) NT cites imprecatory prayers approvingly. Ac 1:20 and Ro. 11:9,10 with Ps. 69:22-28, Ps. 109:6-15.

Acts 1:20 "For it is written in the Book of Psalms, "'May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it'; and "'Let another take his office.'

- 5) Similar prayers in NT: Rev. 6:9-10.

⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.

¹⁰ They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?"

- 6) Severe treatment of certain enemies in NT (Acts 8:20; 13:10-11; 23:3; 2 Ti 4:14; 1 Cor 5:5; Rev 6:10).
- 7) Be angry and sin not Eph 4:25-26.

3. Church use of them without adaptation. See Bob Jones, *Oregonian* (April 3, 1982) E4.

"I hope that you'll [students at Bob Jones] pray that the Lord will smite him [Alexander Haig], hip and thigh, bone and marrow, heart and lungs and all there is to him, that he shall destroy him quickly and utterly,' Jones said."

- a. Inconsistent with Jesus' teaching.
- b. Inconsistent with the practice of Jesus (cf. Jn 13:18 with Ps 41:9-10; cf. 23:34 (text?) and Church (Ac. 7:60).

IV. Toward a Solution³⁵⁹

A. Prayers are by saints (esp. the innocently suffering king) who suffered gross injustices; cf. Psalm 5.

"Most commentators read the Psalms from the comfortable perspective of security and economic affluence. Few have experienced the agony of utterly unprovoked, naked aggression and gross exploitation. It is questionable whether such a detached discussion on responding to enemies would take place in the face of people with manifestly evil intentions³⁶⁰

B. Prayers are righteous and just: they ask for strict retribution.

These prayers assume that the civil courts either will not uphold justice (see Micah 7:1-7) or can not (as in war).

1. Consistent with OT concern for retribution: Lv. 24:17-22
2. Imprecatory psalms entail a very high view of justice.

C. S. Lewis: *Reflection on the Psalms*. Such expressions are lacking in pagan literature because Jews had a firmer grasp on right and wrong.

"If we are to excuse the poets of the Psalms on the ground that they were not Christians, we ought to be able to point to the same sort of thing, and worse, in Pagan authors. Perhaps if I knew more Pagan literature I should be able to do this. But in what I do know (a little Greek, a little Latin, and of Old Norse very little indeed) I am not all sure that I can. I can find in them lasciviousness, much brutal insensibility, cold cruelties taken for granted, but not this fury or luxury of hatred. . . One's first impression is that the Jews were much more vindictive and vitriolic than the Pagans."

p. 31 "Thus the absence of anger, especially that sort of anger which we call *indignation*, can, in my opinion, be a most alarming symptom. . . If the Jews

359 Cf. Nancy deClasse/-/Walford, "The Theology of the Imprecatory Psalms," in Rolf A. Jacobson ed. *Soundings in the Theology of Psalms: Perspectives and Methods in Contemporary Scholarship* (Minneapolis: Fortress), 77—92.

360 Rory Prest, "Enemies in the Psalms" (Regent College, 1980) p. 8.

cursed more bitterly than the Pagans this was, I think, at least in part because they took right and wrong more seriously. For if we look at their railings we find they are usually angry not simply because these things have been done to them but because they are manifestly wrong, are hateful to God as well as to the victim. The thought of the 'righteous Lord'—who surely must hate such doings as much as they do, who surely therefore must (but how terribly He delays!) 'judge' or avenge, is always there, if only in the background."

3. NT upholds the justice of God.

- a. God will answer the prayers for justice. Luke 18:6-8

⁷ And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

- b. Cf. Mt 7:23 with Psalm 6:8—one thing to be driven out by David, another by Jesus Christ; Mt. 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:6-9;

⁴⁶ "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

C. Prayers are faithful: trust God, not themselves, to avenge gross injustices against them.

1. Not imprecations, to call down curses upon someone, but prayers. Petitions, depending on God
2. Consistent with OT theology.
 - a. Life of David: 1 Sa. 24:1-13; 26:1-12. Kidner: "There have been few men more capable of generosity under personal attack than David, as he proved by his attitudes toward Saul and Absalom, to say nothing of Shemei."
 - b. Sarah: "the LORD judge between me and you" (Gen 16:5)
 - c. The wicked avenge (Heb. *naqam*) themselves. Sin of Lamech; Ps 8:2.

3. The concept of "vengeance" (*NQM*) entails faith. B.W. Anderson oversimplifies meaning of word to "to save." Better, it means that the LORD secures his sovereignty and keeps his community whole by delivering his wronged subjects and punishing their guilty slayers. Viewed from the perspective of the sovereign acting on behalf of his besieged community a translation such as "deliver" or "rescue" is called for, but where the perspective is between the ruler and the enemy, as in Mi. 5:14, a translation such as "defeat" or "punishment" is appropriate. Only the sovereign himself has the legitimate right to use force to protect his imperium; the exercise of force by an individual is actually a hostile act. Mendenhall³⁶¹ notes: "With reference to the early usages of *NQM*, one must conclude that the normative value system of the early biblical society would never tolerate an individual's resorting to force in order to obtain redress for a wrong suffered . . . Yahweh was the sovereign to whom alone belonged the monopoly of force. Self-help of individuals or even of society without authorization of Yahweh was an attack upon God himself."

See Anderson, p. 59 where he cites appropriately Ringgren's citation of the Babylonian phrase "living *in a ramanishu*" — living by oneself, on one's own sources, without dependence on God. "This refusal to 'let God be God' is 'the essence of sin' and hence the fool and his folly will be exposed in the day when God judges the people."

Moral. Do not avenge yourselves. Ro. 12:17-21.

**D. Prayers are ethical: ask God to distinguish between right and wrong.
Psalm 7:8-9; cf. 2 Tim. 4:14-16.**

Judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness,
according to my integrity, O Most High.

O righteous God, who searches minds and hearts,
bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure

361 Mendenhall. *The Tenth Generation*, p. 95

E. Prayers are theocratic: look for establishment of kingdom of righteousness by the Moral Administrator of Universe. Psalm 82.

1. The earthly king asks no more of the Heavenly King than the latter asked of him. Dt. 13:5; 17:7; 17:12; 19:13, 19; 21:9; 21:22; 22:22, 24. 72:1ff; 82:3-4.
2. Prayers are part of larger problem of war in the OT (Dt. 20:10-15). War in the OT entailed genocide (i.e death was inflicted on an individual of a group apart from due process of law) to establish God's righteous kingdom. Innocent individuals, however, were spared: cf. Gn 18:16-33; Joshua 2. Contra Lenin who introduced genocide on the basis of class, and Hitler who followed it with genocide of race.
3. Re-enforced in Lord's prayer. Lk 11:1-13; 18:1-8.³⁶²

F. Prayers are theocentric: aim to see God praised for manifesting his righteousness and justice in the eyes of all. Psalm 35:27-28; 58:10-11

May those who delight in my vindication
shout for joy and gladness;
may they always say, 'The LORD be exalted,
who delights in the well-being of his servant.'
My tongue will speak of your righteousness
and of your praises all day long.

G. Prayers are evangelistic: aim for conversion of earth by letting all men see that the Lord is Most High over all the earth. 83:17, 18.

May they ever be ashamed and dismayed,
may they perish in disgrace.
Let them know that you, whose name is the LORD—
that you alone are the Most high over all the earth.

See Leupold

362 See Leupold, p. 19

H. Prayers are covenantal: wrong against saint is seen as a wrong against God. Psalm 69:7-9, 22-28; 139:19-22.³⁶³

For I endure scorn for your sake,
and shame covers my face.
I am a stranger to my brothers,
an alien to my own mother's sons;
for zeal for your house consumes me,
and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.

I. Prayers are oriental: full of figures, especially hyperbole. Cf. Jer. 20:14-18 ³⁶⁴

J. Maledictions are conditional: Jer 18:7-10.

K. Prayer must be held in dialectical tension with concept of divine mercy and grace: Pr. 24:17-18; 25:21-22.

L. Prayers are political³⁶⁵

1. If we may presume the enemy heard the prayer, he would be publicly exposed as one who opposes the kingdom of God.
2. The righteous identify with the psalmist and rally around him (Ps. 142:7; cf. the complaint of Psalm 38 "my friends and companions stand aloof from my plague, and my kinsmen stand afar off" (v. 11).)
3. Enemy and potential evil-doer may be instructed and converted through prayer: cf. Ps. 51:13; 94:8-11

V. Conclusion

A. Prayers conform to sound doctrine. 2 Tim 3:16

363 Chalmers Martin, "The Imprecations in the Psalms," *Princeton Theological Review* 1.4 (1903) 537-553.

364 G. Fee and D. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for all its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981) 182. See hyperbole in Lk 17:2. Kirkpatrick, pp. xcii-xciii.

365 Gerald T. Sheppard, "'Enemies' and the Politics of Prayer in the Book of Psalms," in *The Bible and the Politic of Exegesis*, edited by David Jobling, Peggy L. Day, Gerald T. Sheppard (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim press, 1991).

B. Prayer for justice apart from praying for forgiveness is inappropriate for new Israel

1. Judgment now postponed to final day of judgment: Jn 15:15; Mt 25:46; 2 Th 1:5-9; Revelation; Mt 13:30; cf. Isa 61:1ff with Lk 4:18-20; 2 Co 6:2.
2. Sin and sinner are now more distinctly differentiated: Eph 6:11-18. Against spiritual powers of darkness. Mt. 6:13, but not against person who do evil against us (Lk 6:28, 35).
3. Kingdom comes spiritually, not carnally: Mt 16:18; Lk 10:18.
4. Leave judgment in hands of God: Lk 18:7-8; Rom 12:19.
5. Anger can be the emotional experience that brings us to our feet in praying for justice.³⁶⁶
6. "Only in dialogue with God can we gain perspective through which to take appropriate action. The prayers in the Psalms serve as a guide to direct our anger through God rather than to others³⁶⁷

C. Analogies that imprecatory psalms present sound doctrines that are normative for the church and yet the practice of praying them is non-normative: 2 Timothy 4:14-18; cf. Luke 4:14-21 with Isaiah 61:1-1-2.

D. Prayers are appropriate against Satan.

The enemies are more than human. The animal figures used of them show they are representatives of non-human order. They are representative of all the forces of evil, of chaos and death, arrayed against cosmos and life which God upholds by his covenant. In NT language they become epitomized in Satan and his demonic host behind nations and bestial men.

366 E. Peterson, *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), p. 99.

367 Fee and Stuart, p. 182.

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13. Individual lament: Psalm 3

Part I. Introduction

I. Translation

Superscript: A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.

- ¹ *I AM*, how many are my foes!
Many rise up against me!
- ² Many are saying of me,
"God will not deliver him."
- ³ But you, *I AM*, are a shield around me;
you are my glory, the one who lifts up my head.
- ⁴ I cry aloud to *I AM*,
and he answers me from his holy hill.
- ⁵ I lay down and slept;
I awoke because *I AM* sustains me.
- ⁶ I do not fear the tens of thousands of troops
Who are drawn up against me on every side.
- ⁷ Arise, *I AM*! Deliver me, my God!
Strike all my enemies on the cheek;
break the teeth of the wicked.
- ⁸ Deliverance belongs to *I AM*.
Your blessing be on your people.

Postscript: For the director of music. With stringed instruments.

II. History: Voice of Church

- A. Throughout church history, at Easter the commemoration of Ps. 3:5 was most intently celebrated.
- B. Desert Fathers (4th cent.): Daily recitation of the psalms, commonly twelve psalms in the morning prayer within one's own cell, and twelve psalms at night, became the daily practice, beginning the early morning with Psalm 3 (also more commonly later, Ps. 63 [LXX, 62]) and ending with Psalm 140, and other prayers at the third, sixth, and ninth

hours. Such became the origin and long tradition of the liturgical “hours”, with its variants in the diverse monastic foundations, East and West. During the manual labor of the day, the psalms were constantly chanted. Palladius (363-431) reports that around 3 p.m., “one can stand and hear the divine psalmody issuing forth from each cell and imagine one is high above, in paradise,” that is with the angels. This was the time of day for the main meal, or in more ascetic forms, the single meal of the day.

- C. Pseudo-Bede (b. c. 1103). Sung after Lent to celebrate Christ’s resurrection; third psalm because Christ was raised on the third day!

III. Sitz im Buch (literary context)

Psalm 3 is the first of 12 psalms composed of ten prayers of two groups of five (Pss 3-7; 9-13), with a sixth that characterizes the human condition (Pss 8; 14).

There is a theological journey of the king in Psalms 1, 2, 3, 4,

1. J. Brennan sees a conceptual connection between Psalms 1-3. “By aligning ourselves with the ‘just’ in Psalm 1, and with those who ‘trust in Yahweh’ in Psalm 2 . . . we become part of that people upon whom he invokes Yahweh’s blessing (3:9).”
2. Psalm 2 and 3 share a conceptual kingship connection: “The king who is introduced by Yahweh in Ps. 2, and the enemies who plot against him, reappear in Ps. 3, which is the first of a series of laments in which the king himself cries out to Yahweh for deliverance from those who press in upon him from every side.” The political order of heaven envisioned Psalm 2 is overturned on earth in Psalm 3. In Psalm 2, *I AM* installs his anointed king on his throne; in Psalm 3 the king’s non-anointed son, the heir apparent, dethrones his anointed father. In Psalm 2 the father’s anointed son, by faith, recites both his right to the throne and his prayer to inherit the earth; in Psalm 3 he prays for deliverance from his own people, including his son, who like mad animals seek to devour him.
3. Psalm 3 shares an even closer relationship with Psalm 4: both pertain to the king who is opposed by enemies within his own ranks. Moreover, Psalm 3 is a morning prayer, psalm 4, an evening prayer. Finally, both contain a number of catch words that crochet them together: *s/.ar* (“foes” [3:1]; “distress” [4:1]); *rabbim* ‘o/-/m^erim (“many are [saying, 3:2 [3], asking [4:6 [7]); *k^ebo/~/di/~/* (“my glory” [3:3 [4]; 4:2 [3]).

Symbolically, the king is driven from his palace (political order) into the wilderness (chaos). Though the king’s “landscape” is in disarray, his faith in God gives his spiritual “inscape” order. His faith expresses itself in Psalm 3 and serves as a model prayer that turns an up-side-

down world right-side-up. The basis of his prayer that turns the world right side up is his covenant relationship with God, who orders the world through his immutable covenants.

IV. Rhetoric

A. Logic of form

- I. Summons: Direct address and Lament Over Enemies 1—2
 - A. Enemies too many
 - B. God will not deliver
- II. Confidence: (vv. 3—6)
 - A. Affirmation of trust 3-4
 - B. Validation of that faith 5-6
- III. Twofold Petition and Wish (7—8)
 - A. Twofold petition: to “deliver” him and to punish enemies 7
 - B. Wish: benediction upon the nation (vv. 7-8)

B. The psalm’s stylistic symmetry matches the psalmist’s spiritual composure.

C. Inclusio; Deliverance: denied (v. 2); affirmed (v. 7)

D. Escalation: from address to crescendo benediction

E. Sevenfold repetition of *I AM* and its equivalent “God” unite the development.

Part II Exposition

I. Superscript

A. Genre:

A *psalm* (Heb. *mizmor*) refers to a song sung to the accompaniment of instruments. The psalmist helps to put the cacophony of his situation into harmony with music and song. There is a melody in Scripture. This is the harp—sweeter than that of angels—that drives away sadness of spirit. Psalm 3 vibrates with fervency from the repeated exclamations of danger, to the resolve “I will not fear,” to imperative petitions for deliverance and to be avenged in verse 7 [8] to the crescendo shout: “Victory belongs to *I AM*” before trailing off into the benediction (v. 9]10]). Fervent prayer is effective (James 5:16); it is the fire and the incense; without fervency it is no prayer.

B. Author: “*Of David*”: royal and a type of Christ.

C. Historical background: When he fled from his son

1. After his sin (sex/adultery and violence/murder) with Bathsheba

Tamar is raped by Amnon

Amnon is murdered by Absalom

Absalom is exiled by David

David is exiled by Absalom

2. 2 Samuel 15—16:

a. Kidron Valley: Zadok goes back with ark

b. Summit of Mount of Olives: Hushai goes back to defeat Ahithophel

N. B. Faith works

II. Summons/Address The Address - “*I AM*”

Complete dependence on God. without *I AM* everything and everyone else is a delusion (33:16-18).

To not turn to God in crisis is sin

“Only God, the Guardian of Justice, can turn the tide, can restore health and good fortune, bring back former bliss and security.” (Erhard Gestenberger)

III: Lament:

1–2

Foes too many; I am too weak; God appears absent

Refuses to come to terms. Faith . Spiritual warfare

See comment on “deliver.” Victim’s responsibility to cry out (Dt. 22:23—27)

Response of faith; not to self-avenge

IV. Confidence

3-6

A. Affirmation of faith

3–4

Christ, his Antitype, in similar circumstances also entrusted himself to him that judges justly (1 Pet. 2:23).

But you, I AM is the unequivocal mark of the change from lament to confidence

The *shield* was a light, round shield made of wood and covered with thick leather rubbed with oil to preserve it and to make it glisten. It was carried by the light infantry to ward off the enemy’s sword, spear or arrows; it is frequently employed to describe God’s presence in warding off a foe’s attack.

You are my glory: metonymy of source:

lift my head: God singles him out for honor and lifts him clear of perils. Strong in the Lord and the power of might. Eph. 6:10.

Petition is an integral part of shaping salvation history. -

answers me from his holy mountain – The scenic depiction symbolizes that in prayer space does not separate the earthling from God in heaven. In prayer, the saint and God are united in spirit.

B. Validation of confidence/faith

To sleep secure in trust is unique in the ANE, Pharaoh to son: “Even when you sleep, guard your heart, because no man has adherents on the day of distress.” Cf. the sleep of Sisera and of Saul.

The sleep of our Savior

Clement of Rome (c. 96), gives the first specific reference to Psalm 3 that we found. He writes, “I lay down and slept, and I awoke for the Lord sustained me” (v. 6), as Christ’s death and resurrection

I awoke - demonstrates *I AM*’s faithfulness during “the perilous night”

Tens of thousands - escalates the thrice repeated “many” to an insuperable number

Drawn up – Perhaps this is a technical military term for “posting” an army.

The theology - “Let us, therefore learn, when in dangers, not to measure the assistance of God after the manner of men” (Calvin)

V. Petition and Wish

7–8

A. Petitions:

7

1. Deliver

7a

Arise – like *deliver*, “is frequently used in martial contexts. It refers to preparation for, engagement in and victory in war... Sometimes *it* connotes anticipated or realized victory. When God engages in combat victory is certain . . .” (Coppes)

Enemies...wicked – The parallelism between “all my enemies” and “the wicked” shows his cause is just and deliverance is his due. The pretender showed himself to be wicked by murdering his brother out of revenge, rather than trusting God; by dishonoring his father through stealing the people’s loyalty; by usurping the throne without divine prophetic authorization or consecration by anointing, and by raping his father’s wives and concubines on the roof of the palace in the sight of all Israel!

Father and son strikingly differ in their stance toward their enemy. David turned the wrong done to him over to God, but Absalom took justice into his own hands when he avenged the wrong done to Tamar. . David is attacked, but Absalom is the attacker. David is innocent and in need of God to avenge him, but Absalom seeks personal revenge.

2. Punish

7b

...break – to be rendered defenseless and with respect to their offence that they be made harmless.

First, the anointed asks that with respect to the defense of the wicked conspirators that they be rendered defenseless and with respect to their offense that they be made harmless. “The buffet on the cheek was a climax of insult which shewed that all spirit and power of resistance were gone. (Cp. 1 Kings xxii.24; Job xvi. 10; Lam. iii.30; Mic 5:1).”³⁶⁸ “

Second, “Breaking the teeth” signifies that the enemy, who like wild beasts had been eager to devour him, has been rendered harmless and helpless (cf. 58:6 [7]; Job 29:17). This is the certain fate of *all* his enemies. For the value of these petitions for retribution to Christian faith and practice (see lecture on “Imprecatory psalms”).

B. Wish/benediction

8

Upon your people – the final horizon of the poet/king looks beyond the “I” and “me” to God’s people

Postscript

Shows that the psalms were used in Israel’s temple liturgy and included a much wider audience than that of its historical setting.

David’s voice becomes our voice - Their inclusion in the canon democratizes the psalms for all the people of God, who in Christ are a royal priesthood (1 Pet 2:9).

Part III. Similarities to Jesus Christ

Rejected by his own people without reason.

Taunted that God will not deliver him.

Knows his own glory (John 5).

Lays down in sleep of death and rises again.

368 A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, ed. by A. F. Kirkpatrick (Cambridge: University Press, 1916), 16.

Psalm 51

Part I. Introduction

I. Translation

Psalm 51:1 A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;

according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

² Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.

⁵ Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

⁶ Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

⁷ Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

⁹ Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you.

¹⁴ Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my Savior,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

¹⁵ Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise.

¹⁶ You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

¹⁷ My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

¹⁸ May it please you to prosper Zion, to build up the walls of Jerusalem.

¹⁹ Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous, in burnt offerings offered whole; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Psalm 52:1 For the director of music. A maskil of David.

II. Rhetoric

A psalm of David.

When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

I. Address and Introductory Petitions (1-2)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

² Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

II. Lament/Confession (3-6)

A. Of overt sinful behavior

³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.

B. Of inward spiritual impotence/depravity

⁵ Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

⁶ Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

III. Petitions

A. For overt sinful behavior

⁷ Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

⁹ Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

B. For inward spiritual impotence

¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

IV. Praise

A. Vow to Praise

¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you.

B. Words of Praise

¹⁴ Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my Savior,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

¹⁵ Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise.

C. Sacrifice of Praise

¹⁶ You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

¹⁷ My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

V. Conclusion: Petition for and Praise from Zion

¹⁸ May it please you to prosper Zion, to build up the walls of Jerusalem.

¹⁹ Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous, in burnt offerings offered whole;

Btbt Psalm. Lecture bt then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Postscript

For director of music

Part II. Exposition

Superscript

A. “For the director of music” (Ps 52:s/s). The “ram’s horn” for the Day of Atonement.

1. In the medieval Roman Breviary recited every hour at the conclusion of each monastic service, with the exception of Christmas and Lent.
2. For 13 centuries repeated seven times daily.
3. As De Misere selected for Ash Wednesday
4. The “ram’s horn” for the Day of Atonement

B. “A psalm (song sung to musical instrument)

1. Psalter a royal hymn book: lament concerns welfare of God’s kingdom. Lament psalms are not primarily for personal therapeutic healing but for healing of the kingdom (cf. James 3).
2. Two kinds of sufferings: deserved (penitential lament, explicit) and undeserved (suffering of innocent, assumed).

C. “When Nathan the prophet came to him after he committed adultery with Bathsheba”

1. Story (2 Sam 11:4; 12:1 is part of primary history, which includes Mosaic Law
2. Kinds of Sin:
 - a. Crimes against humanity: passion (adultery: coveted her, stole her and defiled her) and premeditated murder (of husband)
 - b. Defiance against God: 1 Samuel 12:9 (cf. Num 35:16—41; Deut. 22:22)
 1. Capital offenses: for adultery (Deut. 22:22) for murder (Numb 35:16—21)

2. Restitution (lex talionis) not possible
3. Prov 28:13
4. Complete forgiveness with godly repentance: 2 Sam 12:13; Pro 28:13, Forgiveness if so great that out of adultery sprang Solomon (“beloved by God”)
5. Historical guilt: baby died and sons are “chips off the old block”: Amnon (rape); Absalom (murder), Adonijah (hubris).

I. Address and Introductory Petition:

vv. 1–2

A. Address: God (“Elohistic Psalter).

B. Words for sin: assume an absolute standard

1. פֶּשַׁע (pesha‘, “transgression”): rebellion [raised fist] against standard
2. עֲוֹן (‘awon, “iniquity”): deviation from /twisting of standard and guilt
3. חַטָּאת, hattath, “sin”): miss standard

C. God’s immutable, benevolent attributes: Exodus 34:6–7

⁶ And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation." (רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אֲרֹךְ אַפַּיִם) (וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת)

1. חָנַן (hanan): look upon > pity > do a favorable act
- 2 חָסַד (he sed): extend help to helpless partner out of kindness
- 3 רַחֲמִים (rahaimim (intensive plural): “womb” > maternal compassion > pity

D. Petition:

1. Legal forgiveness: מָחָה, mahah “blot out”
2. Liturgical cleansing: כָּבַס kabas, “launder”; טָהַר “make pure”

II. Lament/Confession **vv. 3—6**

A. Of overt sins **vv. 3—4**

1. Confession of personal guilt v. 3

כִּי־פָשְׁעֵי אָנֹכִי אָדַע וְחַטָּאתַי נִגְדִי תָמִיד

2. Confession of sinning against God v. 4

- a. by definition of words of sin
- b. by example of Christ: “ Some men brought to him a paralyzed man, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven." At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming!" Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, take your mat and go home." Then the man got up and went home.” (Matth 9:2—7).

- B. Of spiritual moral impotence vv. 5—6

1. *Of sinful nature: original sin* v. 5

2. *Of moral nature: conscience* v. 6

הֲוֹ־בְעֹוֹן חוֹלְלָתִי וּבַחַטָּא נִחַמְתָּנִי אֱמִי⁸
הֲוֹ־אָמַת תִּפְצֹתָ בַטְּחוֹת וּבַסֵּתֶם תִּכְמֶה תוֹדִיעֵנִי

III. Petitions **vv. 7—12**

A. For forgiveness of sins (see IIIA) **vv. 7—9**

1. For cleansing from stain of guilt v. 7

תַּחַטָּאנִי בְּאֵזוֹב וְאַטְהָר תִּכַּבְּסֵנִי וּמִשָּׁלֵג אֶלְבִּין

2. For word of absolution	v. 8
3. For forgiveness for legal guilt	v. 9
	וְכָל-עֲוֹנֹתַי מְחַה
B. For spiritual renewal	vv. 10–12
1. For a steadfast spirit	v. 10
2. For retaining God's holy spirit	v. 11
3. For a willing spirit	v. 12
IV. Vow of Praise	vv. 13–17
A. Reason: God's grace restores sinners	v. 13
B. Word of praise:	vv. 14–15
C. Sacrifice of praise	vv. 16–17
V. Wish: National praise	vv. 19–20
A. Condition: prosperity of Zion	v. 19
B. Consequence: Zion's praise	v. 20

14. Individual lament: Psalm 22

Part I. Introduction

I. Fourth of Seven last words on the cross

- A. Father forgive them, for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34).
- B. Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise (Luke 23:43).
- C. Woman, behold your son: behold your mother (John 19:26-27).
- D. My God, My God, why have you forsaken me, (Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34).
- E. I thirst (John 19:28).
- F. It is finished (John 19:30).
- G. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit (Luke 23:46).

Traditionally, these seven sayings are called words of 1. Forgiveness, 2. Salvation, 3. Relationship, 4. Abandonment, 5. Distress, 6. Triumph and 7. Reunion

II. The fourth saying stumbles many: "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

A. Matthew 27:39—46

³⁹ Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" ⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ⁴² "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴ In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him. ⁴⁵ From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶ About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

B. Paraphrase of Lloyd Barre (former student). .

According to Matt. 27:46 Jesus said on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Jesus is supposed to be the savior of humanity, but he can't even save himself. Those aren't the words of a man who is voluntarily dying for the sins of humanity or offering himself willingly as a sacrifice for mankind. Those are the words of

a man who can think of a hundred places he'd rather be and most assuredly does not have the situation under control.

III. Words of assurance to nerve suffering Church to fidelity

A. Jesus Allowed his passion to unfold according to prophecy

1. Mark 10:32–33

³² They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. ³³ "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, ³⁴ who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise."

2. Matthew 26:53—56

When Judas led a large crowd, armed with swords and clubs, to arrest Jesus to bring him to the high priest for trial, the other disciples tried to defend Jesus. But Jesus rebuked his disciples. "Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?" Matthew adds: "This has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." (Matthew 26:53—56).

3. Luke 24:27, 44

Luke. 24:13—32 Disciples on Emmaus Road: "²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."

Luke 24:33—44 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

4. Matthew 27:39—46 fulfills Psalm 22

IV. Translation

A psalm by David

- ¹ My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?
Why are you so far from saving me,
from the words of my roaring?
- ² My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,
by night, and am not silent.
- ³ Yet you are the Holy One;
the One enthroned on the praises of Israel.
- ⁴ In you our fathers put their trust;
they trusted and you delivered them.
- ⁵ To you they cried out and were saved;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.
- ⁶ But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mortals and despised by the people.
- ⁷ All who see me mock me;
they split open their lips; they shake their heads:
- ⁸ "Commit [yourself] to *I AM*; let *I AM* rescue him.
Let him deliver him; surely, he delights in him."
- ⁹ Surely, you are the one who brought me out of the womb;
the one who caused me to trust at my mother's breast.
- ¹⁰ From the womb I was cast upon you;
from my mother's belly you are my God.
- ¹¹ Do not be far from me, for trouble is near;
surely there is none to help.
- ¹² Many bulls surround me;
strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.
- ¹³ Lions, tearing their prey and roaring,
open their mouths wide against me.
- ¹⁴ I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint.
My heart has turned to wax;
it has melted away within me.

- ¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue is made to stick to the roof of my mouth;
and you lay me in the dust of death.
- ¹⁶ Surely, dogs surround me,
a band of evil men encircle me;
they bore holes in my hands and my feet.
- ¹⁷ I can count all my bones;
people stare; they gloat over me.
- ¹⁸ They distribute my clothes among them,
and cast lots for my garment.
- ¹⁹ But you, *I AM*, do not be far off;
my Help, come quickly to help me.
- ²⁰ Deliver my life from the sword,
my precious life from the power of the dogs.
- ²¹ Save me from the mouth of the lions;
answer me from the horns of the wild oxen.
- ²² I will declare your name to my brothers;
in the congregation I will praise you.
- ²³ You who fear *I AM*, praise him!
All you seed of Jacob, honor him!
Revere him, all you seed of Israel!
- ²⁴ For he has not despised,
He has not abhorred the suffering of the afflicted one;
he has not hidden his face from him,
but when he cried to him for help, listened.
- ²⁵ From you comes my act of praising you in the great assembly;
I will fulfill my vows before those who fear you.
- ²⁶ Let the poor eat and be sated;
let those who seek *I AM* praise him—
Let your hearts live forever!
- ²⁷ May all the ends of the earth remember and turn to the LORD,
and all the clans of the nations bow down before you.
- ²⁸ for dominion belongs to *I AM*
as ruler over the nations.

- ²⁹ May all the rich of the earth will bow down to him,
before him all who go down to the dust will kneel,
those who did not preserve their lives.
- ³⁰ May their seed serve him;
May it will e told to their generations about the Lord of all.
- ³¹ May they come and proclaim his righteousness;
to a people yet unborn [mat they say]: “Surely, he has acted.”

V. Form

- A. Poetry (e.g., note elision in v. 26)
- B. Psalm: prophecy with music
- C. Complaint/Petition
 - Address/Summons/Invocation (v. 1a, 19a)
 - Complaint/lament (vv. 1b-2, 6-8, 11a-18)
 - Confidence (vv. 3-5, 9-10)
 - Petition (vv. 11b, 19-21)
 - Praise (vv. 22-31)

VI. Rhetoric: Logic, Alternating structures, symmetry

Superscript

- | | |
|---|------|
| I. Stanza I: Complaint and Confidence | 1-10 |
| A. First Strophe: | 1-5 |
| 1. Complaint: Abandoned by God | 1-2 |
| 2. Confidence: God’s covenant fidelity with fathers | 3-5 |
| B. Second Strophe: | 6-10 |
| 1. Complaint: Abandoned by people | 6-8 |
| 2. Confidence: God chose psalmist for covenant fidelity | 9-10 |

II. Lament and Petition	11-21
Transition: Be not far off: unifies lament with petition	11
A. Lament	12-18
1. First unit: zoomorphic enemies and self	12-15
a. Enemy lament: bulls and lions	12-13
b. Personal lament: bones, heart, tongue	14-15
2. Second unit: zoomorphic enemies and self	16-18
a. Enemy lament: dogs	16
b. Personal lament: bones and garments	17-18
B. Petition	19-21
1. Be not far off	19
2. Deliver from sword, dogs, lion and oxen	20-21
III. Psalmist's Praise	22-31
A. Let Covenant Community Praise <i>I AM</i>	22-26
1. First unit: word of praise	22-24
2. Second unit: sacrifice of praise	25-26
B. Nations will Praise <i>I AM</i> forever	27-31
1. First unit: spatial and social universal praise	27-29
2. Second unit: temporal universal praise	29-31

The psalm consists of three stanzas of ten verses each: 1-10, 12-21, 22-31, moving from torment to turmoil to triumph.

Verse 11: a janus unifying stanzas 1 and 2, and unifying stanza 2 by repetition of 'far off' (vv. 1, 11, 19)

Stanzas I and III consist of two strophes of five verses each: vv. 1-5, 6-10; vv. 22-26, 27-31.

Stanza II also consists of two strophes:

Lament of seven verses (vv. 12-18)

Petition of three verses (vv. 19-21),

Numbers representing perfection, completeness and fullness

Although this analysis obscures the psalmist's anguish and the fervency, its symmetry reveals his spiritual composure, even as he endures a cruel and unjust death.

VII. Prophecy of Prayer of Christ on the Cross

The Lord Jesus took this psalm upon his lips as his fourth words on the cross and the gospel writers, especially Matthew and John, frequently allude to this psalm in their accounts of Christ's passion:

the casting lots for his garments (v.19; Mark 15:24; 19:23-24)

the parching thirst (v. 16; Jn. 19:28-29)

the agony of the stretched bones (v. 15)

the digging holes into the hands and feet (v. 17; Jn 20:27)

the mocking of his enemies (v. 9; Matt. 27:43; Lk. 23:35)

No psalm is alluded to more frequently in the Gospels than this one. Is it significant that this psalm is not handed over in a postscript to the chief musician for all God's people to sing? It is no ordinary lament. In any case, Christ's passions are exemplary.

VIII Message

The song's essential message is summarized in stanza 3. God delivered the psalmist from death at hands of wicked. In spite of God's awful delay in answering prayer, he answers prayer and upholds ultimate justice. That saving act will bring all people in space and time to worship the LORD.

The murderers testify that the psalmist trusts God and is blameless but mock his faith

The psalmist emerges on the other side of death praising God for hearing his unanswered prayer before death. His testimony reverberates through the whole world throughout history.

Part II: Exposition

Superscript

David is an inspired prophet: Matthew 22:41-43; Luke 24:44; Acts 2:30

Matt 22:43: “David, speaking by the Spirit,”

Luke 24:44: “Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

Acts 2:30 “But he [David] was a prophet.”

I. Confidence in complaint

1-10

Inclusio: “my God”: first and last words of stanza

A. First Strophe 1. Complaint and Confidence

vv. 1-5

1. Complaint: forsaken by God

vv. 1-2

אלי אלי למה עזבתני רחוק מישועתי דברי שאגתי:

“My God”:

frames stanza (see v. 10)

“God”; of transcendence

“My”: personal. Still owns him as God

“abandoned me”: turned the covenant tables. Human accused of abandoning God.

“Why” Rhetorical to express anguish. Praise of last stanza makes explicit the context of faith and hope within which this lament is sounded”

Identifies with us. How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? ² How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? (Psalm 13:1—2)

Mark Galli, “Mercifully Forsaken.” CT (2011). Sometimes the experience of God-forsakenness is much more keen. You are at a place of deep and profound need. You are staring into the face of death. Or your spouse is. Or your child is.

Or you've lost a job or are about to lose a marriage. Or you are losing your faith. But whatever the crisis, it is a crisis. My God, you hang on a cross, and it's excruciating, and this would be an awfully good time for God to show up, to prove that your faith is not in vain, that all your efforts have been worth it, that everything you've depended on for meaning and purpose and direction has been true and right and good.

But God is not showing up. There is nothing but silence, and the sounds that make the silence worse, like the wind blowing through the trees, air going nowhere in particular.

What is it with God, the God who promises abundant life, the God who invites all the weary and heavy laden to seek him out for rest? Why does this God sometimes seem to fail us just when the chips are down, just when we need him most?

Hebrews 4:14—16: ¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

“far off”: key word uniting Psalm. Not experienced as a very present help in time of trouble. From statement of experience to petition (v. 11) to praise.

“saving me”: *ysh* ‘: deliver and justice (see Psalm 3)

“cries of anguish”: “roaring”: like a wounded animal

להי אקרא יומם ולא תענה ולילה ולא־דומיה לי:

“My God”: links quatrain

“I cry out//you do not answer”: see Psalm 4

“by day//and by night”: Merism for constantly. “I cry out” gapped

2. Confidence: based on God’s faithfulness to the ancestors

3—5

אתה קדוש יושב תהלות ישראל:

“But you”: typical turn from complaint to confidence

“Holy One”: Set apart by perfections

“Enthroned”: God’s Spirit sits enthroned on spiritual praises

“Israel”: “Prevails with God and man”

בך בטחו אבותינו בטחו ותפלטמו:

“In you”: emphatic

“Our fathers”: true Israel; nominal Israel did not trust

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our fathers were all under the cloud (1 Co 10:1)

“Trust”: “rely on someone out of a sense of security”

“They trusted”: memory serves as handmaid to faith

“delivered”: “made them brought into safety/security”

אליך זעקו ונמלטו בך בטחו ולא-בושו:

“to you”: emphatic

“Cried out”: transforms internal, invisible faith into an outward, audible form that enters the throne of God.

“Were saved”: escaped imminent death (Gn 19:17—22)

“In you”/ “to you”: Fathers prevailed by faith, not by human strength.

“Not put to shame”: risked their lives on God’s promises

B. Second Strophe: confidence in complaint

6—10

Abandoned by God: 1st strophe;

Abandoned by man: 2nd strophe)

Mockers [second strophe] move into the space God vacates [first strophe]

Faith intensifies from rewarded Israel’s faith [first strophe] to his own faith from infancy [second strophe]

1. Complaint: forsaken by humankind

6—7

ואנכי תולעת ולא-איש חרפת אדם ובזוי עם:

“But I”: contrast his shame with fathers’ honor

“Worm:” Tapeinosis (lowliness; self-abasement; entails being *God*-reliant rather than *self*-reliant – which ironically *always exalts* a person (brings them *true worth*, cf. 1 Pet 5:6).

“not an individual”: in society. A despicable creature threatening to social well-being

“Scorned”/ “despised”: “to treat with contempt”/ “regard with contempt

“Mortals”/ “people”: A line runs through the hearts of people that transcends political and socio-economic lines.

כָּל־רֹאֵי גִלְעָגוּ לִי וַיִּפְטִירוּ בְּשֹׁפָה יְנִיעוּ רֹאֵשׁ

“all”: relative to the group that regards him as a worm

“mock”: disdain and inward joy (see Ps 2:4)

“split open”: cannot hold in their vitriol

Proverbs 17:14: Starting a quarrel is like *breaching* a dam [פּוֹטֵר מַיִם]; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.

“shake their heads”: disparaging derision (2 Kgs 19:21= Isa 37:22; Job 16:4; Ps 109:25; Lam 2:15)

2 Kgs 19:21 "Virgin Daughter Zion despises you and mocks you. Daughter Jerusalem tosses her head [רֹאֵשׁ הִנִּיעָה] as you flee.

Psalm 109:25 I am an object of scorn to my accusers; when they see me, they shake their heads.

גַּל אֶל־יְהוָה יִפְלֹטְהוּ וַיִּצְיֵלְהוּ כִּי הִפִּיז בּוֹ

“Commit” (Heb. *gol*, “roll”): sarcasm. Object gapped: your hope of deliverance

גַּל אֶל־יְהוָה מַעֲשֵׂיךָ וַיִּכְנֹוּ מִחֻשְׁבְּתֶיךָ (“Commit to the LORD”)

“for he delights in you”: condemns them as sons of the Devil, for they admit he is innocent

“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” (John 8:44)

2. Confidence: based on God's past faithfulness to psalmist

9—10

כִּי־אִתָּה גַחֲזִי מִבֶּטֶן מִבְטִיחִי עַל־שִׁדֵי אֹמִי

עָלֶיךָ הִשְׁלַכְתִּי מִרְחֹם מִבֶּטֶן אֹמִי אֵלֶי אִתָּה

“Surely”: meets the mockers sarcastic “surely” with “surely” of faith. A spiritual battle.

“You”. Emphatic by tautology, word position and inclusio (last word of verse 10)
“brought me out of the womb”: God was the midwife. Cf. Ps 139:15—16

¹ Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born the LORD called me; from my mother's womb he has spoken my name.

² He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver.

³ He said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor."

⁴ But I said, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing at all. Yet what is due me is in the LORD's hand, and my reward is with my God."

⁵ And now the LORD says— he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD and my God has been my strength—

⁶ he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth." (Isa 49:1—6)

“made/caused me to trust”: God initiated covenant relationship.

James 1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

“my mother’s breast”: what difference it would have made if Jesus’ mother had not been Mary.

“from my mother's womb you have been my God”: elected to covenant relationship before birth.

II. Lament and Petition

11—21

A. Janus

11

אַל־תִּרְחַק מִמֶּנִּי בִּיִצְרָה קְרוֹבָה בֵּי־אֵין עוֹנֵר

“Be not far off”: Bolstered by confidences he perseveres, though God seems “far off” from saving him (v. 1). Introductory petition: see v. 18)

“trouble”: “distress” (see Ps 4:1): metonymy for death

“is near”: death is imminent.

B. Lament**t2—19**

Two cycles united by catchword “surround me” (vv. 12, 16) and alternating semantics (animals/self)

Animals are associated with demons (Kraus) and/or rulers (Keel)

1. First cycle**12—14****a. zoomorphic images of afflicting wicked: he is no match****12—13**

סָבְבוּנִי פְרִים רַבִּים אֲבִירֵי בָשָׁן כְּתֹרֹנִי

Chiastic structure matches notion of encircling bulls. He is shut in on every side by bulls with horns (cf. v. 21); there is no escape.

“Many”: cf. Ps 3:1—2

“bulls”: mature (Gen 32:16)

“strong bulls”: lit “mighty”: metonymy. Used of a *chief* shepherd (1 Sam. 21:7[8])

Of champions/ warriors: “But God drags away the mighty by his power” (Job 24:22); champion/warrior “And I have brought down those enthroned like a *mighty one*”; of angels: “Human beings ate the bread of mighty ones”

Bashan: well-known for its well-fed domesticated animals

Deut 32:14: with curds and milk from herd and flock and with fattened lambs and goats, with choice rams of Bashan

Ezek. 39:18 You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the princes of the earth as if they were rams and lambs, goats and bulls—all of them fattened animals from Bashan.

b. personal afflictions**14—15**

“you bring me”: תִּשָּׂאֵנִי, In two of its three occurrences used to putting a cooking pot on a fire (2 Kgs 4:38; Ezek 24:3). God is the ultimate Agent of his death.

2. Second cycle

Chronologically begins before first cycle ends

a. zoomorphic image of enemy

16

“dogs”: unclean, scavenging and dangerous dogs, not hunting dogs

“They return at evening, snarling like dogs, and prowl about the city.” (Ps 59:6,14)

“As a dog returns to its vomit, so fools repeat their folly.” (Prov. 26:11)

“evil doers” (רָעִים) fixed expression for those who cause harm and who stand in contrast to those who wait on God

For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.” (Ps 37:9)

b. Personal lament

1—18

“garment”: countable or collective singular

C. Petition

19—21

Chiastic arrangement of metonymy and zoomorphic images of enemy: “sword,” “dogs,” “lions,” “horns of wild oxen”

1. Do not delay

19

I AM: first use of covenant name. He has not lost faith

“help”: Hapax. Possibly “strength”

2. Save from death

20—21

“sword”: hilt and blade 16” to 3’; may be double-edged; kept in sheath

“my precious life”: lit. “my only one: what is unique and beloved.

“ox”: an auroch: “represents the pinnacle of strength; largest and most powerful

III. Praise**22—31**

Shift to praise is sudden and dramatic. Faith triumphs. “The psalm also exhibits a feature of all the best poems as it effortlessly pivots between praise and lamentation.” (Jeremiah Webster, Exposition of Psalm 27, March 25, 2016).

Praise makes explicit the context of faith and hope within which the lament is sounded” (Moberly).

“Seed” holds the two strophes together (23a,b, 30): of Jacob; of the nations

Escalation: Psalmist testimony of praise for salvation from death expanded in space and time: from bothers (v. 22) > to seed of Jacob (23) > to all the nations, who tell the praise throughout all generations (vv. 27—31). Psalmist salvation brings praise to the Lord everywhere forever.

A. Command to Covenant People to Praise I AM**22—27**

Each strophe [word and sacrifice] with first person: I will

1. Words of Praise**22—24*****a. Address to I am : introduction [resolve to praise in congregation]*****22**

“I will recite.” Cohortative of resolve. Shifts to motif to praise. Resolves to celebrate Name [of *I AM*]

“to my brothers”: true covenant Israel (see ‘who fear *I AM*, v. 23)

b. Address to congregation:**23—24*****1.) Call to fear/trust I Am I*** 23

“who fear *I AM*” qualified as “seed of Jacob”

2.) Cause of fear: 24

“not”: three negatives emphasizing God does not detest prayers of afflicted

“affliction”/ “suffering”: hapax

“afflicted one”: poor, wretched, in desperate needy

אֶת־עַמִּי אֵלֶּיךָ אֶת־עַמִּי אֵלֶּיךָ אֶת־עַמִּי אֵלֶּיךָ (Exo 22:24)

“he did not hide”: litotes

2. Sacrifice of Praise

25—26

“from you [comes] my praising”: Elision: i.e. from you come my salvation and so my act of praising you for your salvation.

“great assembly”: (בְּקָהֳלֶךָ)

" Pharaoh with his mighty army and great horde" [בְּקָהֳלֶךָ, Eze 17:17)]

“let them eat”: parallel “let live”: imperative in v. 24 and “let live” in parallel is jussive

“be sated”: fully satisfied in every way

“those who seek”: carefully and passionately strive to fulfill a passion to have prayer answered,

“hearts live forever” sacrament of offering replaces tree of life.

B. Wish: May all nations Praise I AM forever

27—31

1. Wish for all peoples to worship I AM: universal in space

27—29

Narrowing from ends of the earth > families of nations > social classes

a, Wish: with regard to all nations: “ends of the earth”/nations

27—28

1.) *Wish expressed:*

27

“all” repeated for ends of the earth (27a) and all families (27b)

“ends of the earth” collective, individualized to “families of the nations”

2,) *Wish validated: I AM is owns the nations and is their rightful ruler.*

28

b. Wish for all classes of people to eat sacrament of worship

29

“who cannot keep themselves” alive a janus to posterity

2. Wish for future generations to be told and to proclaim 30—31

a. For future generations to be told and so serve 30

Chiastic structure

“serve him”: metonymy of effect from being told

“be told”: what he did for psalmist

“Lord” Lord of All.

b. For future generations tell the unborn I AM’s righteousness to the psalmist 31

15. Communal Laments: Psalms 90, 44

Part I: Introduction

I. Translation

¹A prayer by Moses, the man of God.

O Lord, you have been a dwelling place for us
Throughout generations.

²Before the mountains were born,
And you brought to birth the earth and the world,
From eternity to eternity you are God.

³You return the mortal to dust;
You say: "Return humankind."

⁴Surely, a thousand years in your estimation
Is like yesterday when it is over,
Like a watch in the night.

⁵You make an end of their lives; they fall into deep sleep;
In the morning they are like grass that is renewed.

⁶In the morning it blossoms and is renewed;
In the evening, it withers and dries up.

⁷Surely, we perish in your anger;
We are dismayed by your wrath.

⁸You set our iniquities before you,
Our hidden sins in the light of your face.

⁹All our days pass away in your fierce anger;
We finish our years like a sigh.

¹⁰As for the days of our years, with them are seventy years;
Or if with strength, eighty years.

And their proud achievements are toilsome and futile,
For they pass away quickly, and we fly away.

- ¹¹Who knows the vehemence of your anger?
And according to the fear due you is your fierce anger?
- ¹²To number our days,³⁶⁹ so cause [us] to know,
That we may gain wise hearts.
- ¹³Turn back, / AM! How long?
And take pity on your servants.
- ¹⁴Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love
That we may shout for joy and rejoice in all our days.
- ¹⁵Make us rejoice according the days you afflicted us,³⁷⁰
According to the years we saw disaster.
- ¹⁶Let your mighty deeds appear to your servants
And your majesty to their children.
- ¹⁷Let the beauty of / AM our God be upon us,
And the work of our hands establish for us;
And the work of our hands, establish it.

II. Form

A. Poetry

Terse” poets do not footnote exceptions; figurative language is normal

B. A Prayer (“chastened and sober”³⁷¹)

369 Or, “by numbering our days.”

370 The clause functions as an attributive genitive after the construct state מִיּוֹם.

371 Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73—150* (Kidner Classic Commentaries; Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2008; org. 1975) 359.

C. A Communal Lament:

- I. Direct address (O Lord, v. 1),
- II. Confidence (“a dwelling place for us,” v. 1),
- III. Lament (for God’s harsh discipline of humankind and of sinful Israel, vv. 3—10),
- IV. Petitions and wishes with praise for salvation (vv. 13—17)

D. Wisdom psalm

A unique fifth motif, the hinge on which the psalm swings from lament to petitions, insightfully unites lament (vv. 3—10) and petitions (vv. 13—17) with a lament for lack of knowledge and fear of *I AM* (v. 11) and a petition for wisdom (v. 12). The lament stanza echoes Ecclesiastes “all is vanity.” In sum, the psalm’s “unmistakable stamp” of being a national lament combined with the unmistakable stamp of the wisdom genre, making the psalm “a stranger in the Old Testament.”³⁷²

III. Poetics and Rhetoric

A. Logical development/outline

I. Doxological Invocation	1b—2
II. Lament: Death and Sin	3—10
A. The brevity of all life	3—6
1. In contrast to the Eternal	3—4
2. In comparison to grass	5—6
B. God’s anger against Israel’s sin	7—10
1. Death	7—8
2. Chastened lives	9—10

372 Von Rad, *God’s Work in Israel*, 218.

III. Hinge: Lament and petition to gain wisdom	11—12
A. Lament: None knows God’s wrath against sin and the fear due him	11
B. Petition: To number days and so know and gain wisdom	12
IV. Petitions	13—17
A. For God to have pity	13
B. For God to confer blessings	14—17
1. To rejoice in God’s unfailing love in his saving deeds	14—15
2. Wishes	16—17
a. To see God’s saving deeds and children to experience God’s splendor	16
b. To establish their work	17

B. Inclusions

1. Divine titles; “Lord/Master” (vv. 1, 17) and “God” (vv. 2, 17)
2. Chronological notices: “generation to generation” and “their descendants” (1, 17).
- 3 Anagram (?) *ma’on* (“dwelling-place,” v. 1) and *no’am* (“beauty”, v. 17)

C. Symmetry

1. Stanzas and strophes consist of couplets (two verses), apart from verse 13. Verse 10 concludes with a quatrain (two couplets).
 2. The unified invocation, lament and hinge consist of seven couplets (1b—2, 3—4, 5—6, 7—8, 9—10, 10a—10b, 11—12), and the petitions for salvation consists of three strophes with two couplets (13, 14—15, 16—17.)
- D. Temporal Catchwords unify the psalm’s stanzas, strophes and couplets

“Generation to generation, eternity to eternity, before (1—2); yesterday, watch in the night (4); morning (4, 5, 14), night (6); years (9, 10, 15) and days (9, 12, 14, 15); how long (12).

Katabasis in the invocation and lament: from “eternity to eternity” > “a thousand years,” > “yesterday,” > “a watch in the night,” > “morning” and “evening” (vv. 1—6).

Anabasis in benedictory petitions: from “morning” > ‘days’ > “years” (vv. 14—15).³⁷³

D. Stanzas and strophes are also linked by the logic of Israel’s covenants:

1. Sin and death (3—10),
2. Fear of the Lord and wisdom (11—12),
3. Repentance and restoration (13—17).

IV. Message:

These rhetorical features point to the psalm’s message. The confidence that Israel’s God is always his people’s dwelling place gives the prodigal penitents space to lament their premature death due to God’s wrath against their sin and to realize that the fear of him is his due. Pity the homeless prodigal.

Though none knows that God’s wrath is commensurate with the fear due him, they penitents ask to cause them to know by numbering their days and so give them wise hearts.

Thus enlightened, they petition I AM to confer upon them a new dispensation both of the joy of salvation in days and years commensurate with their affliction and of enduring work as his majestic deeds of salvation once again appear among them and in which they participate.

V. Author:

A. Evidence for Mosaic authorship

- 1 Shares some language with Deut. 32-33³⁷⁴
2. Moses the great interceder for Israel: (see Exod. 32:11—13; 34; Num. 14:13—19; Deut. 9:25-29; Psa. 106:23; Jer. 15:1; see also Ps 99:6).³⁷⁵

373 Konrad Schaefer, *Psalms* (Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poet, David W. Cotter, ed.; Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 226f.

374 Moses is called “the man of God” (Psa. 90:1) in the introduction to his blessing at the time of his death (Deut. 33:1). The psalm begins “you are a dwelling place,” where Moses’ blessing ended (Deut. 33:27 [מְעוֹן and מְמַנְּהָ are probably a gender doublets]). מְנַלֵּךְ and מְנַלֵּךְ occur together in v. 2 and Deut. 32:18; מְנַלֵּךְ occurs only in v. 15 and Deut. 32:7, where also מְנַלֵּךְ occurs (see v. 1).

375 *Zondervan TNIV Study Bible*; Barker, Stek, Youngblood, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2006), 943.

B. Academic consensus dates psalm to exilic or post-exilic era.

1. Evidence that that supports Mosaic authorship explains its origin as pseudograph (i.e., a forgery)!
2. “Slave” is language of post-exilic communities,³⁷⁶ but term is used by Moses (Exod. 32:13), Solomon (1 Kings 8:32) and Asaph (Psa. 79:2).

C. Cracks now showing in the consensus:

1. H.-J. Kraus: ninth century; resembles Deuteronomy 32 and Gen 2—3 (“J”).³⁷⁷
2. Mitchell Dahood: ninth-century(?) because of its archaic language.³⁷⁸
3. Walter Brueggemann: to be heard as if Moses was now at Pisgah (Deut. 34).³⁷⁹
4. David Noel Freedman: same vocabulary as golden-calf episode: “Turn (שׁוּבוּ) from your fierce anger; relent (רַחֵם) and do not bring disaster on your people” (Exod. 32:12), using the same two imperatives as in v. 13. “Aside from Amos, only Moses intercedes successfully with Yahweh and obtains his repentance [see Exod. 32:14].” So he suggests that whoever composed Psalm 90 based it on the episode in Exodus 32 and imagined in poetic form how Moses may have spoken in the circumstances of Exodus 32.³⁸⁰
5. Beth L. Tanner: superscription was added so that the psalm would be read “intertextually with the wilderness narrative (Exod. 32—33) and the final prayer and blessings of Moses.”³⁸¹
6. Gerald T. Sheppard notes its placement after Psalm 89: “Moses intercedes on behalf of Israel who has been given a divine promise that now seems to be in jeopardy.”³⁸²

376 Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51—100* (Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 20; Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1990), 437f.

377 H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen II* (BKAT 15/2; Neukirchen: Erziehungsverein, 1960), 627—33.

378 M. Dahood, *Psalms II* (Anchor Bible 17; New York: Doubleday, 1968), 322.

379 Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms* (Augsburg Old Testament Studies; Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 110

380 D. N. Freedman, “Who Asks (or Tells) God to Repent?” *Bible Review*, 1, 4 (1985), 56—59.

381 Beth L. Tanner, *The Book of Psalms through the Lens of Intertextuality* [Studies in Biblical Literature 26; New York: Peter Lang, 2001], 85—107, esp. 98.

382 Gerald Sheppard, “Theology and the Book of Psalm,” *Interpretation* 46 (1992): 143—55, esp. 151.

D. Targum s/s: “when the people, the house of Israel, sinned in the wilderness.”

E. BKW: In addition to the linguistic evidence (see Freedman) the historical context of the dying off generation during the closing years of Moses’ life admirably fits the psalm’s dark tone and minor key. The Exodus-Wilderness generation spent their last forty-years wandering around in a cemetery, a harsh wilderness, a land of scorpions and venous snakes. For their unbelief at Kadesh Barnea they died off in natural deaths and never reached the Promised Land. The wilderness generation also killed time in meaningless wanderings (Num. 14:33). And so do moderns with no metanarrative by which to interpret the meaning of their lives.

F. Legitimate objection

1. Restriction of human life to 70—80 years (v. 10) does not comport well with Moses’ and Aaron’s life-spans of 120 and 123 years respectively (Deut. 34:7; Num. 33:39) or with Joshua’s 110 years (Josh. 14:10) and Caleb’s strength at 85 years of age.
2. Texts indicate they are exceptional
 - a. Dt. 34:7: “when he [Moses] died, his eye was not dim nor was his natural vitality diminished.” If this were normal, why mention it?
 - b. Caleb explained his extraordinary full-strength at eighty-five years of age, forty-five years after the Exodus, as due to the Lord’s unique promise to him (Joshua 14:10).
 - c. Longevity of these four great men of the exodus-wilderness generation, which merits Biblical notices, actually proves the psalm’s rule for the majority of Israel.

G. Epithet of “man of God” calls the audience to take their shoes off their feet; they are standing on holy ground.

VI. The Speakers

A. “We” is personal and corporate

1. As individual live 70—80 years (10A)
2. As a community they live “throughout generations”
3. Like leaves on a tree

B. Chastened penitents firm in their faith:

1. Invoke God as their eternal dwelling place (vv. 1—2).
2. Like Daniel (9:4—20) and Ezra (9:5—15), they confess their sin as part of corporate Israel (vv. 3—10).
3. Petition *I AM* to enlighten them (11—12) and save them in the new age (vv. 13—17).

C. Today the “we” is the Church grated into the “olive tree” and being built by Jesus Christ.

Part II. Exposition

Superscript (1A)

A prayer (תפילה): see Psalm 4:1

The man of God (אִישׁ־הָאֱלֹהִים): 76x and refers to:

1. A prophet: Samuel (1 Sam. 9:6—10); Elijah (2 Kgs. 1:9—13); Elisha (4:7, 9, 16; et passim); and, most often, Moses (Deut. 33:1; Josh. 14:6; 1 Chr. 23:14; 2 Chr. 30:16; Ezra 3:2). In the Pentateuch Moses is called “the man of God” only in the introduction to his blessing at the time of his death (Deut. 33:1). In Jer. 35:4, referring to Hanan, “the Targum translates the “man of God” by ‘the prophet [נְבִיא] of the Lord’ to signify a true prophet of the LORD.”³⁸³
2. a highly respected, pious, devoted, and godly charismatic figure. Manoah’s wife called the awesome angel of the LORD who appeared to her, “the man of God” (Judg. 13:6, 8).
3. God will answer this prayer (James 5:16).

³⁸³ Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21—36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, New York: Doubleday, 2004), 575, citing Hayward and P. Churgin.

I. The Doxological Invocation (1–2)

Chiastic structure

- A. Lord you
- B. From generation to generation (global time in past)
- C. The mountains were born (global space)
- C.' You brought forth the earth
- B.' From eternity to eternity (global time in eternity)
- A.' You Lord

“*Lord* (יְהוָה): “Lord of all.” Supplicants conceptualize themselves as his servants (13, 16).

You (אַתָּה): tautological and so emphatic.

For us: The Sovereign began to be Israel’s dwelling-place when he uniquely adopted the patriarchs from the rest of humankind as his sons and formed their descendants into a nation through Moses (see Psalm 100:3). Today the “us” is the Church: Jew and Gentiles made one by their baptism into the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Rom. 4:17; Gal. 3:26—29; 1 Pet. 2:9—10).³⁸⁴ The Eternal’s election of nomads and no-bodies, schmucks and schlemiels, is the scandal of history.

Dwelling place (יְעוֹנָה): used of:

1. Heaven (Deut. 26:15; cf. Jer. 25:30); reached through prayer (2 Chron. 30:27)
2. God’s earthly temple (1 Sam. 2:29; 1 Chron. 36:15; Ps. 26:8).
3. Metaphor: Spiritual God likened to a physical abode, a place of provision, trust, loyalty, communion, comfort, stability and security. Only the faithful find him their refuge: “If you say, ‘The LORD is my refuge,’ and you make the Most High your dwelling (יְעוֹנָה), no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent” (Psa. 91:9—10).

The penitents locate their lament within the context of praise for and confidence in God’s grace: his omnipresent refuge for them. However, deep their sin and desperate their plight, the Lord remains the home of his chosen family.

³⁸⁴ Bruce K. Waltke with Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007) 321—332.

Throughout generations. After the exodus generation died off, the number of the conquest-generation remained almost as numerous as the exodus-generation, like the stars in the sky (Deut. 1:10; cf. Num. 26:51, 62 with Num. 1:46; and Judg. 2:7). “Our help in ages past, our hope for years to come ... and our eternal home.”

“*the mountains*” (הַרִים) In the ancient cosmogony the mountains are the foundations of the earth in the midst of the primeval ocean depths (cf. Jonah (2:6[7]; Ps 104:6—8). As the ocean depths represent primeval chaos, the mountains connote the oldest aspects of the earth/habitation at the beginning of historical time (cf. Mic. 6:2).

“*were born*”: an echo of an ancient mythical idea that mother earth suffered labor pains in giving birth to the mountains. Cf. John Bunyan’s use Greek myths without fear that his Christian theology would be misunderstood.

“*And you brought to birth*” (וַתְּהַוֶּלֶל): Clearly God is the Agent in metaphor.

The earth (אֶרֶץ): sustains life and stands in contrast to the chaotic seas around it, to the unfathomable depths below, and to the unattainable heavens above.

“*world*” (וְתַבְּלָל): used only in poetry, refers to the inhabited and inhabitable as a universal, holistic entity. Poets represent it as set upon foundations (1 Sam. 2:8); speak of its inhabitants (Isa. 18:3; 26:9, 18; Psa. 24:1; 33:8; Lam. 4:12); its fruit (Psa. 27:6); fullness (Ps 50:12); all that is in it (89:12). In draught it withers (Isa. 24:4). The King of Babylon transformed it into an uninhabitable wilderness (Isa. 14:17), and whoever is banished from it perishes (Job 18:18). In sum, Israel’s Sovereign transcends the time and space of all people.

“*You (אֱתָהּ) are God*” (אֱלֹהִים, see Psalm 100:3): “has an unlimited abundance of power and a presence that overcomes the barriers of time.”

II. Lament: Human mortality and Israel's painful sin (3–10)

Summary:

1. Humankind's premature death at 70—80 years is due to sin.
2. God's eternal nature stands in sharp contrast to the mortal's brief existence (v. 4).
3. Two strophes
 - a. First (3—6)) pertains to frail man (אָנִי־שׁ) and common humanity (בְּנֵי־אָדָם)
 - b. Second (7—10) pertains to “we” (i.e., faithful Israel).
 - c The two are linked by: *medial* וְ (7); the theme of the brevity of the mortal's life; the logic of covenant theology: death (3—6) is due to God's wrath against sin (7—10). That all die is science; that God abases humanity is theology. That all life is circumvented by death is based on a sober realism; that death is at God's “absolute disposal”³⁸⁵ is based on faith.
4. The stanza points “to the other eternal reality which transcends the evanescent life of man and which alone is able to impart to it a lasting purpose and value. There is no other way to a genuine faith than the one which continually compels a man in remorseless sincerity to abandon all hope in his own strength and cast himself whole upon God.”³⁸⁶

A. The certainty of death and brevity of life (3—6)

All people know the brevity of this life, but almost all foolishly cling to the transient things of this world, flattering themselves that their picture will not appear in tomorrow's obituary page. Few wisely cling to the eternal God.

1. In contrast to the Sovereign's eternity (3—4)

“Return ... to dust” (שׁוּבֵי־אֲדָמָה ... כְּעֹפָר): “Dust” (עֹפָר) in Gen. 3:19 denotes “dry, loose, ground,” “dust” (אֲדָמָה) derives from the verb “to crush” (cf. Isa. 3:15); connotes total defeat

385 A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1982; original, 1902), 549.

386 Weiser, *The Psalms*, 600f.

The mortal (אָנִישׁ) denotes the male in his weakness.

You say (וְאָמַרְתָּ) *return* (שׁוּבוּ): reprises God's direct word to Adam (Gen. 3:19).

mankind (בְּנֵי-אָדָם): see Psalm 8:4. Mankind was created a mortal, but this became a realized mortality only when he ate the forbidden fruit.

A thousand (אֶלֶף): largest round figure that can exist in multiples for counting; a symbol for an extremely long period of time (cf. Deut. 7:9; 84:10).

In your estimation (בְּעֵינֶיךָ, lit. "your sight"): If a thousand years of human time is like twenty-four hours to God, then seventy or eighty years is like less than two hours.

When it is over (כִּי יֵעָקֵר, cf. Amos 8:5; 1 Kgs. 18:29; Gen. 50:4; Song 2:11): adds notions of life's fleeting, ephemeral and futile nature. To paraphrase the Preacher: "It's all קֶבֶל קֶבֶל יָמֵינוּ" ("utter vanity," Eccl. 1:2, 5): like a puff of cigar-smoke. The day is spent and cannot be recovered.

a watch (שְׁעֵטֵי לַלַּיְלָה) *in the night*, one of three four hour watches (cf. Judges 7:19). Seventy or eighty years are like a little over a quarter of an hour to God.

2. In comparison to grass (5—6)

they fall into deep sleep. Lit. "they become sleep" (יִשְׁנֻןָּ, which means "they become totally given over to sleep, a metaphor for "death" (cf. Job 14:12; Psa.76:6—7, Jer. 51:39, 57; Nah. 3:18).

Like grass (כְּעֵשְׂבָא): "wild growth that comes up regularly and abundantly after the winter rains (Psa. 147:8)... As quickly as *h/.a/-/s/.i/^/r* sprouts in the rain, it withers in draught (Isa. 15:6) or is found along streams at best (1 Kgs. 18:5)."³⁸⁷

B. Israel's punishment for sin (7—10)

The second strophe adds three truths to the first:

- 1.) Israel's death is due to God's wrath against iniquities (7—9);
- 2.) A person's span of years is seventy or at best eighty years (10A);³⁸⁸
- 3.) Mankind's proud achievements are futile, for they quickly pass away (10B).

387 M. D. Futato, *NIDOTTE*, 2:247, s.v. קָצִיר *h/.a/-/s/.i/^/r*.

388 For exceptions see Introduction: Author.

1. Death for sin (7—8)

The penitent prodigals, unlike the wilderness generation, do not murmur against God for their plight. V. 8 is the metonymy of the moral cause for the physical afflictions in v. 7. God's punishment of their sins is righteous and just.

“he sets them before him”: Like a good detective seeking justice

In the light of your face (לְפָנֶיךָ פָּנֶיךָ): People hide sin from themselves by subterfuges and conceal from others by hypocrisy, the just God does not sweep under the rug but exposes them implicitly to right the wrong (cf. Prov. 20:27; 1 Cor. 2:11); 1 Cor. 4:5). C. S. Lewis noted: “In the end that Face which is the delight or the terror of the universe must be turned upon each of us...either conferring glory inexpressible or inflicting shame that can never be cured or disguised.”³⁸⁹

If one wants to understand the strength of God's wrath against the sin of unbelief, do not look to the black and fanciful lines of Baxter, Bunyan or Milton, but look at ethnic Israel's tragic history. In ca. 587 B.C. Babylon burned Jerusalem to the ground and Rome did it again in 70 A.D. By 1255 A.D. the Inquisitions of Spain and France were in full gear: Jews were put into dungeons, burned at the stake and their property confiscated. In 1940s German Nazis, according to some historians, slaughtered a total of eleven million Jews. Presently the State of Israel exists by its eyelashes in the midst of enemies sworn to kill them within a couple of decades. Many in Israel have never known a day of peace.

2. Chastened lives while they live (9—10)

And their proud achievements: refers to their insolent pride. In their hubris, mortals strive to achieve what they call “success” independently from God and credit their achievements to the power and strength of their own hands, not to God who gave them ability (cf. Deut. 8:17—18). They do not say, as they should: “If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that” (James 4:13-17).

toilsome! “burdened with grief” (לְבָבֵךְ).

389 C. S. Lewis, “The Weight of Glory” *Theology* (November, 1941) in Wikipedia, “Weight of Glory and Other Addresses,” 6. .

futile: Shakespeare’s Mark Anthony lamented over the corpse of Julius Caesar: “O mighty Caesar, dost thou lie so low?/ Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils/ Shrunk to this little measure?”³⁹⁰ James put it this way: “You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes” (James 4:14). Humans deceive themselves when they think their achievements will gain them social immortality and praise. They name streets after themselves and write post-humous memoirs; they might just as well write their names on water. They build monumental architecture, but most of it winds up only as foundation stones that are uncovered by the archeologist’s spade, and the few that remain above ground are skeletons. Their mansions are sand-castles that the tide inexorably washes away.

And we fly away (נִפְּזָנוּ). Cf. Pro. 23:5. The metaphor connotes speed, and once gone, we are gone forever.

III. Blindness to God’s Wrath Remedied by Numbering Days (11 – 12)

A. Janus stanza:

1. Connection to lament: Catchwords to lament: “your anger” (אַפְּךָ, 4, 11A), “your fierce anger” (אַפְּךָ הַחַדָּד, vv. 7, 11B) and “our days” (יָמֵינוּ) with “the days of our years (יָמֵינוּ אֲשֶׁר נִחְיֶה, vv. 10, 12) Having numbered the mortal’s days to seventy or eighty years (10A), the penitent’s are now able to number their days (12A).
2. Connection to petition: petitions (12B, 13—17) and wise hearts (12B) whom God can bless (13—17).

B. Unification of verses 11 – 12:

1. Catchwords “who knows?” “Cause us to know.”
2. The objects of “cause us to know” (12A) are the double objects of what none knows: your anger and the fear due you (11A, B).
3. Wise hearts of 12B are inseparable from the knowing “the fear due you” (11B; cf. Pro. 1:7; Job 28:20—28; Eccl. 12:13—14).

³⁹⁰ Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, 3.1.282—83.

Hossfeld and Zenger comment: “It is striking that at the beginning [of the petition section], in vv. 11—12, what we have is a petition not for an end to the crisis, but for knowledge or insight into the crisis.”³⁹¹

C. Forster notes numerous key words that point to the reversal from lament to petition:

The root שׁוּב [“to return”] in v. 13] points back to v. 3, but now refers not to the mortal’s return” to dust, but instead of YHWH’s “return” to the petitioners or the “turning away” from his wrath... Verse 14 takes up בִּקְרָא [“in the morning”] from vv. 5—6. What in the earlier verses was part of an image for mortality now describes the morning as a time in which YHWH will again prove himself gracious. Verses 14 and 15 with כָּל־יְמֵינוּ [‘all our days’] and שְׁנוֹת/כִּימוֹת [“according to the days/years”] refer back to v. 9... In contrast to the lament there over the vanished years and days, what follows here is a petition for joy lasting just as many days and years. A major inclusion is created by the key work linkage בְּנֵי־אָדָם / בְּנֵיהֶם between vv. 3 and 16, undoubtedly also with an antithetical tendency: despite the mortality of the *children* of humanity there is hope that YHWH’s servant and their *children* will see revealed the glory of YHWH.³⁹²

1. Few know God’s wrath against sin and the fear due him (11)

2. Petition to know by numbering days (12)

To number (לְמַנּוֹת): “to count” in order to obtain the sum total (Gen 13:16; Psa. 147:4; of 2 Kgs. 12:11); 2 Sam 24:1); The sum will be minus one each day. “It is the counting of days in their toilsome and troubled nature that could push the community to this acknowledgment [strength of Yhwh’s wrathful anger] and of submission [in reverence to God]. Without it, people can live in denial and simply continue enjoying their lives without a care or a thought for God.”³⁹³

So (כֵּן)” ‘thus,’ mostly of manner (i.e., *in this way*) It is medial with reference to what has preceded,³⁹⁴ to wit, “to number our days,” not to verse 11.

391 Hossfeld and Zenger, *A Commentary on Psalms 51—100*, 418

392 Forster, *Begrenztes leben*, 150, cited by Hossfeld and Zenger, *A Commentary on Psalms 51—100*, 420f.

393 John Goldingay, *Psalm. Vol.3: Psalms 90—150* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008), 31.

394 *IBHS*, P. 39.3.4e.

Cause ... to know (*יָדַע*) asks for a double accusative of person and thing, both elided.³⁹⁵ The object of person “us” is readily supplied from “our days.” The only expressed object of thing are the objects of “know” in v. 11. The design of Moses is that by numbering their evanescent days people become keenly aware of the “the immense value of every single day,”³⁹⁶ and they elevate their minds to God in heaven by detaching them from the insolent pride associated with earthly objects (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5). By facing the complete negation of life due to sin, the penitents pay daily attention to the other reality: life in the fear of the Eternal who is their ever present dwelling place (see v. 1). David had the same design when he prayed:

"Cause me to know, *I AM*, my life's end³⁹⁷ and the number of my days;

let me know how fleeting my life is.

You have made my days a mere handbreadth;

The span of my years is as nothing before you.

Everyone is but a breath, even those who seem secure.

Surely everyone goes around like a mere phantom;

in vain they rush about, heaping up wealth without knowing whose it will finally be.

But now, Lord, what do I look for?

My hope is in you” (Psalm 39:4—7 [5—8]).

Verse 12 is “a lesson not in elementary arithmetic but in life-changing theology.”³⁹⁸

wise (*חָכָם*) signifies masterful skill in living.³⁹⁹ In wisdom literature *חָכָם* is inseparable from doing what is right (cf. Pro. 1:3) and from its reward of life.

395 Most English versions gloss “teach us” but that gloss obfuscates the connection with “know” in v. 11.

396 Hossfeld and Zenger, *A Commentary on Psalms 51—100*, 423.

397 Note the difference in syntax from Psalm 90:12A

398 M. Wilcox, *The Message of Psalm 73—150: Songs for the People of God* (Bible Speaks Today; Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2001).

399 Bruce K. Waltke, *Proverbs 1—15* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2004), 76—78; _____, *Finding the Will of God: A Pagan Notion* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2016), 75f.

III. Petitions to relent from anger and to bless Israel (13–17).

“The time had not yet come when the hope of personal immortality could be appealed to as the consolation of sorrow and the consecration of effort (1 Cor. 15:58).”⁴⁰⁰ Nevertheless, as Isaac Taylor comments, “the thought of a life eternal is here in embryo.”⁴⁰¹ They ask to be delivered from the sleep of death and mention the morning of the new age without mentioning the night, yet they speak of their future years as “according to the years you afflicted us” and their hope is for their descendants. Their embryonic desire will come to birth in Jesus Christ in a way immeasurably more than they could ask or imagine (Eph. 3:20; cf. 2 Cor. 4:17).

Their petitions found occasional fulfillment in the old dispensation, as in the case of Joshua’s generation, but the truly new dispensation was inaugurated with the advent of Jesus Christ; continues to be fulfilled until his second advent, and will be consummated in the eschaton.

A. To relent from punishment (13)

B. To confer benedictory blessings (14–17)

The two couplets are joined by the catchword “to see” (הָרָא, 15B and 16A), supplemented with the assonance of the last two words of 15 and of the first word of 16: רָאִינוּ רָצָה רָצָה (ya/-/’e/~/ni/~/ ra/-/’a/~/ yira/)/’eh. The penitent’s will rejoice (14—15) when the majestic saving acts of God once again appear among them.

1. For God’s unfailing love and so to rejoice (14—15)

2. Wish for God’s majesty and beauty upon Israel (16—17)

400 Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 55.

401 Cited by J. J. Stewart Perowne, *The Book of Psalms: A New Translation with Introductions and Notes Explanatory and Critical* (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1898), 157.

Psalm 44

Part I. Introduction

I. Translation

Of the Sons of Korah. A maskil.

- ¹ We have heard it with our ears, O God; our ancestors have told us
what you did in their days, in days long ago.
- ² With your hand you drove out the nations and planted our ancestors;
you crushed the peoples and made our ancestors flourish.
- ³ It was not by their sword that they won the land, nor did their arm bring them victory;
it was your right hand, your arm, and the light of your face, for you loved them.
- ⁴ You are my King and my God, who decrees victories for Jacob.
- ⁵ Through you we push back our enemies; through your name we trample our foes.
- ⁶ I put no trust in my bow, my sword does not bring me victory;
- ⁷ but you give us victory over our enemies, you put our adversaries to shame.
- ⁸ In God we make our boast all day long, and we will praise your name forever.
- ⁹ But now you have rejected and humbled us; you no longer go out with our armies.
- ¹⁰ You made us retreat before the enemy, and our adversaries have plundered us.
- ¹¹ You gave us up to be devoured like sheep and have scattered us among the nations.
- ¹² You sold your people for a pittance, gaining nothing from their sale.
- ¹³ You have made us a reproach to our neighbors, the scorn and derision of those around us.
- ¹⁴ You have made us a byword among the nations; the peoples shake their heads at us.
- ¹⁵ I live in disgrace all day long, and my face is covered with shame
- ¹⁶ at the taunts of those who reproach and revile me, because of the enemy, who is bent on
revenge.
- ¹⁷ All this came upon us, though we had not forgotten you; we had not been false to your
covenant.
- ¹⁸ Our hearts had not turned back; our feet had not strayed from your path.
- ¹⁹ But you crushed us and made us a haunt for jackals; you covered us over with deep
darkness.
- ²⁰ If we had forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a foreign god,
- ²¹ would not God have discovered it, since he knows the secrets of the heart?
- ²² Yet for your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.

²³ Awake, Lord! Why do you sleep? Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever.

²⁴ Why do you hide your face and forget our misery and oppression?

²⁵ We are brought down to the dust; our bodies cling to the ground.

²⁶ Rise up and help us; rescue us because of your unfailing love.

Psalm 45:1 For the director of music. To the tune of "Lilies."

II. Form

A. Poetry

B. Maskil: "Making prudent?" Instruction in theology of prayer for martyrs

C. Royal and Community/National Lament: Protest of the Innocent

Gattung: lament (address, confidence, lament, petition + protest)

Setting: temple? King and nation protest God's handing his army over to a humiliating defeat although they had been God's faithful covenant partners. Cf 2 Chron. 20:3—14

Some people came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Dead Sea. ... Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the LORD, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. The people of Judah came together to seek help from the LORD. Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of the LORD in the front of the new courtyard and said: "... Our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? But now here are men from Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir ... Our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you." All the men of Judah, with their wives and children and little ones, stood there before the LORD. Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jahaziel son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph, as he stood in the assembly. He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat.

Suffering in this psalm is "a battle-scar" for righteousness, "the price of loyalty in a world which is at war with God." (Derek Kidner)

III. Rhetoric

A. Stanzas by tense

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Past prosperity of Israel | 1-8 |
| 2. The present adversity | 9-22 |
| 3. The cry for future divine help | 24-27 |

B. Chiastic Structure

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a Hymnic description of God's past aid | 2-4 |
| b The present community's faithful trust in God | 5-9 |
| x God's violence against the community | 10-17 |
| b' Community's innocence contrasts with God's action | 18-23 |
| a' Petition that God aid in the present | 24-27 |

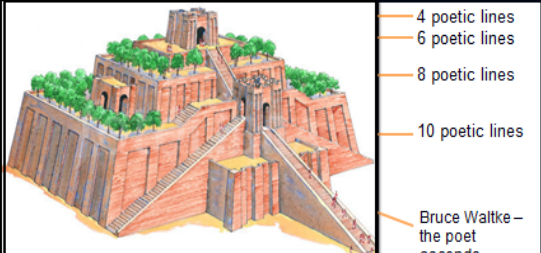
C. Motifs structured like a ziggurat

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Hymn and Confidence (10 lines: [vv. 1, 3 quatrains]) | 1-8 |
| II. Lament (8 lines) | 9-14 |
| III. Protest (6 lines) | 15-18 |
| IV. Petition (4 lines) | 19-22 |

Rhetoric

➤ **Ziggurat Structure – Ridderbos**

"This," says Ridderbos "could hardly have occurred by chance. The Psalm rises up like a ziggurat, and only when the poet has come to the top most flight does he raise up his prayer to God."



— 4 poetic lines
— 6 poetic lines
— 8 poetic lines
— 10 poetic lines

Bruce Waltke – the poet ascends

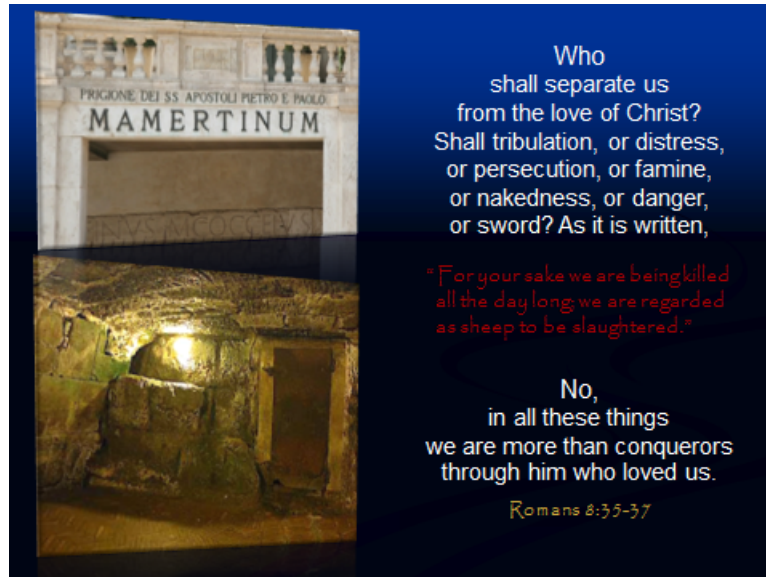
D. Symmetrical structures within motifs

Superscript	44s/s
I. Hymn and Confidence	1–8
A. Recital of Israel’s Salvation History in Past	1–3
B. Affirmation of Israel’s Continuing Faith and Praise	4–8
II. Lament	9–16
A. Lament of Being Handed Over to Defeat	9–12
B. Lament of Being Handed Over to Humiliation	13–16
III. Protest	17–23
A. Assertion of Innocence	17–19
B. Proof of Innocence	20–23
IV. Petition	23–26
A. Wake Up	23–24
B. Redeem Us On Account of Your Unfailing Love	25–26
Postscript	45s/s

N.B. This perfect balance of poetic lines produces a sense of serenity and pleasure, and reveals the Psalmist’s composed psyche. He confronts his peril with fervency, balanced with equanimity. The combination resembles a Beethoven symphony: fervent harmony.

IV. Message

This Maskil (“making prudent”?) teaches martyrs, among other things, that the calculus of covenant blessings and curses is not a simplistic quid pro quo; before enjoying covenant blessings the faithful may expect to suffer undeservedly. This becomes normative in the new dispensation.



The *Makil* inspires praise for and confidence in God's sublimities in the face of irrational adversity. It is preserved in Scripture to give martyrs the theology they need to continue to struggle for God's Name even in death. The reason why martyrs suffer may be unknown, but the reasons for sustaining their faith can be learned from each stanza of this psalm.

Part II Exposition

Superscript

The sons of Korah - God elected this priestly family to play a prominent role in the temple liturgy. These valiant adherents of God chosen king guarded the entrances to the temple and served as musicians in the sanctuary.

An anonymous Korahite put this inspired plea into the mouth of the afflicted king and his people, who are in corporate solidarity, to pour their out an antiphonal, liturgical lament and protest.

Unique relation to Psalm 60 – "A *miktam* of David...when Joab returned and struck down twelve thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt." Like Psalm 44, Psalm 60 laments a national defeat under David's kingship, a defeat that is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture.

I. First Tier: Confidence

A. Forefather’s Praise of God	1
B. Victory of Forefathers	2
C. Victory of Forefathers not by Human Strength	3a
D. Victory of Forefathers by God	3b
X. Confession of King’s Confidence in God Alone	4
D.’ Victory of Present Generation by God	5
C.’ Victory of Present Generation not by Human Strength	6
B.’ Victory of Present Generation	7
A.’ Present Generation’s Praise of God	8
A. Hymn and faith for past : recital of salvation history [5 lines]	1—3
1. Introduction to the salvation history of Joshua	1
<p>“Our fathers have told us”: successful transmission of the gospel proclamation I spite of the common parent ailment of being tongue-tied.</p> <p>“In days long ago.” Over 2600 years ago our fathers appealed to stories of Book of Joshua to inspire courage.</p>	
2. The salvation history of Joshua	2—3
<p><i>a. Contrast of God’s favor on Israel and his defeat of Canaanites</i> 2</p> <p>“You—your hand”: emphatic</p> <p>“Drove out the nations and made them flourish”: singles out of Israel’s salvation history her conquest of the Land (Joshua 1–12) and distribution and settlement of it (Joshua 13–19) because at issue in this national protest is the possession of the land, By right of conquest one people succeeds another in possessing and ruling over a territory. This right of conquest is undergirded by the Creator’s good pleasure and power.</p>	
<p><i>b. Victory Solely by God’s power, not human might</i> 3</p> <p>Joshua’s sword effective because of <i>I AMI</i>’s sword (cf. Josh 5:13—15)</p>	

B. Hymn and Faith in Continuing Salvation history [5 lines] 4—8

1. King and nation express praise and confidence in God's victory 4—5
2. King and nation praise God and renounce faith in arms for victory 6—7
3. King and nation everlasting praise God 8

II. Second Tier: Lament 9—16

The inspired poet now ascends to the second tier of his literary ziggurat, a desolate waste, covered with black clouds that conceal the heavens.

“No longer are we to hear Miriam’s timbrel.
We are to hear Rachel’s weeping.” (Spurgeon)

Timbrel and tears, however, complement each other. Lament and protest is possible only because the holy nation assumes the covenant doctrine of blessings and curses as reward for virtue and punishment for vice respectively.

With a sustained rhythm and repetition of “you” introducing the first five verses, the psalmist blames God for Israel’s defeat and humiliation. It is not merely that God has allowed other nations to desolate Israel, but rather that God has actively sought to defeat them.

A. Handed over to defeat [4 lines] 9—12

1. Literal account [2 lines] 9—10

rejected – as opposed to “favor” fathers enjoyed

humiliated = caused us to be in a state of public dishonor

routed...plundered – lost property, including precious articles and food supplies and the fleeing troops left behind on the battlefield

2. Metaphorical account [2 lines] 11—12

flock...scattered – The dead soldiers are depicted as defenseless sheep being butchered and the survivors as being sent into exile.

sold – a frequent metaphor “to describe people as completely at the disposal of their enemies, as if they were slaves, the property of their foes.”

a pittance – These figures are then expanded by another figure: God sold them for a pittance – i.e. it cost the enemy almost nothing in loss of their own lives.

B. Handed over to humiliation [4 lines] 13–16

Inclusio: “reproach”: object of verbal abuse, scoffing

1. Nation’s humiliation [2 lines] 13–14

you made us = God has authority and exercises power over Israel to transform her identity from being an object of respect to that of being repulsive.

2. King’s humiliation [2 lines] 15–16

So also our Lord Jesus Chrst

III. Third Tier: Protest 17–22

The inspired psalmist now ascends to third tier of his literary ziggurat; it is covered with fog so thick he cannot see. Though hotly protesting, the martyr remains completely rational, for the stanza exhibits alternating moieties, each beginning with a quatrain testifying in first person to the people’s covenant fidelity and ending in a single bicolon introduced by an emphatic *kî* (“surely) glossed “but no!” and “yet”, followed by the protest that “you” God are killing us.

A. Assertion of innocence [3 lines] 17–19

not forgotten – “to forget” means “to dismember oneself from a former allegiance, a synonym for ‘to abandon.’”

not turned back, steps not strayed – incomplete metaphor for keeping the “way” of the Mosaic covenant

you crushed us – incomplete metaphor for intense physical and psychological affliction. Ironically, their faithful “steps” ended in a *haunt for jackals*.

B, Proof of innocence [3 lines] 20–22

1. Denial of—and proof of—not breaking covenant 20–21

spread out palms = gesture for praying, to give one's confidence to

searched it out – a real question; God would have sent a prophet if sin had been in the camp (cf. Joshua 7; 2 Chron 20:14).

2. Went to battle for sake of God's Name 22

for your sake...we are considered – (Rom 8:36). Stories of Bible are mostly about retaining faith in adversity.

IV. Fourth Tier: Petition 23–26

The psalmist now ascends above the thick fog to the fourth and uppermost tier of his literary ziggurat, where his petitions gives voice to hope.

The catchword “reject” links the petition to the lament, the catchword “forget” links the petition to the protest.

An initial petition, “wake up,” introduces the first strophe, and a concluding petition, “rise up,” draws the second strophe to its conclusion. In sum, petitions that God awake from his indifference frame the stanza.

A. Wake up [2 lines] 23–24

God is spirit and responds to fervent spirit

B. Redeem Us On Account of Your Unfailing Love [2 lines] 25–26

sink down to the dust – utter humiliation, while “bodies cling to the ground” intensifies the image to “abject humiliation”

Rise up – reprises Moses' old war cry

on account of your (hesed) unfailing love – the psalm draws to conclusion with the sole reason for God to act. The living, unchanging, everlasting god helps his helpless people as a responsible keeping of faith with them.

Postscript

Handing the Psalm over *for the director of music* transforms the Psalm from a particular historical situation to all God's covenant people. The Psalm ends with the plea to God, not with God's response. But that the plea was set to *the tune of "Upon Lilies"* infers that the Warrior awoke and vindicated his people.

That the covenant community passed down this *Maskil* for three millennia in uninterrupted regular use also infers that God's people found in this Psalm the spiritual strength to accept unmerited suffering for God's sake.

"A war has been fought and lost, but the fight for the meaning of history goes on." (Anderson)

Part III. Conclusion

"The history of the Church ought properly to be called the history of truth" (Pascal, *Pensees*, XIV.858)

Careless seems the great Avenger;
History's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness
Twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne,
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
And, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above his own.

16. Songs of Trust: Psalms 91, 139

Part I. Introduction

I. Translation

¹ As one who dwells in the secret place of the Most High,
[who] in the shadow of the Almighty resides,

² I say of I AM, “[he is] my shelter and my stronghold,
My God in whom I trust.

³ Surely, he will deliver you from the fowler’s trap,
From the destructive plague.

⁴ With his pinions he will overshadow you;
And under his wings you may seek shelter.
His faithfulness is a shield and a rampart.

⁵ Do not be afraid of the terror at night,
From the arrow that flies by day,

⁶ From the plague that walks in darkness,
From the pestilence that rushes at noon.

⁷ A thousand will fall at your side,
A myriad at your right hand;
[But] it will not come near⁴⁰² you.

⁸ Only with your eyes will you look,
And you will see the retribution of the wicked.

⁹ Because you [proclaim], “I AM is my refuge,”
[and] you make the Most High your dwelling place,

¹⁰ Calamity will not meet you,
And a plague will not draw near your tent.

¹¹ Surely, he will command his angels for you
To protect you in all your ways.

¹² Upon the palms of their hands they will lift you up,
Lest your foot strike a stone.

⁴⁰² The Qumran scroll reads נָגַע (“strike”).

- ¹³ Upon the lion and cobra you will tread;
You will trample the young lion and the serpent.
- ¹⁴ Because he clings to me, I will rescue him,
I will set him on high because he knows my name.
- ¹⁵ He will cry out to me, and I will answer him,
I [will be] with him in distress;
I will deliver him, I will glorify him.
- ¹⁶ I will satisfy him with endless days,
And I will show him⁴⁰³ my salvation.

II. Form

A. *Gattung*: Psalm of Confidence/Song of Trust

Other songs of trust: 11, 23, 27:1—6; 62, 121 131.

B. Sitz im Leben: temple:

1. Author: anonymous

2. Antiphonal: three different voices and directions (cf. Pss 2, 45, 84, 110).

- a. “I” who confesses to God his faith in him (vv. 1—2);
- b. Authority who assures “you” of God’s deliverance, protection (vv. 3—13);
- c. “I” who assures “him” of security, exaltation, fullness of life (vv. 14—16).

N.B. the reprise of v. 2 in v. 9a identifies the addressed “you” in vv. 3—13 as the confessing “I” of v. 2: “Because you [proclaim] *I AM* is my refuge.”

N.B. The “I” of vv 14—16 must be God, for only he can promise endless days. God’s beneficiary (“him”) has no other plausible antecedent than the “I” who finds his shelter in God (vv. 1—2) and the “you” who seeks God’s shelter (vv. 3—13).

3. Reference “Secret place,” “shadow” (v. 1) & “wings [perhaps of cherubim] (v. 4)

⁴⁰³ Lit., “cause him to gaze at” (see “commentary”).

C Royal: who is “I” o(v. 2)_ you” (vv. 3—13) and “him” (vv. 14—16)?

1. “Israel” (Kirkpatrick)? But pronoun is singular (contra Ps 90).
2. A godly Israelite (Tate)? Dialogue between worshiper and priest (Eissfeldt)? A traveler facing threats (Brueggemann)? Those going on a pilgrimage festival (Hakam)? But none does justice to martial language that characterizes the psalm.
3. The king:
 - a. See “Historical Approach/extensive royal interpretation
 - b. Targum superscript paraphrase reckoned David as speaking to Solomon.
 - c. Plain sense: “It [the psalm] makes sense as addressed to the king, like Ps 20. It is the king who especially needs Yhwh’s rescue and protection in battle.”⁴⁰⁴

Eaton notes: “For a king, the air is ever thick with deadly darts, whether of plague (often a danger on campaigns), hostile curse or weapons. But God confers safety on him day and night, though armies fall in ten-thousands at his side (cf. II Sam. 18.3).”⁴⁰⁵ The prophecy in vv. 3—13 climaxes with the promise he will trample nations (v. 13).⁴⁰⁶
 - d. Other indicators will be noted in “Exposition.”

D. Eschatological, Messianic:

1. The psalm’s assurance that God will rescue the king from the wicked in a present round-the clock battle not universally true (see Psalm 44; Rom 8:36; Matt 13:35; 14:1—12). Martyrs in church history.

404 John Goldingay, *Psalm. Vol.3: Psalms 90—150* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008), 39.

405 Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, 58.

406 Alter (*The Book of Psalms*, 322) speaks of “life imagined as a battlefield fraught with dangers” is misguided. It is unlikely that a poet would sustain the metaphor of the battlefield from vv. 3—16 without giving a clue to the figured reality.

2. True of Lord Jesus Christ: wicked did not harm him until he handed his life over a ransom for many (Matt 2:13-18; 5:1—13; 4:37—39; Mark 8:40—42 [deliberately touched the leper]; Luke 4:29—30; John 10:31—39; 10:18). Achilles' mother tried to make him immortal by treating him with ambrosia and burning away his mortality. Because the heel by which she held him remained untouched by the magic, she failed to make him immortal. *I AM*, however, successfully made his Messiah invulnerable and invincible in conjunction with Messiah's ethical faith in the promises of God.

3. New Testament interpretation.

- a. Luke 4:9—11: "The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 'If you are the Son of God [italics mine]," he said, 'throw yourself down from here. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you [italics mine] to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone' "

- b. Luke 10:19 (cf. Psalm 91:13): "I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you" (Luke 10:19).

III. Rhetoric

A. Logical development

- I. King speaks: confession of faith in God (vv. 1-2)
 - A. Introduction to confession (v. 1)
 - B. Confession (v. 2)
- II. Prophet speaks: assurances to the King (vv. 3—13)
 - A. First cycle (vv. 3—8)
 - 1. Delivered and protected from peril (vv. 3—4)
 - 2. Fear not round-the-clock perils (vv. 5—6)
 - 3. Gaze on destruction of the wicked (vv. 7—8)

B. Second cycle	(vv. 9—13)
1. Faith and protection	(vv. 9—10)
2. Angelic enablement	(vv. 11—12)
3. Tread on wild animals	(v. 13)
III. God speaks: assurances to the King	(vv. 14—16)
A. Love for God and salvation	(v. 14)
B. More than answered prayer	(v. 15)
C. Longevity and salvation	(v. 16)

N.B. The attenuation from prophetic speech to divine speech occurs commonly in prophetic literature. (e.g. Micah 1:2—5, 6—7; 8—14, 15—16).

N.B. Since the prophet repeats the King’s confession of faith in v. 9a, the psalm could be analyzed as consisting of two equal stanzas: the “King’s” confession of faith and promises of assurance (vv. 1—8, 9—16).⁴⁰⁷

B. Alternating structure of two cycles of prophet’s speech

1. Begin with **יָדַע** (“surely” [vv. 3, 9])
2. King’s divine protection by God’s wings (v. 4) and by his angels (vv. 11—12),
3. Wicked will be punished (v. 8) and Messiah will trample them (v. 13).

C. Escalations

1. The first cycle culminates with the King gazing down at corpses of the wicked (v. 8), and the second with his trampling the symbolic “cobra” and “lion” (v. 13).
2. The divine oracles escalate his deliverance and protection to glorification, fullness of life and salvation.

407 Kirkpatrick (*The Book of Psalms*, 554) so analyzes the psalm.

Part II: Exposition

I. King speaks: confession of faith (vv. 1–2)

A. Introduction (v. 1)

Sounds the psalm's theme: *I AM*'s protection of his King.

Most High [El] Elyon, Gen 14:18); *Almighty* [El] Shaddai [שַׁדַּי], Gen 17:1): names of God used by patriarchs (see Psalm 90:1–2). '*Elyon* is an epithet of kingship: the great King over all the gods (Ps 18:13[14]; over all the earth (Ps. 47:2[3]); dwells in the heights above the clouds (Isa 14:14); thunders from heaven (Ps 18:13[[14]; and is sovereign over good and ill (Lam 3:38). That title “cuts every threat down to size,” says Kidner.⁴⁰⁸

secret place (סֵתֶר): a place of intimacy that is inaccessible to those not chosen, even as a secret (סֵתֶר) message is accessible only to the addressee and no one else (Judg 3:19). a metonymy for the house of God on Mount Zion.

as one who dwells (יָשָׁב): hospitable acceptance into a household, security (cf. Gen 19:3–8; Judg 19:16–24) and duration of residence.

in the shadow (בְּצֵל) (connotes protection: of a tree (Jon 4:5) or a cloud (Isa 4:6) that protects from the heat of the sun (cf. Psalm 121:5); of Lot's house from Sodomites (Gen 19:8) and of covering of eggs by a bird (Isa 34:15); and of *I AM*'s wing (Ps 17:8), the probable sense here (cf. v.4).

Resides (יָתַד, *hithpolel*): continual protection.

B. Confession (v. 2)

I say (אָמַר): a habitual, repeated situation [i.e., “it is my custom to say”]; He declares his faith publicly (cf. Rom 10:9)

my shelter (מִקְוֵי): Whereas in v. 1 the sanctuary where God sat enthroned provided protection, in v. 2 *I AM* himself is the defender; he is always with him (v. 14). Three repetitions of “my” emphasize the King's personal relationship with God.

And my stronghold (וּמְצוּדָתִי): another military term appropriate for a king. Strongholds are usually built on cliff-like heights. After David captured Jebusite city “he took up residence in the fortress (מְצוּדָה) and called it the City of David” (2 Sam 5:9). Before its

408 Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150* (Kidner Classic Commentaries; Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2008; org. 1975) 364.

capture the Jebusites had taunted David “ ‘You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off’ ” (2 Sam 5:7). The Qumran scrolls use the term for the now famous Masada.

Trust (Heb. root אָמַן) “to rely on someone (e.g. Pharaoh [Jer 46:25]) or something (e.g. wealth [Prov 11:28]) out of a sense of security, usually in the face of danger.” Scripture condemns trust in anyone or in anything apart from God (cf. 2 Kgs 18:21; Ps 118:8—9; Isa 36:5; Jer 5:17; 12:52; 18:10; 48:7; Ezek 33:13; Mic 7:5). Trust in God assumes God has spoken words and he is trusted as their guarantor. The psalm now segues into words of promises and assurances (vv. 3—16).

II. Prophet speaks: assurances to the King (vv. 3—13)

The speaker speaks for God, for he gives assurances that only God can fulfill.

A. First cycle (vv. 3—8)

The catchword “shelter” (Heb. אָוֶן) connects the King’s confession of faith to God—“he is my shelter” (אָוֶן אֱלֹהִים)— with the prophet’s assurance that under God’s wings you may seek shelter (אָוֶן אֱלֹהִים).

The first cycle consists of a couplet, assuring the King that God will deliver and protect him (vv. 3—4) and a quatrain (two couplets) pertaining to battlefield perils (vv. 5—8): human weapons and nature’s plague (vv. 5—6) and the King’s triumph through the plague (vv. 7—8). Some speculate the real perils are demons and/or sunstroke,⁴⁰⁹ but those interpretations have no solid foundation in this text. Goldingay comments: “The military language reflects the king’s literal position as commander in chief; reference to epidemic and to his tent may link with that.”⁴¹⁰ He also notes: “There is no explicit indication of this reference [demons], and it would be unique in the OT, which makes hardly any reference to demons.”⁴¹¹ The gifted poet of Psalm 91 discerns and reports the telling details of the battle to represent the whole: terror at night (see comment below), arrows that fly by day, and an unscathed King gazing at the tens of thousands of soldiers round-about him, felled by a plague that accompanies battle. Weiser comments: “The

409 Cf. Artur Weiser, *The Psalms* (Old Testament Library; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), 608f.

410 Goldingay, *Psalms*, 39.

411 Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:45

greatness of the divine power to help can be judged only by the magnitude of the affliction.”⁴¹²

1. Delivered and protected from peril (vv. 3—4)

a. *Delivered* (v. 3)

The two images of evil, human trap and nature’s plague, from which the King is saved mutually support one another, for both dangers “strike unseen, against which the strong are as helpless as the weak.”⁴¹³

he *will deliver* you (לְיָדָיִךְ): “to snatch away, liberate, out of any kind of being held fast.

from the trap (מִמְלֶכֶת) *of the fowler* (שֶׁל הַיָּדָיִם , see Ps. 124:7; 141:9; 2 Tim 2:26). The fowler may be Death⁴¹⁴ and/or the wicked (v. 8). A trap or snare conceals its deadly danger in order to take its victim suddenly and by surprise to hold him fast until its owner can do as he will to his powerless victim (cf. Eccl. 9:12).

the plague (מִדֵּבַר). The bubonic plague is associated with war. The Angel of the Lord killed 185,000 in the Assyrian army in 701 B.C. probably through a bubonic plague (2 Kgs 19:36). The Greek historian Herodotus, writing his history in the fourth century B.C., heard an Egyptian story about Sennacherib’s campaign that also ascribed the Assyrian withdrawal from Jerusalem to a miracle.⁴¹⁵ The presence of mice in his account suggests that a bubonic plague destroyed the Assyrian army because rat flees are the usual carriers of the disease. So also the Lord’s ark of the covenant probably inflicted a bubonic plague on the Philistines, for their apotropaic devices of tumors and rats are connected with a bubonic plague (1 Samuel 6:5). A bubonic plague was a most serious threat that God leveled against Israel (Lev. 26:25; Num. 14:12).

412 Weiser, *The Psalms*, 607.

413 Kidner, *Psalms 73—150*, 364.

414 So F. Delitzsch, *Psalms*, translated by Francis Bolton (Commentary on the Old Testament by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Volume 5; Peabody, Massachusetts, 1996; 1866—69), 603.

415 “After this, Sennacherib, King of the Arabians and Assyrians, marched a large army against Egypt...a number of field-mice, pouring in upon their enemies, devoured their quivers and their bows, and moreover, the handles of their shields; so that on the next day, when they fled bereft of their arms, many of them fell.” (Herodotus, 2, 141). Mice are a Greek symbol of pestilence; it is Apollo Smintheus (the mouse god) who sends and then ends the plague in Homer, *Iliad*, 1. 39.

b. Protected (v. 4)

Combines the warm protectiveness of a parent bird (v. 4[a] ...) with the hard, unyielding strength of armour (4b).⁴¹⁶

With his pinions (לְחַיִּימוֹתָיָם), see n. 19) evokes the image of a mother-bird who protects her brood by spreading her wings over them (cf. Ruth 2:12). Possibly, the figure refers to God who is present above the wings of the cherubim upon the ark (Exod. 25:20; 1 Kgs 8:6—7). “This image [of covering wings],” says Caquot, “seems to be specifically Israelite; it has no equivalent in Akkadian lyrics.” He draws the conclusion: “Probably, its origins are to be found in the realities of the temple: the ‘pinions of Yahweh’ are those of the cherubim connected with the ark.”⁴¹⁷ The figurative references to the temple in v. 1 support this interpretation. The cherubim are winged angelic creatures who protect what is sacred.

his faithfulness (אֱמוּנָתוֹ): God’s reliability/ ependability/ trustworthiness/ /constancy finds concrete reality in his words: “We have not to fly to a dumb God for shelter, or to risk anything upon a Peradventure. He has spoken, and His word is inviolable. Therefore, trust is possible.”⁴¹⁸

The shield (מָגֵן): The long shield to protect the entire body.⁴¹⁹ It was used during the siege of cities, particularly when warriors are trying to undermine the wall. Often a shield bearer will have sole responsibility of moving the shield in order to protect himself and an archer who accompanies him.⁴²⁰

416 Kidner, *Psalms 73—150*, 364,

417 Caquot, “Le Psaume XCI,” 28.

418 Maclaren, *The Psalms*, 3:19.

419 The *ma/-ge/-n* is a round, light shield that is made of wood or wicker and covered with thick leathery rubbed with oil (cf. Isa 21:5) to preserve it and to make it glisten, and is carried by the light infantry to ward off the enemy’s sword, spear, or arrows.

420 T. Longman, *NIDOTTE*, 3.819—20, s.v. *s./inna/* (see Y. Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), 406, 418, 462).

2. Fear not round-the-clock perils (vv. 5—6)

The perils alternate as several merisms: in vv. 5—6 by humans (v. 5) and God through nature (v. 6); in v. 5 at night and arrow by day, hidden and open; in v. 6 by darkness and noon, open and hidden.

a. *Peril of human weapons (v. 5)*

Do not be afraid (אלֹא־תִירָא): an *oratio variata*, a poetic way of reinforcing the underlying strong promises of vv. 5—6, not a real command, for the King has expressed his confidence in *I AM* to be his shelter and stronghold.

Terror of the night (מִתְּרֵי־לַיְלָה מִמֶּנֶּה: something scary).

1. Demons?

- a. Targum, rabbinic aggadists and some moderns (Wensinck, Oesterley, and Gemser)
- b. Night is the domain of demons.

2. Perils of the battlefield

- a. Job 24:16—17 associates the night with thieves and adulterers, not with demons.
- b. The night does not end demonic activity⁴²¹
- c. The parallel, “the arrow that flies by day,” points to a military peril (cf. Ps 121:6).
- d. Song 3:7—8 of Solomon’s warriors, “all of them wearing the sword, all experienced in battle, each with his sword at his side, prepared for the terrors of the night (תִּירָא מִמֶּנֶּה לַיְלָה).”
- e. Ps 11:2 “the wicked bend their bows; they set their arrows against the strings to shoot from the darkness” (לַיְלָה).

421 Caquot, *Le Psaume xci*, 29.

The arrow (יָנֵף): strikes from afar (Gen 21:16), suddenly (Ps 64:7), so swiftly that time stands still (Hab 3:11); and often from ambush (Jer 9:8). Poisoned and strikes at random: a weapon to be feared.⁴²²

By day (בַּיּוֹם): merism with “at night”; Weapons and plagues pose a round-the-clock threat.

b. Peril of bubonic plague (v. 6)

pestilence/plague (מַדְבֵּה see v. 3): personified as a person who *walks* through the camp by foot, a fitting metaphor for the spread of the plague from one soldier to another.

In darkness (לַיְלָא) denotes the darkness of night; connotes sinister “gloom.”

Destruction (מַחֲרֵב): in three of its occurrences is paired with “pestilence”/ “plague” (מַדְבֵּה [Ps 91:6; Hos 13:14] and מַחֲרֵב [Deut 32:24]), suggesting it is used here as a metonymy for a plague, perhaps “epidemic.”

Rushes [in force]: escalates “walks,” implying the plague has reached epidemic proportions.

At noon (בְּצֶהְרֵי הַיּוֹם): the brightest time of the day (Ps. 37:6), stands in contrast to evening and morning in Ps 55:18.

3. Gaze on the destruction of the wicked (vv. 7—8)

The King’s protection (vv. 5—6) from his enemies is complemented with their destruction (vv. 7—8). He gazes (v. 8) upon the fallen wicked all around him (v. 7).

a. Myriads of the wicked fall (v. 7)

The poet elaborates upon the plague rather than weapons, because it is an act of God, not the King’s military skill, to destroy the wicked. V. 7a consists of synonymous parallels (v. 7aα “a thousand...// v 7aβ myriad...) about the felled enemy, antithetical to the parallel about his escape (v. 7b). “At your side” (7a) is set over against “not near you” (7b). The fallen from the plague are right beside him, but the plague itself is not within talking distance of him. As for v. 7a, the escalation from “a thousand” to “ten thousand” is formulaic in synonymous parallelism (cf. 1 Sam 18:6—7), but in this case it reflects, like the parallels “walk” and “rush” in v. 6, that the plague has reached raging epidemic

⁴²² *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, Leland Ryken, James C. Willhoit, Tremper Longman III (eds.) (Downers Grove, Ill. IVP Academic, 1998), 48.

proportions. The antithetical parallel plus the identification of the fallen as “wicked” in v. 8 shows the fallen are his enemies.

thousand (אלף): is the largest round figure that can exist in multiples for counting. Usually it occurs with a noun (cf. Ps 90:4), but here it is used absolutely, probably as a reference to a military unit of a thousand soldiers . Jesse sent David with cheese to the commander of an אלף (1 Sam. 17:18). In Moses song against Israel, God asks: “How could one man chase a thousand, or two put a myriad to flight?” (Deut 32:30). “Thousands” and “myriads” ae also used in the military contexts of Deut 33:17; 1 Sam 18:7; and Ps 3:6[7]. The numbers may be actual. Sennacherib’s slain troops numbered 185,000.

Will fall (יִפֹּל) is used “especially of violent death (ca. 96 times).” Of Sisera, Deborah sings: “where he sank, there he fell—dead” (אֶת־מִשַׁן הָרַגְתָּ וְשָׁם יִפֹּל כַּמָּוֶת).

at your side (בְּצֵדְךָ), as Ruth sat beside Boaz (Ruth 2:14) and Abner sat at Saul’s side (1 Sam 20:25) and signifies close proximity.

myriads (מֵאוֹתָאֵלָפִים): an indeterminate, immense number (cf. 1 Sam 18; Ps 3:6[7]; Mic 6:7).

right hand (יְמִינְךָ): the favored and stronger hand (cf. Gen 48:1, 18; 1 Kgs 2:19). “Since time immemorial, the ‘right hand’ has been used figuratively in the sense of “power” or “might” (cf. Isa 63:12).⁴²³ In sum, the King will appear to have slain a whole army, though in truth they were killed in the raging bubonic epidemic.

“it will not come near you” (עֵלְיָכֶם לֹא יָבִיא): The only grammatical antecedent of **it** (masc. sing.) is כַּדְּבַר and כֹּתֹבֵב, the devastating plague “that frequently broke out during military campaigns.”⁴²⁴ The assurance in the midst of scenic descriptions of the enemy falling all around the King (v. 7) and of his only gazing at them (v. 8) are eminently suitable for a plague.

You is emphatic.

Draw near (קָרַב) may denote to come close for intercourse: for sex (Exod. 19:15) or for conversation (Gen 43:18; 44:18). He can see the fallen enemy beside him but the plague does not come close enough to be heard.

423 Soggin, *TDOT*, 6:101, s.v. יָמִין.

424 Dahood, *Psalms 50—100*, 332.

b. The wicked paid back (verse 8)

The destruction of the wicked is just, not arbitrary.

the recompense (תַּגְלִיט) refers to the compensation or reward that the wicked must pay to God and his King for the harm they did by setting a trap for the righteous. Hugger comments: “The poet sees the victims of the plague, their death and their putrefaction, and explains both theologically as a ‘consequence’ (תַּגְלִיט) of godlessness.”⁴²⁵

B. Second cycle (vv. 9–13)

V. 9 reprises the opening stanza (vv. 1–2), to wit, the chiasmic repetition of “the Most High” (vv. 1,9b) and the confession that *I AM* is “my shelter (vv. 2, 9a). The repetition suggests that v. 9 is either an inclusio with vv. 1–2 or an introduction to a second strophe. The reprise in v. 10 of vv. 3–8 (see below) supports that the couplet, vv. 9–10, introduces a second strophe: the perils and plague will *not* (אֵל) happen to him (v. 10). As noted, the strophes have an alternating structure.

1. Faith and protection (vv. 9–10)

a. *Condition: reprise of King’s confession (v. 9)*

b. *Consequence: no calamity (v. 10)*

will... meet you (אֵלַי אֶפְגָּע). Calvin comments: “Troubles, it is true, of various kinds assail the believer as well as others, but the Psalmist means that God stands between and the violence of every assault, so as to preserve him from being overwhelmed.”⁴²⁶

Plague נֶגֶף: “onset of illness in a general sense;” more specifically “a blow” (Ps 89:33) or, as here according to *HALOT*, “affliction, plague, infestation.” If so, נֶגֶף echoes אֶרֶב (vv. 3B, 6A); “calamity” echoes “terror” and “arrows” (v. 5). Also נֶגֶף (“to be close to,” v. 7b) and אֶרֶב (“to come near,” v. 10) occur as parallels in Isa 65:5.

In your tent (אֶתֶּן אֶתֶּן): appropriate locus for a king in battle (cf. 1 Sam 4:10; 17:54; 2 Kgs 7:7). “The frequent interpretation of this term as an allusion to a

425 Pirmin Hugger, *Jahwe meine Zuflucht: Gestalt und Theologie des 91. Psalms* (Munster/Schwartzach: Vier-Tu-Verlag, 1971), 45.

426 Calvin, *Psalms*, 2:484..

nomadic life ... does not commend itself⁴²⁷ because the psalm's holistic scene is that of a battlefield, not of a migrating nomad.

2. Angelic enablement (11—13)

Vv. 11—13 are unified grammatically and semantically. Angels are the subject of vv. 11—12 and the motif of advancing movement unifies vv. 11—13: “way” (v. 11), “foot” (v. 12), “tread [under feet]” (v. 13). This closing unit brings the prophetic assurances (vv. 3—13) to their climatic conclusion: angels will protect/watch over the King (v. 11) to keep his feet from stumbling on a stone that would prevent him from accomplishing his mission (v. 12) to tread upon the cobra and trample upon the lion (v. 13). Only in this climatic verse of the second stanza does the poet uncover why the King engages the battle; viz., to vanquish the political and spiritual enemy.

a. King guarded in all his ways (v. 11)

his angels (מַלְאָכָיו): מַלְאָךְ glossed “messenger” for a human messenger and “angel” for a divine messenger. Angels are supernatural and nonphysical spirits that may assume a bodily appearance. They link heaven and earth (Gen 28:12; John 1:51). Angels are excellent in wisdom and power (1 Sam. 29:9; 2 Sam 14:17; 19:27): “mighty ones who do *I AM*'s word” (Ps 103:20). The angel of the Lord encamps around the faithful (Ps 34:8) and chases the king's enemies (Ps 35:5). They continue to be “ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation” (Heb. 1:14; cf. M 18:10; Acts 5:19—20; 10:22; 12:7—11; et cetera).

to guard you in all your ways (לְכָל-דְּרָגְתֶיךָ יִשְׁמְרֶנִּי): שָׁמַר can also glossed “to watch over” as when God promised Jacob: “I will watch over you wherever you go” (וְיִשְׁמְרֶנִּי בְּכָל-אֲשֶׁר-תֵּלֵךְ, Gen 28:20, NIV). In these contexts, polysemous “way” is used “figuratively of course of life, or action, undertakings.”⁴²⁸ Here they are appropriate to achieve a desired purpose.

b. Angels prevent King from stumbling (v. 12)

The image of a stumbling stone originated in the rocky landscape of the Judean hills, in which there were no paved roads until the Romans introduced them.⁴²⁹ The overshadowing wings of God (cherubs?) now give way to the palms of

427 Dahood, *Psalms 50—100*, 333.

428 BDB, p. 203, entry 5, s.v. שָׁמַר.

429 Cf. Alter, *The Book of Psalms*, 323.

angels' hands (vv. 4, 12a) and a stumbling block replaces trap (vv. 3, 12b). Perhaps the wicked planted the stumbling stone to trip him up.

They will lift you up: connotes “to support, sustain”⁴³⁰ with the prepositional phrase *upon palms [of hand]*.⁴³¹ Angels appear as human beings with hands, not with wings, unlike common artistic representations of them (cf. (Judg 13:21; Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4).

Lest your foot strike a stone (לֹא יִכּוּת רַגְלְךָ אֶת־אֶבֶן): could involve falling off a cliff to one's death (cf. Luke 4:9—12). With the angels bearing the King upon the palms their hands, nothing will trip the King up from his completing his mission to crush the serpent's head under his heel (cf. Gen 3:15).

3. Tread on wild animals (v. 13)

Verse 13 is linked with verses 11—12 in several ways: rhetorically, by the motif of advancing movement (see above); semantically, by answering the question why angels guard and enable the King; and grammatically, by beginning with the preposition “upon” (לְ), which also began v. 12.

lion, לְיוֹן denotes the rapacity of the king of the beasts

cobra (לְנָחָשׁ): a poisonous snake, perhaps the “cobra.” Deut 32:23; Job 20:14, 16

young lion (לְיוֹן צָעִיר): death of a young lion entails the loss of progeny.

Serpent (לְנָחָשׁ): echoes of a sinister sea-monster (cf. Isa. 27:1; Jer. 51:34). Symbolic for the thousands of wicked fallen round about him;

- 1.) angels do not come to the aid of the King merely so that he can tread upon a snake.
- 2.) Kings trample down their political enemies,⁴³² who, as we learn in the New Testament, are energized by demonic forces.
- 3.) The Uraeus [yoō' rēəs], the stylized, upright form of a cobra, featured prominently as the head ornament on the Pharaoh's crown. It symbolized his sovereignty, royalty, deity and divine authority and re-enforced his claim over the land.

430 BDB, p. 671, entry 2c, s.v. אָשַׁן.

431 Cf. 1 Sam 5:4 כַּפְּיוֹת דָּגָן (palms of his [Dagan's] hands)

432 For the association of animals with rulers see O. Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical Word: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*, trans. T. J. Hallett (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), 84—86.

- 4.) Serpents symbolize ancient Egypt (Isaiah 51:9—10; Ezek 29:3; Ezek 32:2;) and with a lion, Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 51:34). Cf. Gen 3:16 and Roman 16:20. In the Testament of Levi (12:18), the new priest “shall give power to his [God’s] children to tread upon the evil spirits.” Jesus echoes these words to his disciples in Luke 10:19: “I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.” These texts about the devil and evil spirits and their defeat by Messiah find their echo in Rev 12. In sum, the cobra/serpent and lion/ young lion are not real animals but symbols of Israel’s political and historical enemies and of the spiritual powers that inspire and empower them. Messiah will trample them under his feet as Jehu’s horse trampled Jezebel’s corpse.

III. God speaks: Assurances to the King (vv. 14—16)

God sometimes responds *to* the faithful with assurance that their prayer is answered (cf. Pss 12:5[6]; 46:10[11]; 60:6; 75:2[3]; 81:6; 95:8). Here God gives assurance to the King by talking *about* him, not to him. “The King now overhears himself being spoken about, a form of hearing that has its own power.”⁴³³

The introductory verse, like vv. 9—10 of the second stanza, reprises vv. 1—4: the King’s confession of faith in vv. 1—2 and the oracle of salvation and security in vv. 3—4. *I AM*’s assurances consist of two divine sevens: seven escalating versets—v. 15 has three—and seven verbs of salvation with “I” as subject: “I will rescue him”; “I will set him (securely) on high”; “I will answer him”; “I will deliver him”; “I will glorify him”; “I will satisfy him with endless days”; and “I will show him salvation.” The affirmation, “I [will be] with him” is centrally positioned among the seven verbs.

A. Love for God and salvation (v. 14)

He clings to me (אֲדַבֵּק לִּי): used of a man fancying a woman (Gen 34:8; Deut 21:11) and of *I AM*’s being attracted to Israel (Deut 7:7).⁴³⁴ “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder” is famous because it rings true to a universal human experience: people have different ideas of what beauty is. The spiritual purity of the King enables him to see what is truly beautiful, the transcendental and absolute beauty of God himself, and he clings to it.

433 Goldingay, *Psalms*, 48.

434 Cf. Goldingay, *Psalms*, 48.

I will set him [safely] on high (אֲשַׁבְּיֶהוּ): above the reach of his enemies (cf. Ps 139:6; Prov 18:10)

Because he knows my Name (כִּי־יָדַע שְׁמִי): God’s fourfold names in vv. 1—2. “Name” functions as a character description rather than a merely a label of identification. “Know” connotes intimate possessing, not merely as intellectual knowledge (Pss 3:6; see 90:11) and entails to entrust oneself to him (see. Ps 9:10[11]) and to submit to him (cf. 1 King 8:43).⁴³⁵

B. More than answered prayer (v. 15)

He will cry out (יִקְרָאֵנִי): “to draw someone’s attention with the sound of the voice in order to establish contact,”

and I will answer him (וְאָעֲנֶהוּ): designates *I AM*’s reaction or response.⁴³⁶ The King need only raise his voice for God’s help (cf. 1 Kgs 8:52) and his God responds with help (cf. Ps 2:8; 3:4[5]; 4:1[2]; passim). But cry he must, for failure to turn to God, his only source of hope, would be tantamount to abdication of his throne, making him an accomplice with the evildoers (cf. Deut. 22:24). *With him* (עִמּוֹ): signifies “fellowship and companionship,” and “giving aid” (1 Chron. 12:19; cf. Gen 21:22; Deut 20:1, 4; 43:2; Josh 1:5, 9; Judg 2:19; 6:12).⁴³⁷

I will deliver him (וְאֶחְלֶצֶהוּ): originally meant “to withdraw, pull out” (cf. Lev 14:40).

I will glorify him (וְאֶכְבֹּדֶהוּ). Honor entails an enhancement of life 1 Sam 2:30 (“whoever honors me I will honor” (אֶכְבֹּד) that gives social weight).⁴³⁸

C. Longevity and salvation (v. 16)

I will satisfy him (עֲבֹבֶנּוּ *Piel*) provide the full and consummate measure of expectation, need, and desire for life.

Endless life. The ancient versions gloss אֲרֵךְ יָמִים literally by “length of days.” The phrase is ambiguous: either a long life terminated by clinical death ((Job 12:12). Or endless days not terminated by death. “He asked you for life, and you gave it to him— length of days, for ever and ever” (אֲרֵךְ יָמִים עוֹלָם וָעֶד, Ps 21:4[5]). “Your statues, *I AM*, stand firm;

435 Caquot, “Le Psaume XCI,” 36.

436 C. J. Labuschagne, *TLOT*, 3:1159f., s.v. קָרָא Israel *qr*’.

437 BDB, 767, s.v. עָם, entry 1a.a.

438 Hugger, *Jahwe meine Zuflucht*, 275f.

holiness adorns your house for endless days” (לְאֶרְךָ יָמִים, Ps 93:5). The desire for food can be satisfied temporarily with a meal, but the desire for life can be sated only by “endless days.” Isaiah prophesied of Jesus Christ: “After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied” (Isa 53:11) By suffering Isaiah means: “he makes his life an offering for sin” (v. 10).

And I will show him (וְאֶרְאֶהוּ) “to make visible to him what heretofore had been invisible” (cf. Ps 90:16) With the preposition *בְּ* it means “to cause to look intently at, to cause to gaze at with joy.”⁴³⁹

My salvation (יְשׁוּעָתִי) refers to the just deliverance of the King by God from external evils. Salvation from evil, including its elimination, consummates the purpose of sacred history (cf. Ps 50:23). The Lord Jesus Christ has already conquered death; “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” (1 Cor 15:55). And at the end of history he will prove victorious over all death: “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death” (1 Cor 15:55). Of the Church Peter says: “who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet 1:5).

439 BDB, p. 909, s.v. רָאָה entry *Hiph.* 2a.; cf. pp. 907f., entry *Qal*, 8.a.(5).

Psalm 139

I. Translation

Of David. A psalm.

- ¹ *I AM*, you search me and so you know me.
- ² You know when I sit and when I rise;
you consider my thoughts from afar.
- ³ My going out and my lying down you discern;
you are familiar with all my ways.
- ⁴ Surely, before a word is on my tongue,
I AM, you know it completely.
- ⁵ Behind and before—you hem me in;
you have laid the palm [of your hand] upon me.
- ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
It is too high; I do not have the power to scale it.
- ⁷ Where can I go to escape your spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
- ⁸ If I ascend to the heavens, you are there;
if I spread out my bed in the grave, behold, you!
- ⁹ Were I to rise on the wings of the dawn
and alight on the far side of the sea,
- ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.
- ¹¹ And I then thought: "Surely if darkness crushes me,
and if light becomes night around me,"
- ¹² Even darkness will not be too dark for you,
And the night will shine like the day;
Darkness is as light to you.
- ¹³ For you gave birth to my kidneys;
you wove me together in my mother's womb.
- ¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully extraordinary;
your works are wonderful I know full well.

- ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you
when I was wrought in the secret place,
when I was colorfully woven in the depths of the earth.
- ¹⁶ My embryo your eyes saw; in your book all of them were written;
My days were fashioned when there was not yet any of them.
- ¹⁷ And for me, how precious are your thoughts, God!
How vast is the sum of them!
- ¹⁸ Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand.
I wake up, I am still with you.
- ¹⁹ If only you, God, would slay the wicked—
Bloodthirsty men, get away from me!—
- ²⁰ who speak of you with evil intent;
your adversaries misuse your name.
- ²¹ Do I not hate those who hate you, *I AM*,
and loathe those who rise up against you?
- ²² I hate them with complete hatred;
they have become my enemies.
- ²³ Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts,
- ²⁴ and see if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.
- Psalm 140:1 For the director of music.

I. Form

A. Poetry

Allusions to the pagan myths of the Solar deity, the Mother Earth goddess, and the Tablet of Destinies

B. Psalm

C. Setting

1. Surrounded by blood-thirsty blasphemers
2. Certainty of loyalty to God and hatred of wicked mixed with uncertainty of its purity
3. Seeks for certainty of his motives with regard to hatred of wicked

D. Gattung: Petition psalm with extended praise and confidence

1. Motifs

- a. Address (v. 1A)
- b. Confidence (vv. 1B-12)
- c. Praise (vv. 13-18),
- d. Lament (vv. 19-22),
- e. Petition (vv. 23-24)

2. confidence: atypical

- a. Mixed with anxiety.
- b. Anxiety resolved by being totally open to God

3. Petition: atypical.

- a. Enemies: not for deliverance but a wish that blood-thirsty blasphemers be eliminated.
- b. Self: does not protest or confess sin but seeks integrity of loyalty to God.
- c. Asks God for intimacy;, to test the mettle of his integrity, for he has misgivings about its purity (see v. 23-24); to lead him in the way everlasting,

III. Rhetoric

A. Logic

Superscript	v. 1A
I. Meditation: Trust, Anxiety, Praise	vv. 1—18
A. Confession of <i>I AM</i> 's Personal Omniscience	vv. 1b-6
1. Confidence	vv. 1-4
a. Summary: searched and known	1
b. In time	2
c. In space	3
d. Known beforehand	4
2. Anxiety	5-6
B. Confession of <i>I AM</i> Omnipresence	7-12
1. Anxiety and summary	7
2. Confidence	8-12
a. <i>I AM</i> Omnipresence in space	8-10
1.) Vertical axis	8
2.) Horizontal axis	9-10
b. <i>I AM</i> transforming presence in darkness	11-12

C. Praise of <i>I AM</i> 's Personal Omniscience	13-18
1. Praise for how and where I AM made him	13-16
a. How <i>I AM</i> made him	13-14
b. Where <i>I AM</i> made him	15-16
2. Praise for God's Rare and Innumerable Thoughts	17-18
a. God's thoughts are rare and precious	17A
b. God's thoughts are innumerable	17b-18a
3. Janus: Psalmist awakens	18b
III. Lament with Wish and Petition	19—24
A. With regard to wicked/enemies	19—22
1. To eliminate blasphemers	19—20
2. Psalmist hates wicked; they have become his enemies	21—22
C. Petitions with regard to self: Search, know and lead me	vv. 23-24
Subscript	140:1A

N.B. Third stanza, praise of God's personal omnificence, introduced by logical *ki* ("[I say this] because)," substantiates his confidence in God's personal omniscience and omnipresence. *I AM* knows him inside-out because he made him from his conception, and the darkness of his mother's womb, where God crafted his magnum opus, is so hidden it might just as well have been in the inaccessible bowels of the earth (vv. 15-16), showing that no darkness is too dark for God (vv. 11-12).

B. Symmetry

1. Four stanzas of six verses.

2. Each stanza consists of two strophes: a quatrain and a couplet

N.B. Each stanza has three couplets

3. Each quatrain consists of an introductory, one-verse summary, expanded in three verses:

- a. You search me and know me (v. 1)
- b. Where can I flee from your presence (v. 7)
- c. For you gave me birth (v. 13)
- d. Slay the wicked, God; get away from me (v. 19)

These symmetries show that though hounded by ungodly murderers (v. 19), the psalmist is in full control of his rationality and his emotions.

C. Inclusions

1. “search and know” (1B, 23B)
2. “my thoughts” and “my anxious thoughts” (vv. 2, 23)
3. “way” (vv. 3, 24).

17. Liturgical Approach

Part I: Liturgy/cultus

I. Definition of cultus [liturgy]

A. Presentation of views

1. Mowinckel:

"Cult or ritual may be defined as the socially established and regulated holy acts and words in which the encounter and communion of the deity with the congregation is established, developed, and brought to its ultimate goals." Mowinckel, *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1.15.

2. Eichrodt:

"... the term 'cultus' should be taken to mean the expression of religious experience in concrete external actions performed within the congregation or community, preferably by officially appointed exponents and in set forms." Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 1. 98.

3. Kurt Goldammer:

structured experience: symbolic, meaningful activity; "pattern of facts which have a reasonable connection with each other in the mind and attitude of the person who stands within it." Cited by Buss, p. 317.

B. Conclusion: the experience of religion in:

1. material over against purely inward, spiritual feelings.
2. regulated/set forms over against spontaneity
3. congregation over against individual.
4. integrated structure over against ideational approach (data and reflection).

C. Applied to Psalter:

"In the use of this literature the individual became one with his group and shared the spirit which moved it, whether the mood of the moment was contrition, trust, or glad thanksgiving. He found himself, and he also found the God of his soul's desire through his unreserved participation in the acts of communal worship, whereby the rich resources and inspiring traditions of his people's history were made available to him." (Babb, p. 59)

N.B. I have not used Hegel's definition as the participation of finite existence in essential being (i.e., the realization and enjoyment of true reality.) This definition, however, is inappropriate in Israel where there is a tension between Yahweh and His worshipers. In Israelite religion, Yahweh demands covenant faithfulness for participation in worship (see "aspects in the psalms: sacred sites: participants"). In Israel it is better to speak of entrance into the sacred sphere; identification gives way to covenant structures. Also in Israel the Eternal and Infinite is moderated by way of historical structures.

"In the Israelite cult, the God-man relation is not natural, in the sense that it is given. There is a requirement for decision; laws are decreed; threats and promises support allegiance. In a personal way, God and man stand confronting each other." (Buss, 322)

II. Sitz im Leben

A. Historical Critics (debunk superscripts and accepts Wellhausen)

1. Gunkel (conditioned by "literary analytical approach")

- a. Psalms are rooted in the cultus.
- b. Much of Psalter reflects democratization of the cult and dated to exilic and post-exilic epochs, employing imagery (e.g. royalty) of pre-exilic period.
- c. Extant Psalter from synagogue, consisting of writings by private individuals unconnected with the cultus.

2. Mowinckel: Fall enthronement festival of first temple

a. View: In Fall Festival in connection with proclamation "Yahweh has become King"

- 1) Influenced by Mesopotamian Akitu festival in Babylon, not by Mosaic law.
- 2) Cultus functions to re-enact and to re-actualize the creation of the world and of Israel.

- 3) "Yahweh has become king"—not "Yahweh reigns"—in "myth" (i.e. *chaos[kampf]*) of creation and in of celebration of exodus from Egypt and victory at Reed Sea.
- 4) Yahweh's coming at the enthronement festival sets world aright again and crushes every onslaught that the enemies might make on his city and people.
- 5) Yahweh represented by king
- 6) Sacramental: aims to discover inner connections between psalms showing what the congregation was experiencing and feeling through acts and words of cultus. "The power inherent in the act is also concentrated in the word; the holy word is effective and creative." In remembrance and re-enactment of cultus, the historical facts of salvation ...[are] turned into effective reality." "We shall have understood neither the psalm nor its place in actual life, its cultic situation and its aim, until we have connected it with the festival in question, and with its idea and cultic forms."

b. Evaluation:

- 1.) Probably the fall festival was prominent during the monarchy:
 - a.) "All the men of Israel came to Israel came together to King Solomon at the time of the festival in the month of Ethanim, the seventh month" (1 Kings 8:2; cf. 8:65-66).
 - b.) "Jeroboam instituted a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival held in Judah" (12:32).
 - c.) "On the day of the festival of our king the princes are inflamed with wine" (Hos 7:5)
 - d.) "Not since the days of the judges ... nor through he days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah, had any such Passover been observed" (2 Kings 23:21)
- 2.) Grammatically possible.
- 3.) Looks to ancient Near Eastern pagan religions to reconstruct the festival, not to the Mosaic Law. Participates in the inherent heterodoxy of historical criticism.
- 4.) All reconstructions of the festival are hypothetical, lacking clear Scriptural warrant. The variety of views calls into question the method.
- 5.) Today, not followed

3. Other views: see "form criticism"

B. Plain sense of Psalter, including superscripts and subscripts

1. Many psalms began as private prayers,

Especially of David, and later used in cultus (cf. Psalm 30). The reversal of Gunkel.

2. Some psalms obviously composed away from “house of God”

(Psalm 42—43) or after its destruction (Pss 74, 79).

But these psalms are "inwardly so closely related to the sanctuary and its cultic traditions that not many hymns are left over in the Psalter of which it can be said that they are really 'dissociated from the cult' and not many exclusively composed for private edification" (Weiser, p. 81)

3. Problem of “wisdom”/instruction psalms (see below).

4. Many psalms composed for temple use

- a. Todah psalms (sacrifice and word)
- b. Hymns: Creation and salvation history
- c. Community laments
- d. Royal: coronation (Pss 2, 110), battle (Pss 20, 21), wedding (Psalm 45)

III. Function of the cultus generally

A. Symbolic: a visible form that profoundly portrays the living stuff of religion.

1. Of man toward God (inner > outward > God (e.g., ascending smoke, raising hands, etc))
2. Of God toward man (God > outward > inner man (e.g., ark, cherubim, lamp stand, lavers, etc.).

¹ Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.

² But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold.

³ For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

⁴ They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong.

.....

¹³ Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence.

¹⁴ All day long I have been afflicted, and every morning brings new punishments.

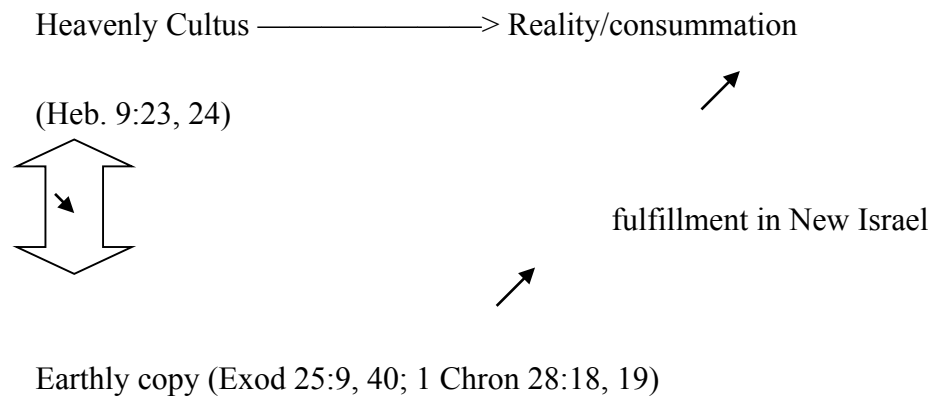
¹⁵ If I had spoken out like that, I would have betrayed your children.

¹⁶ When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply

¹⁷ till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.

¹⁸ Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin.

B. Typical: a divinely intended, visible form to portray what will become real or actual in the future:



C. Sacramental: spiritual participation in words that accompany cultic acts.

D. Artistry/propaganda: e.g., building, banners, music

A song. A psalm of the Sons of Korah.

¹ Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, his holy mountain.

² Beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth, like the heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King.

³ God is in her citadels; he has shown himself to be her fortress.

⁴ When the kings joined forces, when they advanced together,

⁵ they saw her and were astounded; they fled in terror.

⁶ Trembling seized them there, pain like that of a woman in labor.

⁷ You destroyed them like ships of Tarshish shattered by an east wind.

⁸ As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the LORD Almighty, in the city of our God: God makes her secure forever.

⁹ Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love.

¹⁰ Like your name, O God, your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with righteousness.

¹¹ Mount Zion rejoices, the villages of Judah are glad because of your judgments.

¹² Walk about Zion, go around her, count her towers,

¹³ consider well her ramparts, view her citadels, that you may tell of them to the next generation.

¹⁴ For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.

IV. Aspects of the cultus generally

A. Mosaic tent > Royal temple

1. Moses:
 - a. sacred sites (one site but unspecified [Deut 12])
 - b. sacred objects (e.g., ark, tent, vessels, ephod, Urim and Thummin),
 - c. sacred seasons (Passover, Pentecost, Kippur/Sukkoth/New Year),
 - d. sacred personnel (priests, Levites)
 - e. sacred offerings and sacrifices
2. David:
 - a. Transformed cultus into opera (staging, libretto, music to accompany Mosaic cultus).
 - b. Sacred site now located at Jerusalem
 - c. Sacred personnel now included king and prophets along with Levites and priests.

B. Calendar

1. Chronos: annual, weekly, and daily
2. Critical: contingent and catastrophic; 1 Kings 8:31-51: 7 petitions
 - a. 8:31-32: (= 1) individual: uphold justice
 - b. 8:33-40: (= 2-4) national: deliverance from three disasters (*defeat in war* and exile, famine, plague) and forgiveness for sins, which cause the disasters, upon repentance and to learn what is right

The disasters are taken from covenant curses (see Deut 28:21-22, 24, 25, 38, 58-63). But prayer looks for removal of the curses with repentance. This too is part of OT Torah. Solomon holds out hope of restoration beyond failure; grace will have the last word.

Note word play on *shabah* ("capture/exile") and *shub* "return" (esp. v. 48 "shabu" for both verbs"). Play points to solution of captivity. Repentance demands faith by turning to Temple for salvation, a turning that entails living by the rule of faith.

c. 8:41-43 (= 5) hear the foreigner so that all people will worship Israel's God.

b.' 8:44-45 (= 6) for *victory in war* over enemies

a.' 8:46-53 (= 7) when nation defeated and in exile and they repent, forgive and uphold cause of *justice for the nation*.

C. Uncertain about cultic status of "songs of meditation and instruction":

1. Wisdom psalms. Mowinckel in 1924 recognized only two or three as non-cultic (Pss 1, 11, 127). Then added to learned psalmography, 1, 34, 37, 49, 78, 105, 106, 111, 112, 127. He attributed these to the wise men, another group alongside of royal magistrates, prophets, and priests. But the priests instructed the people in Torah (Mal. 2:6).

Holm Nielsen redefines cult to include post-exilic synagogue, where instruction in the law and in divine worship cannot be strictly separated. Psalter implies divine worship.

Murphy also disallows sharp division between wisdom circles and cult, though uncertain about the precise *Sitz im Leben* of 1, 32, 34, 37, 49, 112, 128.

V. Aspects of the Cultus in the Psalter

Within the cultus covenantal benevolences are mediated to the worshipper including forgiveness through sacrifice.

Within: all is sacred; without: profane (Latin: *pro* "before" + *fanum* "temple")

Within: Infinite; without finite

Within: Perfection; without imperfection.

Outside the cult are wicked, enemies, "dogs". Not admitted to cultus

A. Sacred site

Terms: "Zion," "house of the LORD," "holy hill," "sanctuary of God," "dwelling place in Zion": Pss 2:6; 3:4; 63:14; 74:3; 76:2; 49:1; 92:12, 13; 100:4; 114:2; 116:18, 19; 118:19, 20; etc.

1. Psalms pertaining to election of Mt. Zion: 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122.

Psalm 46:1 Of the Sons of Korah. According to alamothe. A song.

¹ God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

³ though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.

⁵ God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.

⁶ Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

⁷ The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

⁸ Come and see what the LORD has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth.

⁹ He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰ He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."

¹¹ The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

2. Participation in temple worship: Pss 15, 24.

Participant shares in the "righteousness" or "life" of the cult.

B. Sacred seasons

N.B. Mixture of individual sacrifice, visitations with friends, public processions, priestly recitations, and sacred actions.

1. Sabbath: see Ps 92 s/s

2. New Moon: 81:3

Of Asaph. Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob!

² Begin the music, strike the timbrel, play the melodious harp and lyre.

³ Sound the ram's horn at the New Moon, and when the moon is full, on the day of our festival

3. Daily Sacrifice: 1 Chron 16:8-22 (= Ps 105:1-5); and 1 Chron 16:23-36 (= Ps 96:1-3 and 106:1, 47)

⁴ Then he appointed some of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the LORD, to invoke, to thank, and to praise the LORD, the God of Israel. ⁵ Asaph was the chief, and second to him were Zechariah, Jehiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom, and Jehiel, who were to play harps and lyres; Asaph was to sound the cymbals, ⁶ and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests were to blow trumpets regularly before the ark of the covenant of God. ⁷ Then on that day David first appointed that thanksgiving be sung to the LORD by Asaph and his brothers.

⁸ Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples!

.....

²⁹ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him. Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness

.....

³⁹ David left Zadok the priest and his fellow priests before the tabernacle of the LORD at the high place in Gibeon ⁴⁰ to present burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of burnt offering regularly, morning and evening, in accordance with everything written in the Law of the LORD, which he had given Israel. (1Chron 16

C. Sacred actions:

1. Offerings: cf. 96:8; 107:22; 116:14, 17-19.

Psalm 96

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts! (Psa 96:8)

Psalm 107

²¹ Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind.

²² Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy. (Psa 107:21-22)

Psalm 116

¹² What shall I return to the LORD for all his goodness to me?

¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD.

¹⁴ I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.

.....

¹⁷ I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the LORD.

¹⁸ I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people,

¹⁹ in the courts of the house of the LORD— in your midst, Jerusalem. Praise the LORD. (Psa 116:12-19)

2. Prophetic Oracles

A psalm of Asaph._ The Mighty One, God, the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to where it sets.

.....

⁷ "Listen, my people, and I will speak; I will testify against you, Israel: I am God, your God.

⁸ I bring no charges against you concerning your sacrifices or concerning your burnt offerings, which are ever before me. (Psa 50:1,7-8)

3. Processions:

⁶ I wash my hands in innocence, and go about your altar, LORD,

⁷ proclaiming aloud your praise and telling of all your wonderful deeds.

⁸ LORD, I love the house where you live, the place where your glory dwells. (Psa 26:6-8)

²⁵ In front are the singers, after them the musicians; with them are the young women playing the timbrels.

²⁶ Praise God in the great congregation; praise the LORD in the assembly of Israel.

²⁷ There is the little tribe of Benjamin, leading them, there the great throng of Judah's princes, and there the princes of Zebulun and of Naphtali. (Psa 68:25-27)

4. Songs of pilgrimage.

Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.

How lovely is your dwelling place, LORD Almighty!

² My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD;
my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

³ Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may have her young— a place near your altar,
LORD Almighty, my King and my God.

⁴ Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.

⁵ Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.

⁶ As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the
autumn rains also cover it with pools.

⁷ They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.

⁸ Hear my prayer, LORD God Almighty; listen to me, God of Jacob.

⁹ Look on our shield, O God; look with favor on your anointed one.

¹⁰ Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a
doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

¹¹ For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no
good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

¹² LORD Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you. (Psa 84:1-12)

A song of ascents. Of David.

¹ I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

² Our feet are standing in your gates, Jerusalem.

³ Jerusalem is built like a city that is closely compacted together.

⁴ That is where the tribes go up— the tribes of the LORD— to praise the name of
the LORD according to the statute given to Israel.

⁵ There stand the thrones for judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

⁶ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May those who love you be secure.

⁷ May there be peace within your walls and security within your citadels."

⁸ For the sake of my family and friends, I will say, "Peace be within you."

⁹ For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your prosperity. (Psa 122)

D. Sacred objects:

1. altar (84:3; 118:27)

2. cup (116:13);

3. banners (20:5);

⁵ May we shout for joy over your victory and lift up our banners in the name of our God. May the LORD grant all your requests. (Psa 20:5)

4. musical instruments (47:5; 150).

¹ Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens.

² Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.

³ Praise him with the blast of the ram's horn, praise him with the harp and lyre,

⁴ praise him with timbrel and dance, praise him with the strings and pipe,

⁵ praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.

⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD. (Psa 150:1-6)

E. Sacred personnel

1. angels: 103:20, 21

²⁰ Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word!

²¹ Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers, who do his will!

2. priests: 132:8,9

⁷ "Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool!"

⁸ Arise, O LORD, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might.

⁹ Let your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let your saints shout for joy.

3. Levites: 135:19-20

¹⁹ O house of Israel, bless the LORD! O house of Aaron, bless the LORD!

²⁰ O house of Levi, bless the LORD! You who fear the LORD, bless the LORD!

4. King: see Psalm 2

5. Warriors/worshippers Psalm 44

6. God-fearers (see 135:20)

Psalm 2

Part I: Introduction

I. Translation

- ¹ Why do the nations conspire,
and the peoples plot [יְקַגְּנוּ] in vain?
- ² The kings of the earth take their stand
and the rulers band together
against / AM and against his anointed one:
- ³ “Let us break their chains,
and throw off their shackles.”
- ⁴ The One enthroned in heaven laughs;
The Sovereign scoffs at them.
- ⁵ Then he spoke to them in his anger
and in his wrath terrified them:
- ⁶ “But I install my king
on Zion, my holy hill.”
- ⁷ I will proclaim the decree;
“You are my son;
today I give you birth.
- ⁸ Ask me, I will give the nations your inheritance,
the ends of the earth your possession.
- ⁹ Break them with a rod of iron;
Like a potter’s vessel dash them to pieces.”
- ¹⁰ Therefore, kings, be wise;
be warned, rulers of the earth.
- ¹¹ Serve / AM with fear
and celebrate his rule with trembling.
- ¹² Kiss [his] son, lest he become angry,
and you be destroyed in [your] way [וְתִאֲבָדוּ דְרֹגְיָי]
for his wrath will soon flare up.
- How rewarded [אֲשֶׁרֵי] are all who take refuge in him!

II. Outline

I. Hostile Kings Speak:

Resolve to Throw Off Rule of *I AM* and His King 1-3

II. *I AM* Speaks

Resolves to Install His King on Mount Zion 4-6

III. King Speaks:

Resolves to Recite Decree Granting Him Dominion 7-9

IV. Psalmist Speaks:

Admonishes Hostile Kings to Submit to *I AM*'s King 10-12

III. Settings:

A. *Sitz im Leben*: coronation liturgy (v. 6) sung antiphonally

B. *Sitz im Buch*: part of introduction

1. Second introduction to Book of Psalms.

2. Verbal connections to Psalm 1

Ashre ("Blessed"/ "Rewarding") – frames the two psalms

"to meditate" in both introductory stanzas

metaphor of "way" *derek* with the term "perish" *abad*

both employ terms for "mock"

uniform message - the pious and righteous are fully rewarded, and in the time of judgment they triumph over the wicked.

The editor's two introductory psalms prepare those who meditate on his anthology of petitions and praises and of instruction to interpret the psalms both with respect to the king and to themselves as individuals within his kingdom.

3. Functions as a janus/a transition to the rest of the Psalter: coronation poem of Israel's king See "royal psalms." (cf. v. 8a)

C. Sitz im Canon. Fulfilled in Jesus Christ

1. No historical king extended rule to ends of the earth (v. 8), but Christ does.

2. New Testament uses the Psalm to refer to Christ and his church

²⁵ You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.' ²⁷ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. (Acts 4:25—28)

Cf. 2:1/Rev 11:18; 2:2/Rev 19:19; 2:7/(see below); 2:8/Heb. 1:2; 2:8, 9/Rev 2:26—27; 2:9 Rev 12:5, 19:15; 2:11/Php 2:12.

Amyrault, a French protestant theologian (ca. 1625A) said: "We must keep our left eye on the historical king and our right eye on eternal Christ."

D. Function today: vv. 10—12

Part II: Exposition

I. Hostile Kings Throw Off / AM's Rule

1—3

A. Amazement and Indignation at plot that cannot succeed

1

"Why"; rhetorical question to express amazement and indignation at stupidity to plot their own death (cf. v. 9)

"Nations," "peoples." Refers to Gentiles; used ironically of Jews

"Conspire," "plot." Setting of first scene in a pagan court; to kill God and his king. "The El Armana correspondence (ca. 1300 B.C.) offers graphic descriptions of the plottings (sic) and intrigues of the petty kings of Syria-Palestine against the Egyptian Suzerain and against one another." (Dahood)

"vain": plot will not succeed

B. Universal, unified rebellion

2

“kings,” “rulers”: represent the nations/peoples

“of the earth”: in contrast to God in heaven

“take their stand (in battle), “band together”: plot now put into action

“I AM” : author of Torah (Psalm 1)

“Anointed”:

Metonymy [of adjunct] for king in Psalter (see v. 6). An attack upon the Davidic monarch is an attack upon God’s rule.

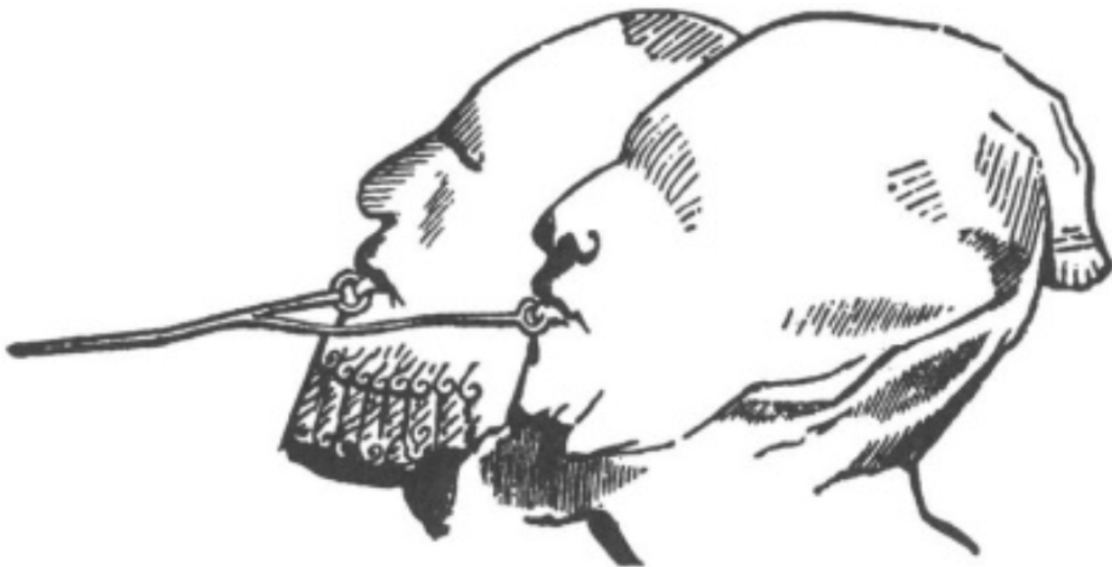
Meaning: מָשִׁיחַ (*mashiah*), from root *mashah* (“to paint/smear”). Prophet poured oil from flask or ram’s horn on newly minted king.

Symbolism: legitimation (by prophet); consecration (as God’s property), empowerment by God’s spirit. Cf. 1 Samuel 16:1—13; chapter 17.

C. Motivation for rebellion: to throw off God’s rule

3

“chains,” “shackles”: metaphor rule in conjunction with God’s Torah. King copied the Torah upon his inauguration (Deut. 17:17). Either leather thongs which lashed into place yoke (LXX τὸν ζυγὸν αὐτῶν) or rope and shackles on captives.



Contrast attitude toward Torah in Psalm 1.

II. *I AM* installs king on Zion

4–6

A. God laughs

4

The poet frames the second stanza by beginning with *I AM* sitting enthroned in the heavens and ending with his anointed king on “my holy hill.” The upper frame speaks of his universal transcendence over all the earth and the lower frame of his immanent presence through his charismatic king who extends his kingdom over all the earth.

1. Historic

“He who enthroned in heavens”, “Sovereign: transcendent in contrast to earthlings
 “laughs,” “scoffs”: comic (Lilliputians);
 “laughter of victory” (37:12f.; 59:7f.) over evil kings.

¹² The wicked plot against the righteous, and gnash their teeth at them;
 but *I AM* laughs at the wicked, for he sees that their day is coming.

⁷ There they are, bellowing with their mouths, with sharp words on their lips –
 for “Who,” they think, “will hear us?”

⁸ But you laugh at them, *I AM*,
 you hold all the nations in derision.

Problem of *Schadenfreude*:

“Christian and non-Christian sensibilities commonly regard Israel’s pleasure derived from the misfortune of others—what the Germans call “*Schadenfreude*” (“damage joy”)— as expressed in Israel’s Song of the Sea and in David’s psalms, as an unworthy emotion. In 1852 Archbishop R. C. Trench of Dublin in his *The Study of Words* wrote: “What a fearful thing is it that any language should have a word expressive of the pleasure which men feel at the calamities of others.” Even Schopenhauer, a 19th-century German philosopher and atheist, found it too dreadful to contemplate. Friedrich Nietzsche argued that malicious pleasure is illegitimate and makes one guilty because pleasure is derived from doing nothing. *Schadenfreude* is a dangerous emotion when injustice is celebrated but not when justice is served, as is the case in Israel’s songs and in Woman Wisdom’s sermon at the city-gate (Prov. 1:20-33) . John Portman, a professor of religious studies at

the University of Virginia, in his recent book, *When Bad Things Happen to Others*, argued that justice is a virtue and so is the feeling of pleasure when we see lawbreakers brought low—‘and it’s all to the good that we do, because this pleasure reflects our reverence for the law . . . *Schadenfreude* is a corollary of justice.’⁴⁴⁰” (*An Old Testament Theology*, p. 395

2. Christ: Does not laugh: not time to avenge wrongs

Luke 4:16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read,¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down.

Isaiah 61:1—2 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God,

3. Moral: Church prays for enemies

Matt 5:43f

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Decision of Anglican primates who met in Canterbury (January 2016): “It is our unanimous desire to walk together. However given the seriousness of these matters we formally acknowledge this distance by requiring that for a period of three years The Episcopal Church no longer represent us on ecumenical and interfaith bodies, should not be appointed or elected to an internal standing committee and that while participating in the internal bodies of the Anglican Communion, they will not take part in decision making on any issues pertaining to doctrine or polity.”

440 Robert Fulford, “Schadenfreude: one of life’s guilty pleasures,” *National Post* (November 29, 2003), A14.

Joy at holiness and order but treat disbarred Episcopalians with compassion. They know not what they do.

B. God becomes angry: Moral indignation

5

1. Historic

Neglected doctrine. God is love, but God gets angry at sin. C. S. Lewis:

“such expressions [of anger] are lacking in pagan literature because Israel had a firmer grasp on right and wrong:⁴⁴¹ Thus the absence of anger, especially that sort of anger which we call indignation, can, in my opinion, be a most alarming symptom . . . If the Jews [sic!] cursed more bitterly than the Pagans this was, I think, at least in part because they took right and wrong more seriously. For if we look at their railings we find they are usually angry not simply because these things have been done to them but because they are manifestly wrong, are hateful to God as well as to the victim. The thought of the 'righteous Lord'—who surely must hate such doings as much as they do, who surely therefore must (but how terribly He delays!) 'judge' or avenge, is always there, if only in the background.⁴⁴²

Angry when people violate his Law: Anger blazed against them when they made a Golden Calf.

2. Christ: zeal for righteousness and against wrong doing

John 11:13 “he was deeply moved [*embrimaomai*: expression of anger and displeasure/snort] and troubled. ;

John 2:13 When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. ¹⁵ So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."

441 Ibid., 28.

442 Ibid., 31.

Matt 23: 13 10 woes “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. (Mat 23:13),

3. Church: Eph4:26 be angry and sin not.

1. Be angry: not just moral indignation (cf. not cleaning up; leaving lights on; _ moral indignation.: Christ, Sunday, Abortion, same sex marriage, corruption, mud-slinging
- 2 Sin not: Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else. Rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit (1 T

C. Installs king on Zion.

6

1. Historical. See Sitz im Leben and liturgy .

“I”: emphatic

“Install”: instantaneous perfective. Performative speech act

“Zion”: Meaning is unknown. Refers to the hill between the Tyropoean and Kidron Valleys. In most instances refers to Temple Mount, where Dome of the Rock now sits. Connotes invincibility. The name in use before King David’s conquest (ca 21000 B.C.) was Stronghold of Zion.

“holy”: “Jerusalem is *in* [original] ordinary history, the history in which ‘kingdoms topple’ (Ps 46:7), but it is not *of* [original] it” (Jon D, Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An entry into the Jewish Bible* [New York: Harper & Rowe, 1987], 155).

“hill/mountain”: symbolic of heaven

2. Christ: anointed at his baptism but never sat on an earthly throne on Mount Zion. Fulfilled at his ascension, not in a Jewish millennium.

a. John 16:13

“¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. (Joh 16:12-13).

No clear references to a Jewish Millennium in NT and no reference to Israel being regathered as a political entity after destruction of Jerusalem. (see *AOTT*, pp. 584—586).

b. John 4:19—22. No longer come to an earthly mountain

¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." ²¹ "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." (Joh 4:19-24)

c. Jesus ascended to heavenly Zion. Acts 2

³³ Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand ³⁵ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." ³⁶ "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah." (Act 2:33-36)

3. Church: is being built from heaven and comes to heavenly Mount Zion.

²² But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ³ to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ⁴ to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. (Heb 12:22-24)

III. King recites the decree giving him the right to rule the earth

7—9

A. King's relationship with God: A son

7

1. Historic:

“I”: King is speaking, for “*I AM* said to me.”

“will”: resolve. Risks life to become king in hostile world

“proclaim: “recite”

“decree”: poetic formulation of of Davidic covenant

“When your [David’s] days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring [Solomon] to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ **I will be his father, and he will be my son.** When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. (2Sa 7:12-14)

“son,” “begot you”: an adopted son, not biologically begotten.

“Israel” is called “son of God” (Exod. 4:22; Prvo 30:4b; Hos 11:10)

David, whose lineage is well known, addressed God as “Father” (Ps 89:26).

Naomi was made a mother to Obed by taking Obed to her bosom; the woman said “a son was made born (7?) to Naomi” (Ruth 4:16f.)

Implications:

- to care for him (Ps. 89:26-29),
- to discipline him (2 Sam. 7:14),
- to make him the legal heir of the earth, which *I AM* owns by having created it.

“today”: coronation day.

2. Christ: Son of God

- a. By Adam (Luke 3:38)
- b. By David
- c. By Holy Spirit at virgin birth;

³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." ³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. (Luk 1:30-35)

- d. By divine nature, from eternity

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (Joh 1:14)

3. Church: sons of God by rebirth of Holy Spirit and adoption.

B. King's relationship to the earth: An inheritance by prayer

8

1. Historical/Exegesis:

“Ask”: Although a son by covenantal promise and an heir of the earth by patrimony, the king must ask and depend by faith on God to fulfill promise.

“Me”: Owns earth by creating it

“and I will give”: could be a purpose clause: “that I might give”

“Nations”: see v. 1. King not only endures rebellion but inherits them as a lasting possession.

“Inheritance”: an estate/property inherited from one's father without payment of a purchase price (cf. Num 27:7). Must prove himself to a true “son.”

“the ends of the earth”: beyond limits of Abraham's fief and of David's empire from Euphrates to border of Egypt. See Psalm 72 (last psalm of Book II):8—11:

⁸ May he [merciful and just king] rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

⁹ May the desert tribes bow before him and his enemies lick the dust.

¹⁰ May the kings of Tarshish and of distant shores bring tribute to him. May the kings of Sheba and Seba present him gifts.

¹¹ May all kings bow down to him and all nations serve him.

2. Christ:

Satan an imposter (cf. Luke 4:5—6). He was not given the kingdoms of the world, but allowed to rule them until he fell from heaven and Christ defeats him (Luke 10:18).

“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matt 28:18—20).

3. Church: Romans 8:14—17

¹⁴ For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. (Rom 8:14-17)

Prayer for the Mission of the Church:

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your loving arms on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those that do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name.

C. King's Relation to Nations: Their Ruler

9

1. Historic//Exegesis:

“you will break” (MT. Targ. Sym. *רֹדֵם*, *r'ro 'em*; LXX, Rev 2:297; 12:5; 19:15; Syr., Jerome *ποιμανεῖς* (shepherd/care for animals < *tir 'em*,) MT preferred because: a. based on an oral tradition; b. *r* “Aramaic loan word; c. *r'h* means “tender care”: an oxymoron with “iron rod.” D. “break” a better parallel with “smash.”

“iron”: Noted for its hardness and strength; will not break and so carry the day

“rod”: Used by a person in authority: God (Job 21:9), father (Prov 13:23-24), king (Ps 2:9)

“Like a potter’s vessel dash them to pieces“: The command *like a potter’s vessel dash them to pieces* finds graphic depiction in the Egyptian execration texts, which illustrate the Egyptian practice of formally cursing persons and cities. The ritual involved writing the names of the person or city on a pottery figures and/or ceramic bowl, after which the curse was spoken and the bowl smashed.

2. Christ.

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. (Luk 4:18-20)

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, (Isa 61:1-2)

3. Church. Movie, "The War Room"

IV: Psalmist Warns Rulers to Submit to *I AM*'s Son

10–12

A. Relationship to psalmist: Be wise.

10

"Therefore": Logical conclusion

"Kings," "rulers" ("judges"): Link with v. 2 secured by "earth"

"be wise": *sekel*: give attention to danger and make beneficial decision

"be warned": lit. "be educated/instructed"

B. Relationship to *I AM*

11

"Serve" (worship): "To serve *I AM*" fundamentally means to be in subjection to or in a subordinate position to *I AM* as Master. Mortals serve some god or gods; the only question is which master they serve. Deliverance entails a change of masters. *I AM* delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage to serve him as their new master. But *I AM*'s is a benevolent servitude that leads to peace, prosperity and life, whereas servitude to other masters, such as Pharaoh and idols, leads to wretchedness and death. Ironically, to free oneself from servitude to *I AM* leads to slavery to oppressive masters. More specifically, "to serve *I AM*" may be an ethical, comprehensive notion of regarding one's whole life, one's entire existence, in his service, as in Joshua's famous confession: "As for me and my household, we will serve *I AM*" (Josh. 24:15; cf. 1 Kings 8:23). In the Psalter, however, it signifies a more narrow liturgical notion of serving him in the temple ritual and so may be glossed "worship."

"with fear": entails faith that God says what he means and means what he says. For spiritual and faithful, not ritualistic, worship. This faith leads to rejoicing.

"rejoice": spiritual response to God's rule through his son that reflects his sublime character of purity and order and finds expression in spontaneous shouts of joy.

"with trembling": hold God in awe and with respect. Cf. Acts 5:5, 11)

C. Relationship to the Son: Kiss the son (1 Sam 10:1).

“Kiss” [the son] (worship): significance depends on social context: a. with relatives and friends, to show affection; b. with romance, done in private; c. in religious context, to express homage (cf. 1 Sam 10:1; 1 Kgs 19:18; Hos 13:2).



“son”: Aramaic *bar* (so also Prov. 31:2; cf. *r''*). Some emend *bar* to *b^eraglayw* “[kiss] his feet” but *nshq* not used with *b^e*. Others gloss “purely,” but lacks an object.

“he”: Cf. “seek refuge in him.” Object of *hsh* (37x) is always God. God is always subject of 𐤁𐤏𐤍,

“perish”: see 1:6

“way”: see 1:1, 6. Their way has been that of rebellion against him. Their insult must be dealt with.

“soon”: “in a little” (Ps 8:14—15; Job 32:22)

“blessed”: see 1:1

Hsh: “seek refuge” posture that stands behind fear and trembling. God is at once a Savior or a Destroyer. The coronation liturgy closes with God’s mercy salvation trumping his anger and judgment. Moreover, David extends God’s salvation beyond the limits of the covenant people to the whole uncircumcised world. He concludes his poem with a universal embrace: “Rewarding is the life of *all* who seek refuge in *I AM*.” Moreover, he extends the Word of God to all nations, not to just Israel.

18. Psalms 2, 110

Part I. Introduction

I. Role of Psalm 110

A. In the NT

“Seated at God’s right hand” were minted in Psalm 110. Circulated in NT: 25 quotations

1. In the Gospels

Three/five partial or complete citations of Psalm 110:1: Mark 12:36; Matt 22:14; Luke 20:42—43; Acts 2:34—35; Heb. 1:3).

⁴¹ While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴² "What do you think about the *Messiah*? Whose *son* is he?" "The son of David," they replied. ⁴³ He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says, ⁴⁴ " **'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet."** ' ⁴⁵ If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?" ⁴⁶ No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Jesus interpreted the psalm as a reference to himself; his testimony led to his death.

High priest asks Jesus, "Are you the *Messiah, the son of the Blessed One*," to which Jesus replied: 'I am', adding "you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the power" and coming with the clouds of heaven.' To this confession, the High Priest responded: "You have heard his blasphemy" (Mk 14:61-64).

2. In the epistles

- a. In Hebrews: The frequent use of the text may suggest a downplaying of the cult of Melchizedek as used by Jewish, Samaritan and Qumran sects. Melchizedek is a type of Christ.
- b. In Paul:
 - 1.) Romans 8:34: an early hymn celebrating the continually present intercession of Christ at God's right hand: "is at the right hand of God interceding for us."
 - 2.) Colossians. 3:1 a baptismal formula, reflecting on the heavenly identity those who share in Christ's death: : Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
 - 3.) Ephesians 1:20f: a worship hymn acclaiming the universal kingdom of the Risen Christ who sits at God's right hand: "when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority...."
- c. 1 Peter 3:22, a baptismal context, for those trusting in the risen Christ: "who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him."

B. In Church History

In the devotion of the Church it was celebrated on Ascension Thursday, It has always played a critical role in Christology, so its importance has always been profound.

Altogether Luther expounds on this Psalm in 123 pages, the longest discourse he makes on any one psalm in his writings. He concludes: "this beautiful psalm is the very core and quintessence of the whole Scripture. No other psalm prophesies as abundantly and completely about Christ. It portrays the Lord and his entire Kingdom, and is full of comfort for Christians."

II. Translation

A Psalm of David.

- ¹The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand,
until I make your enemies your footstool."
²The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter.
Rule in the midst of your enemies!
³Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power;
in holy garments, from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth
will be yours.
⁴The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever
like Melchizedek."
⁵The Lord is at your right hand;
he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.
⁶He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses;
he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth.
⁷He will drink from the brook by the way;
therefore he will lift up his head.

III. Form:

- A. Poetry: full of imagery.
- B. Psalm. Sung to accompaniment of instruments.
- C. *Sitz im Leben*: Coronation Liturgy.

1. Content: "Sit at my right hand."
2. Striking similarities to Assyrian royal prophecies (7th century BC)
 - a. Both begin with an introduction formula: 110:1.
 - b. Subdivision of oracle with a second introduction formula: 110:4.
 - c. Change in person, both of the addressee and the divine speaker. 110:4-5, 6-7.
 - d. Legitimization of relationship between deity and king ("at the right hand"): 110:1
 - e. Enemies at the king's feet: 110:1b.
 - f. Promise of the destruction of enemies: 110:2, 5-6

- g. Promise of universal dominion: 110:1, 6.
- h. Presence of loyal support: 110:3.
- i. Divine promise accompanied by denial of lying: 110:4.
- j. Affirmation of priestly responsibility: 110:4.
- k. Eternality of royal prerogatives: 110:4

“It is likely that Psalm 110 was a prophetic oracle originating and subsequently used in conjunction with cultic celebration of the king’s enthronement” (Hilbers).

- 3. David, a prophet, prophesied about his greater Son. It was probably used as a part of Israel’s cultus at the coronation of the king.

IV. Rhetoric

A. Logic

I. Stanza I: Messiah: the Conquering King

A. Introduction to Divine Citation: genre: a prophecy for David’s Lord.

¹ The LORD says to my lord:

B. Divine Citation to the Lord/Messiah

"Sit enthroned at my right hand, until I make your enemies the footstool for your feet."

C. Prophetic Reflection on Divine Citation: Addressed to Lord/Messiah

1. LORD Initiates Holy War

² The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion, Rule in the midst of your enemies!

2. Lord’s/Messiah’s Troops Willing to Fight

³ Your troops will offer themselves freely on your day of battle, Arrayed in holy splendor, your young men will come to you Like dew from the womb of the morning.

II Stanza II: Lord/Messiah: the Eternal Priest

A.' Introduction to Citation: genre (irrevocable oath)

⁴ The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind,

B.' Divine Citation to Lord/Messiah: Eternal priest like Melchizedek

"You are a priest forever like Melchizedek."

C.' Prophetic Reflections on Citation

1. Address to Lord/Messiah: he will smash kings

⁵ The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.

2. Address to Congregation

a. Lord/Messiah judges whole earth

⁶ He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth.

b. Lord/Messiah will consummate his victory

⁷ He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head.

B. Alternating Structure and catchwords

The two stanzas are held together by structure (Introduction to divine citation + citation + prophetic reflection), "right hand," and "day of your [Messiah's] power,"/"day of his [God's] wrath."

C. Symmetry: 74 words in each stanza

Part II. Exposition

Superscript and introduction to citation

1. By David:

- a. Crucial to Jesus' argument that Messiah is Lord, Son of God.
- b. A prophet: Cf. Assyrian royal prophecies for coronation ritual (7th cent.)
- c. Critics who deny David authorship reach no consensus about date

2. A psalm: music accompanies prophecy

I. First Stanza

1—3

A. Introduction to citation:

1a

1. LORD [YHWH]:

- a. He Is. "Glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning is now, and will be evermore." Someone or something "is" [eternal].
- b. I am Who I am: incommunicable attributes (omnicompetent); communicable (Exod. 34:6: grace, mercy, patience, love, fidelity and justice)

2. Says ne'um (375x of divine speech), not 'amar (content), dibber (act)

- a. When human is subject, it denotes he speaks as a prophet. Cf. Num 24:3; 2 Sam 23:1; Prov 30:1

"The inspired utterance of David son of Jesse, the utterance of the man exalted by the Most High, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, the hero of Israel's songs:

"The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue. The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me (2 Sam 22:1—3a).

"But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne" (Acts 2:30).

- b. Normally God is subject; infers the one who speaks for God is in a prophetic state.

1.) Cf. Isaiah 6:1—13

2.) Jeremiah 23:18: But which of them has stood in the council of the LORD to see or to hear his word? Who has listened and heard his word?...²² But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people and would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds.

3. to my lord: A greater than David:

- a. *'adoni* = “my master” [to a slave[, not *'adonay*, Lord of all).
- b. David is a slave to this One; A king is a slave only to God.

B. Citation: Empowered to Rule: given the authority and power to rule 5b

Sit: posture of authority: Cf. Matt 5:1; “ex cathedra”; “bishop’s see”; professor’s chair\

Matt 5:1 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him,² and he began to teach them. He said:

at my right hand:

1. highest authority next to God

1 Kings 2:19 “When Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him for Adonijah, the king stood up to meet her, bowed down to her and sat down on his throne. He had a throne brought for the king's mother, and she sat down at his right hand.”

Matt 20:20—24²⁰ Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.²¹ "What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom."²² "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered.²³ Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those

for whom they have been prepared by my Father." ²⁴ When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers.

- 2 Place of judge.to right (south) of throne of God was throne of justice.

Execute the Ten Commandments. In Egypt coronation ceremony had two parts: two coronations: at the temple and at the palace: "he was conducted to his palace where he ascended his throne where in a more or less threatening way he announced *urbi et orbi* the start of his rule."

- 3 Type fulfilled in ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into heaven where today the Son of Man sits at God's right hand and is given a kingdom (Daniel 7:13f.; Acts 2:34-36).

until: action/state continues, does not cease when limits reached

I make: God is the Ultimate Agent; works through Lord/Messiah.

your enemies: those opposed to the Ten Commandments: No other God: money; popularity; approval of men. US Supreme court becoming an enemy of the Christ and his church: replaces God and allows murder, adultery (same sex marriage), lying (cf. Falwell and Flynn).

Footstool: part of the throne. On Tutankhamen's footstool are representations of foreign captives, prostrate, with their hands behind their back, to depict symbolically his enemies as already bound and under his feet. From the victor's perspective, connotes disdain and judgment; from the victim's perspective, shame and humiliation (cf. 1 Cor. 15:25; Eph. 1:22).

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:25—27)

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. (Ephesians 1:22—23)

C. Reflections on the Citation: Prophetic address to Lord

vv. 2—3

1. I AM initiates and empowers holy war

v. 2

Scepter: badge and symbol of authority. Christ's badge and symbol is his resurrection from the dead.

mighty: Strong: cannot be broken and will prevail (cf. Psalm 2:9)

Send forth: extend in ever widening circles.

Zion: conceptualized as the center of the world

Rule: initiates holy war. Associated with to compel obedience by punishing disobedience and so commanding respect. Today he rules through suffering Church, filling up His sufferings. Church relies on prayer (cf. Lord's prayer). At second advent he will destroy enemy.

2. Lord's troops willing to fight

v. 3

people > troops

freely lit. "is volunteerism": totally volunteers; word is often used of "free will offerings" (not required). Dedicated, fearless warriors to support their leader on the battlefield. They love and trust their king and know their cause is just.

Deuteronomy 20:8: Then the officers shall add, "Is anyone afraid or fainthearted? Let him go home so that his fellow soldiers will not become disheartened too."1—9

1 Corinthians 15:29: Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them?

Phillipians 2:1 7 "But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith." A

"Wars are not won or lost on the battlefield; they are won or lost in the minds of men. Pen is mightier than the sword. Wall Street Journal (Feb. 2, 2015). After driving ISIS out of town of Kobna, Syria, the Kurdish commander said: 'We only survived because we believed in our cause.'"

day of your power: is a metonymy for the time of holy war. Christ's world wide conquest to his law of liberty begins when he ascends into heaven and pours out his Spirit. After Pentecost his disciples surrender their lives in service to him, even to martyrdom (Acts 7:57-59). So they turned their world upside-down.

holy garments: lit. "holy splendor": a metonymy for their regalia (cf. Ps 45:3[4]). Holy Regalia marks them as set apart to God as a pure kingdom of priests

from the womb of the dawn: metaphor—the dawn of the final king's rule. The new age gives birth to this dedicated army.

Dew: after the night; of heavenly origin, to refresh the earth. Metaphor connotes

1. myriads: see them on cobwebs
2. refreshing: smell it on the clover
3. mysterious, heavenly origins: Micah 5:7⁷ The remnant of Jacob will be in the midst of many peoples like dew from the LORD, like showers on the grass, which do not wait for anyone or depend on man.

Youth: freshness, prime strength, prowess, promise and endurance

Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

II. Stanza II

4—7

Inclusio: The stanza begins with his eternal priesthood and ends with his eternal victory

A. Introduction to Recitation: an irrevocable oath

Swears will not change: emphatic. God changes prophecies according to human response but never changes an oath (Contrast Jeremiah 18:5—10 with Hebrews 6:13—17). See Richard Pratt in *The Way of Wisdom*

B. Recitation:

Priest: The high priest is divinely appointed to protect the sanctity of the temple and perform what properly goes on there: offering sacrifices for the people, singing psalms, dealing gently with those who go astray, dispensing oracles; teaching Torah; and judging. The priests represent Israel's relationship with God; they are mediators of the covenant. The high priest, bearing the names of the twelve tribes on his breastplate, represents the entire nation. The priests actualize I AM's presence in the words of their many liturgical functions. The holiness that worship demands is symbolized in the priesthood, which makes a visible statement that I AM is the lord and master of the nation.

Compare symbolism of Christ's priestly work in washing disciples' feet:

1. Got up. Before he sat down
- 2 Took off his outer garment,
- 3 Donned a towel: humbled himself to become a slave and prepared himself for his work: his active obedience
- 4 poured water: prepared their cleansing in his blood
- 5 washed feet: made it efficacious
- 6 dried them with the towel: .

I am not skilled to understand what God hath willed, what God hath planned
I only know at his right hand is one who is my savior./
Yea, living, dying, let me bring my strength my solace from this spring,/ that he
who lives to be my king, once died to be my savior.

Like. Dibrah 'al always means “for the reason that.” It never means “in the order of.” Messiah is a king and a priest because before Aaron’s priesthood, Melchizedek, a royal priest, served him.

Melchizedek. A royal, eternal priesthood (see Hebrews 7)

C. Prophet’s Reflections

The two strophes are held together by “smash,” and “kings/nations”

1. Address to Messiah

v. 5

*Lord*⁵ אֲדֹנָי('adonay [Lord of all], not 'adoniy [my lord]. Lord of all is God.

your right hand: thereby assuring Messiah of divine protection and power (see v. 2). True Strength *smashes kings*, who are empowered by demonic forces (cf. Eph. 6:10-20). Their defeat is certain because their king has been dethroned from heaven (Lk. 10:18) and been bound in the sense that today Jesus Christ takes captives from nations formerly under his rule and frees them from sin and death to join him in his battle for truth and justice (Eph. 4:1-13).

Smash: Language of old dispensation. NT replaces it with spiritual interpretation: cf. “temple,” “born again,” “water from Jacob’s well,” “manna,” “sword,” “armor.”

2. Address to congregation [overheard by royal priest]

vv. 6—7

a. Messiah will judge the whole earth

v. 6

He will judge (yadin): “give right and just verdicts” (i.e., reward the good and punish the evil), not “judge” *shapat*, “to right wrongs.”

Nations. Represented by “kings” in v. 5 (cf. Psalm 2:1—12)

Fill the valley with corpses: emphasis is on punishing all sinful nations with death.

Heads: singular: countable (see v. 7; cf. Gen. 3:15) or, more probably, a collective singular (cf. Psalm 68:21 [22]).

b. Messiah will consummate

brook. Lit. “wady.” The image connotes that even in desert areas of the broad earth God will supply Messiah with an abundant amount of water to quench his thirst and refresh him

Along the way (badderek): marches triumphantly in his world wide conquest.

Drink: In his hurry, a momentary break to refresh himself. Neither desert nor fatigue will stop him in his zeal to end tyranny. Livy (b. 59 BC) Roman historian: “The terror of the Roman name will be such that, once a Roman army has laid siege to a city nothing will move it—not the rigors of winter nor the weariness of months and years—that it knows no end but victory and is ready, if a swift and sudden stroke will not serve— to persevere until victory is achieved.”

And so: therefore

Lift up his head: a picture of honor, dominion, joy. Contrast to smashed kings on his footstool.

Gen 40:13 “Pharaoh will lift up your head”

Judg 8:28: “they [Midian] did not lift up their head again”

Ps 3:3[4]: “my glory, the One who lifts my head [high].”

Ps 24:7: “**Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.**” The circle of gate towers are personified, which like a council of elders sat waiting the return of the army and its Great Warrior gone to battle, and which sat bowed and anxious.” In the Ugaritic texts we find a picture of the council of the gods assembled in the mountain of ’El. On the approach of emissaries of Ba’l’s arch foe, Prince Sea, the gods are bowed and fearful, ‘dropping their heads onto the knees, down on their princely throne,’ sitting in fear and despair. Ba’l, the young king, shouts: “Lift up, O gods, your heads.”

19. Rhetorical Approach

Part I: Introduction

I. Contrast to form criticism:

Phyllis Tribble deftly defines by contrast form and rhetorical criticisms: “Whereas form criticism studies the typical and so groups literature according to its genres, rhetorical criticism studies the particular within the typical. Its guiding rubric declares that ‘proper [or appropriate] articulation of form-content yields proper [or appropriate] articulation of meaning.’”⁴⁴³

II. Levels of signification:

collection or book
sections/groups of songs
poems
stanzas
strophes
verses/lines
half-verses/versets/cola
phrases
words
syllables
sounds

Poetics: The poetics used in poetry to give focus and unity to a work are mostly the same as those used in narrative (i.e., *leitwort*, refrain, contrast, comparison, logic, escalation > climax, patterns of all sorts, janus, generalization > particularization, preparation, summarization, interrogation, inclusio, intercalation, allusion.) Some of these are employed in connecting the versets that comprise the verse (i.e., in parallelism).

⁴⁴³ Phyllis Tribble, “Wrestling with Words, Limping to Light,” in *Why I (Still) Believe*, John Byron & Joel N. Lohr, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2015), 233.

Part II: Poetics

I. Introduction

A. Definition:

literary devices that an author uses to construct his composition and to communicate his evaluative point of view (aesthetics):

“An inductive science that seeks to abstract the general principles of literature from many different manifestations of those principles as they occur in actual literary texts.” Its essential aim is not “to elicit meaning from a text” but rather “to find the building blocks of literature and the rules by which they are assembled.” Thus, “poetics is to literature as linguistics is to language. That is, poetics describes the basic components of literature and the rules governing their use. Poetics strives to write a grammar, as it were, of literature.” We must first know how a text means before we can know what it means.⁴⁴⁴

N.B. Fishbane speaks of text and “texture.”

N.B. Through these devices a skillful author embeds meaning in his text without explicit articulation: “techniques for making a meaning available without articulating it explicitly.”⁴⁴⁵

444 Berlin, *Poetics*, p. 15.

445 M. Buber, “Leitwort Style in Petateuch Narrative,” in Buber and Rosenzweig, p. 114.

B. Authors, not redactors

1. Difference between the concept of author versus redactor:

“Diachronic” literary critics regard the text as “crudely” pieced together;
“Synchronic” literary critics regard it as artistic with careful attention to detail

“Is the narrative hand ‘crude’—what critics usually mean when they write redactional or ‘careful’—what I mean when I write authorial?”⁴⁴⁶

N.B. “Synchronic” critics do not deny sources but treat them with indifference.

2. Implications:

- a. Exegetical expectations differ: The biblical narrators use words sparingly; each word counts. The interpreter's attitude should be that nothing in the text is for naught.⁴⁴⁷
- b. Hermeneutical expectations: not looking for layers of meaning before the text; but meaning of text.
- c. Theological expectations: text is theologically laden with subtle and nuanced meaning; not a bundle of contradictory meanings.

Narrators/poets do not explain their techniques

II. Poetic techniques/rhetorical criticism

A. *Leitwort* (= lead word that gives focus to text)

Martin Buber coined the word *Leitwort*, in analogy to *Leitmotiv*, defining it as “a word or word root that is meaningfully repeated with a text or sequence of texts or

446 Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, p. 57.

447 Bonchek, *Studying the Torah*, p. 15.

complex of texts.” He continued, “those who attend to these repetitions will find a meaning of the text revealed or clarified, or at any rate made more emphatic.

Psalm 2: Key word: “*I AM*” and “King”:

- I. Hostile kings rebel against *I AM* and his king
- II. *I AM* set his king on Zion
- III. King recites *I AM*'s decree
- IV. Worship *I AM* and submit to his king

B. Refrain: repetition of same phrase or clause

1. Psalm 42 (Lament)/43 (Petition)

“Why, my soul, are you downcast?

Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him,

my Savior and my God.” (Psa 42:5, 11; 43:5)

2. Psalm 49

A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.

a. Introduction

A. Addressees (Summary, Specific)

¹ Hear this, all peoples! Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,

² both low and high, rich and poor together!

B. Author (substance, style)

³ My mouth shall speak wisdom; the meditation of my heart shall be understanding.

⁴ I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will solve my riddle to the music of the lyre.

b. Body

1.) All Die Like Animals

⁵ Why should I fear in times of trouble, when the iniquity of those who cheat me surrounds me,

⁶ those who trust in their wealth and boast of the abundance of their riches?

⁷ Truly no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life,

⁸ for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice,

⁹ that he should live on forever and never see the pit.

¹⁰ For he sees that even the wise die; the fool and the stupid alike must perish and leave their wealth to others.

¹¹ Their graves are their homes forever, their dwelling places to all generations, though they called lands by their own names.

¹² *Man in his pomp **will not remain (bal yalin)**; he is like the beasts that perish.*

וְאָדָם בִּיקָר בַּל־יָלִין נִמְשָׁל כַּבְּהֵמוֹת נִדְמוּ

2.) Fools Die Forever Like Animals

¹³ This is the path of those who have foolish confidence; yet after them people approve of their boasts. Selah

¹⁴ Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol; death shall be their shepherd, and the upright shall rule over them in the morning. Their form shall be consumed in Sheol, with no place to dwell.

¹⁵ But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me. Selah

¹⁶ Be not afraid when a man becomes rich, when the glory of his house increases.

¹⁷ For when he dies he will carry nothing away; his glory will not go down after him.

¹⁸ For though, while he lives, he counts himself blessed—and though you get praise when you do well for yourself—

¹⁹ his soul will go to the generation of his fathers, who will never again see light.

²⁰ Man in his pomp yet **without understanding (welo' yabin)**s like the beasts that perish.

²¹ אָדָם בִּיקָר וְלֹא יָבִין נִמְשָׁל בַּבְּהֵמוֹת גְּדָמִי

c. Refrain divides body into two stanzas of eight verses

N.B. Pun links Introduction to refrain: *proverb* (Hebrew *mshl*); *is like* (Hebrew *nmsl*)

N.B. catchword “wise” linking body to introduction

A. All die

“do not endure”— without distinguishing between wise and foolish (v. 10)

“After the game, the King and the pawn go into the same box” (Italian proverb)

B. Death of fools

(v. 13; “without understanding” v. 20) permanent in contrast to upright (vv. 14—15)

C. Contrast: associates or juxtaposes things that are dissimilar or opposite:

“It has been said that a sign of the creative individual is his ability to perceive the differences in similar things and the similarities in different things.”⁴⁴⁸

Psalm 1: v. 1 versus v. 2; 3 versus 4, 5A versus 5B ; 6A versus 6B—6

D. Comparison: associates or juxtaposes things that are alike or similar.

Psalm 23

Shepherd motif (1—4): provision, restoration, protection

Sheikh motif (5): provision, restoration, protection

448 Bonchek, p. 59.

E. Logic

Causation and Substantiation: order the text through relationships of cause and effect.

Psalm 2:10—12

F. Climax/intensification: movement from lesser to greater intensity

Psalm 23: Pasture > Tent > Temple

G. Structure: some patterns⁴⁴⁹

1. Symmetrical (ABCA'B'C):

“Parallel patterns tend to invite comparison of the parallel sequences and of individual parallel elements. Comparison often reveals progression, but not necessarily opposition or contrast, between the parallel components.”⁴⁵⁰

1 Kings 19:9b-18

- A. Setting at the cave and word of LORD came (19:9a)
- B. LORD's question: what are you doing here, Elijah (19:9b)
- C. Answer: “I have been very zealous... my life away” (19:10f)
- D. Then the LORD said (19:11a)
- E. Wind...not in the wind (19:11b)
- F. Earthquake...not in earthquake (19:11c)
- G. Fire ... not in fire (19:12a)
- H. Sound of sheer silence (19:13a)

449 See Richard L. Pratt, Jr., *He Gave Us Stories* (Brentwood, Tennessee: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, Publishers, Inc. 1990, pp. 179-230.

450 Jerome T. Walsh, *1 Kings* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996), p. xiv.

- A' Setting: at the cave a voice came (19:13b)
- B' Question: what are you doing here, Elijah (19:13c)
- C' Answer: "I have been very zealous ... away" (19:14)
- D' Then the LORD said (19:15a)
- E' Anoint Hazael (19:15)
- F' Anoint Jehu (19:16a)
- G' Anoint Elisha (19:16b)
- E" Hazael kills (19:17a)
- F" Jehu kills (19:17b)
- G" Elisha kills (19:17c)
- H" 7,000 have not bowed to Baal

Psalm 110

2. Concentric [usually, called 'chiastic'] symmetry: ABCB'A'

Function: "Concentric symmetry usually emphasizes the central elements (and sometimes the first and last elements as well). The central element often contains a turning point in the narrative development. The sequences before and after the turning point—often called "the pivot"—or the individual corresponding elements in those sequences often contrast with one another. Radday (p. 67) argues that "chiastic structure seems to have been compulsory for a narrator but this convention slowly faded away until it completely disappeared, approximately in the 5th century B.C.E." Though too extreme, it suggests the frequency of this pattern

1 Kings 1-11

- A. prophet intervenes in the royal succession: 1:1-2:12
- B. Solomon eliminates threats to his security: 2:13-46
- C. The early promise of Solomon's reign: 3:1-15
- D. Solomon uses his gift for the people: 3:16-4:34
- E. Preparations for building temple: 5:1-18
- F. Solomon builds the Temple 6:1-37

- G.** Solomon builds 'rival' buildings 7:1-12
- F'** Solomon furnishes the temple 7:13-51
- E'** Solomon dedicates the temple, warned by God 8:1-9:9
- D'** Solomon uses his gifts for himself 9:10-10:29
- C'** Tragic failure of Solomon's reign 11:1-13
- B'** Yahweh raises up threats to Solomon's security: 11:14-25
- A'** A prophet determines the royal succession 11:26-43

H. Janus:

A literary unit that looks back and forth to unite two units: Superscripts; cf. Ps 23:4

I. Generalization and particularization:

Movement in the text toward explication that becomes either more specific or more comprehensive . Most hymns are deductive:

Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—who....(Psa 103:2)

J. Preparation/foreshadow:

Refers to the inclusion of material in one part of the text that serves primarily to prepare the reader for what is still to come.

Typology: on intertextual plane. See “Messianic approach”

K. Summarization

Offers a synopsis or abridgment of material that is treated more fully elsewhere. See Ps 23:6

L. Interrogation

Employment of a question or problem followed by its answer or solution: Psalm 15

LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy mountain?

² Those whose walk is blameless,

who do what is righteous, who speak the truth from their hearts;

- ³ who have no slander on their tongues,
who do their neighbors no wrong, who cast no slur on others;
- ⁴ who despise those whose ways are vile but honor whoever fears the LORD;
who keep their oaths even when it hurts;
- ⁵ who lend money to the poor without interest
and do not accept bribes against the innocent.

Whoever does these things will never be shaken.

M. Inclusio

Refers to a repetition of features at the beginning and end of a unit, as exemplified by the use of antiphons in liturgical poetry. Psalm 8 The purpose of inclusio:

1. Framing a unit
2. Stabilizing the material enclosed (Ridout)
3. Emphasizing by repetition

N. Intercalation

The insertion of one literary unit in the midst of another. Psalm 24

Of David. A psalm.

¹ The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;

² for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.

³ Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place?

⁴ Those who have clean hands and a pure heart, who do not put their trust in an idol or swear by a false god.

⁵ They will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God their Savior.

⁶ Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, God of Jacob.,

⁷ Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

⁸ Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

⁹ Lift up your heads, you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

¹⁰ Who is he, this King of glory? The LORD Almighty— he is the King of glory. (Psa 24:1-10)

O. Inter-textuality/Allusion

A reference in one passage to another.⁴⁵¹ Cf. Psalm 8 and Genesis 1.

P. Scenic depiction

Cf. 2 Sam. 15:30 (Hushai on top of mount); 16:1 (Ziba just past top of mount), 16:5 (Shemei passed Bahurim).

Psalm 23:4

Q. By naming: Ps 91:1—2

¹ Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

² They say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

451 Pratt, *Stories*, p. 246.

20. Messianic Approach and Psalm 16

Part I. Messianic Approach

Origin of the term

I. Definition of Messianism:

the realization of God's promise to give Israel an ideal king who will establish a universal rule of righteousness and peace at the end of the ages.

II. Historical background to Messianism

A. Origin of Messianism

1. According to Bible

- a. Genesis 3:15: Seed of Woman: Genesis: enmity between seed of woman and seed of serpent
- b. Narrowing of seed of woman: Seth, Noah, Shem, Isaac, Jacob, Judah

2. According to academia:

Messianism had its origin in the Davidic covenant: "Your [David's] house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."

B. Psalter idealized the king in the royal psalms that praised the king

(see lecture on superscriptions) and "presented to sight and thought ...the realization of the ideal.⁴⁵² Cf. coronation liturgies (Psalms 2 and 110).

⁴⁵² Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, p. 98. Mowinckel argues that these ideals expressed a genuine hope, and disagrees with Gunkel, who regarded these expressions as the exaggerated statements of the *Hofstil*.

C. When the Psalter was completed,

probably in the early post-exilic period, all the royal psalms were projected to the reconstituted House of David. The Psalter was edited with a view to the coming king . Was it compiled about the time of Haggai and Zechariah?

D. Under the influence of the apocalyptic literature

which had a fixed dualism pitting this age against the one to come, the Messiah became profiled as a heavenly figure who had been with God from the beginning, remains with him, and after ushering in the heavenly kingdom at the end of time will finally bring all things to a perfect end in connection with the resurrection and final judgment. Apocalyptic dualism:

1. All reality consists of two fundamental components: forces of good and evil; God and Satan; angels and demons; covenant people and world.
2. Present age when evil prevails; future age when righteous prevail and evil destroyed
3. Cataclysmic change from present evil age of sin and death and future righteous kingdom without sin and death occurs connection with resurrection of dead and judgment
4. Messiah introduces that new age.

John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, calls for repentance in light of this coming cataclysmic event. One must participate in the new age at the present time.

III. In the New Testament Jesus of Nazareth is presented as this coming Messiah

A. Two advents of the Messiah:

1. First advent: suffering for sin and death
2. Second advent: triumph over sin and death.

B. Two aspects to fulfillment of Messianic triumph (mystery: not in OT)

1. Already: fulfillment: resurrection of Lord Jesus Messiah
2. Not yet: consummation: resurrection of all covenant people

The NT introduces a realized eschatology, an already and a not yet. The Messianic expectation is fulfilled in Jesus Christ and his Church (cf. Matt 28:18-20; John 17:2) and will be consummated after His Parousia and the resurrection of his saints in the new heaven and the new earth (cf. 1 Cor. 15:23-28). The sufferings of the Christ at his first advent are clearly distinguished from his glory to follow his resurrection and ascension.

C. Role of Psalter in the New Testament⁴⁵³

1. NT directly quotes the OT 283 times: 116 times (41%) from the Psalter.
2. Psalms are used in three ways:
 - a. Cited as proof texts of the meaningfulness of episodes in the life of Jesus
 - b. In defense of theological positions
 - c. Liturgical passages that in some way refer to the psalms.
3. Jesus Christ alluded to the Psalms over 50 times.
4. The psalms speak of Jesus Christ: Lk. 24:44: "He said to them, 'This is what I told you while I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.'"

⁴⁵³ See charts in Hunter, *Introduction to the Psalms* (2008), 101—03; 105r

Psalms

New Testament

His passion

6:4	"my soul is troubled"	Jn 12:37
22:2	"why have you forsaken me"	Mt 27:46
22:18	"divided my garments	Jn 19:24
31:6	"Into your hands I commit"	Lk 23:46
34:20	"not a bone broken"	Jn 19:36
35:19	"hated me without reason"	Jn 15:25
40:6	"a body prepared for me"	Heb 10:5-10
41:8	"lifted up his heel against me"	Jn 13:18
42:6	"my soul is downcast"	Mt 26:38
69:22	"vinegar for my thirst"	Mt 27:34,48
109:25	"they shake their heads"	Mt 27:39
2:1	"against the Anointed"	Ac 4:25-26
109:8	"another take his place "	Ac 1:20

His fervor

69:9	"zeal for house"	Jn 2:17
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His authoritative teaching

78:2	"I will open my mouth"	Mt 13:35
37:11	"meek will inherit land/earth"	Mt 5:5
48:2	"Jerusalem... city of Great"	Mt 5:36
78:24	"bread from heaven"	Jn 6:31
82:6	"you are gods"	Jn 10:34

His glory

8	Humiliation and glory	Heb 2:5-10; 1 Co 15:27
2:7	My Son	Ac 4:25-28 Heb 1:5; 5:5
45	Throne forever	Heb 1:8-9
110:1	"David's lord"	Mt. 22:44
118:22f	rejected stone the capstone	Mt. 21:42

IV. Kinds of Messianic Psalms: How the NT uses the Psalter

A. Indirect and typical.

David, the earthly king, foreshadows his greater son, the heavenly King (e.g., Psalms 1, 3, 4)

B. Typico-prophetic

David's sufferings and glory typifies Jesus Christ but his language transcends his own experience and finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ (e.g. Psalms 2, 22).⁴⁵⁴

C. Prophetic

David predicts the reign of his Greater Son. Psalm 110 (see Mt. 22:41-46).

D. The LORD's enthronement Psalms (Psalms 93, 99).

These psalms, celebrating the LORD's coming universal, righteous kingdom find their fulfillment in the Church and their consummation in the coming reign of Jesus Christ in the new heaven and the new earth.

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⁴⁵⁴ Hunter, *Introduction to the Psalms*, 127—133.

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Part II: Psalm 16

I. Translation

A *miktam* of David.

- ¹ Keep me safe, El,
because I take refuge in you.
- ² I say to *I AM*, “You are the Lord;
I have no good thing apart from you.”
- ³ As for the holy ones in the Land, they,
–indeed the noble people—are those in whom is all my delight.
- ⁴ Their pains will increase who have acquired another god.
I will not pour out to them libations of blood,
or take up their names on my lips.
- ⁵ *I AM*, my allotted portion and my cup,
you hold my lot.
- ⁶ The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
indeed, the inheritance is beautiful to me.
- ⁷ I will bless *I AM* who counsels me;
indeed at night my conscience instructs me;
- ⁸ I place *I AM* always before me.
Because he is at my right hand, I will not be toppled.
- ⁹ Therefore my heart is glad and my liver rejoices;
indeed my body rests secure,
- ¹⁰ because you will not abandon me to the grave,
nor will you allow your devoted one to see corruption.
- ¹¹ You will make known to me the path of life,
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand

II. History of Interpretation

A. Apostles

1. Peter (Acts 2:25—32)

David said about him [Jesus]:“ I saw the Lord always before me.

Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;

my body also will rest in hope,

because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,

you will not let your holy one see decay.

You have made known to me the paths of life;

you will fill me with joy in your presence.’

“Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

2. Paul (Acts 13:32—38)

“We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors 33 he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. “So it is also stated elsewhere:

‘You will not let your holy one see decay.’

“Now when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay. “Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.”

B. Effect of Historical Criticism

1. S.R. Driver (*Expositor* 10 (1910): 35—37)

“The Psalmist does not speak explicitly of a future life, for verse 11 does not refer to it at all, but he expresses the hope of superiority over death grounded on the close personal relation in which he himself stands towards God, and which he cannot

believe will be interrupted by death...The Psalm is thus 'Messianic', not in being a prediction of Christ's resurrection...but in expressing an ideal...a hope of superiority to death...which transcended experience, and was fully realized by Christ."

Were the apostles wrong then in their interpretation of the Psalm? Yes, argues Driver, because of their use of the mistranslations of the Septuagint (see below, "corruption").

2. "Western" Christianity (*Psalms as Christian Worship* (p. 320)

"Following Driver, many modern commentators have either argued the apostles were wrong in their interpretation of verses 9-11 or else have now ignored the apostolic use of the Psalm to give it as a message of comfort to be unafraid of death, with no clear doctrine of Christian resurrection. Artur Weiser actually commends the inner polemic of the psalmist to keep the idea of resurrection muted because of the pagan mythologies of (a) dying and rising god(s)⁴⁵⁵. John Goldingay (b.1928) illustrates the increasing loss of transcendence in contemporary 'western' Christianity, by suggesting that among the Psalm's numerous 'readings', we should opt for its original meaning, which, according to his interpretation, would cut us off from all the history of its usage by the early Church and later in order to settle upon its original immanent meaning⁴⁵⁶. Yet even the original was facing the transcendence of death. Others, like Craig Broyles⁴⁵⁷, wholly ignore the apostolic references to the Psalm. While Samuel Terrien (b.1911) assures us that the hope of the psalmist was that as the beloved of Yahweh, he will never see the lower depths of the underworld...on account of the Presence"⁴⁵⁸. But he gives no reference to the New Testament doctrine of the Resurrection of Christ. "

⁴⁵⁵ A. Weiser, *The Psalms, a Commentary*, trans. Herbert Hartwell (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962) p. 177

⁴⁵⁶ John Goldingay, *Psalms*, vol.1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2006) p. 234

⁴⁵⁷ Craig C. Broyles, *New International Biblical Commentary, Psalms* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Henrickson Publishers, Inc., 1999) p. 97

⁴⁵⁸ Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms, Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge, U.K., 2003), p.178

II. Form

A. Poetry

B. Petition Psalm

Address: El	1
Petition: “Keep me safe,” not “deliver me”	1
Confidence: “I say to <i>I AM</i> ”	2—6
Praise: “I will bless”	7—11

C. Song of Trust:

Apart from verse 1, confidence and praise dominate Psalm.

D. Eschatological/Messianic: see “history of interpretation”

III. Rhetoric

A. Logic

I. Introductory Petition for safety [not salvation]	1
II. Confidence with praise	2-11
A. Confession of trust before death	2—8
1. Confession of loyalty to covenant community	2--4
a. Sole loyalty to <i>I AM</i>	2
b. Sole loyalty to people of <i>I AM</i>	3-4
1.) Delight in people of <i>I AM</i>	3
2.) Refusal to join apostates	4

2. Cause for Trust and loyalty	5—8
a. Inheritance from <i>I AM</i>	5-6
1.) Inheritance of <i>I AM</i>	5
2.) Inheritance of possessions	6
b. Instruction from <i>I AM</i>	7-8
1.) Praise for <i>I AM</i> 's instruction	7
2.) <i>I AM</i> 's presence and protection	8
B. Commitment of Corpse to God	9—11
1. Confidence of God's presence in death	9-10
a. Emotions joyful for body secure	9
b. Body secure with reference to grave	10
2. Confidence of presence with God after death and forevermore	11

B. Chiastic symmetry of Song of Trust

Stanza 1 (3 verses):	2—4
Strophe 1: 1 verse	2
Strophe 2: 2 verses	3—4
Stanza 2 (4 verses):	5—8
Strophe 1: 2 verses	5—6
Strophe 2: 2 verses	7—8
Stanza 3 (3 verses)	9--11
Strophe 1: 2 verses	9—10
Strophe 2: 1 verse	11

C. Numerical symbols: 3 (complete), 7 (perfection), 10 (fullness)

D. Message

The chosen king petitions El (God) to keep his corpse safe in and beyond the grave. He is confident that God will protect his body so as to enjoy him forever because God elected his king to have God himself as his inheritance, to instruct him and to be at his right hand.

A prophecy so no p/s ? So also Psalm 22, 110

Part II: Exposition

Superscript

מִכְתָּם לְדָוִד

Genre: *Miktam*. Occurs 6 times in of petition psalms that celebrate salvation of righteous, but similar psalms do not have this genre identification. Meaning is uncertain

I. Petition

1

“Keep me safe” [שְׁמַרְנִי]

Exercise great care over someone/something

Assumes danger (i.e., corpse given over to death, v. 10)

“El”: Quintessence of divine transcendence

“Because”: keeps covenant obligation

“Take refuge”: “A constant life of prayer is the natural way in which faith manifests itself in life” (Weiser).

II. Song of Trust	2–11
A. Confession of trust before death	2–8
1. Confession of loyalty to covenant community	2--4
a. Sole loyalty to <i>I AM</i>	2
“I say”: said in the congregation?	
“Lord”: acknowledges God’s claim on him	
“No good thing”: sole trust in his Master	
“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.” (Jam 1:17)	
2. Loyalty to the People of God	3-4
a. <i>Saints are his sole pleasure</i>	3
“Holy ones”: They accept God’s forgiveness and enablement to be set apart to God.	
“Land”: Promised Land of Israel; angels not in view	
“They”: emphatically the king’s subjects	
“Noble”: respected for excellence in power.” They live by true Strength (cf. David), not false strength (cf. Saul)	
“All my delight”: Any delight apart from the sacred congregation defiles that relationship.	
b. <i>refusal to worship with apostates</i>	4
“ Their pains will increase”: on a trajectory to painful death	
“Another god”: who give significance and security. Their gods do not further salvation history.	
“Pour out ... libations of blood”: not participate in their cultus	
“Take ... names ... lips”: Will not even speak their names. “Religiously correct language”	

B. Cause for trust

5—8

At ease in crisis because sublime God is his possession and this God bestows on him all the good he possesses.

“If man turns his thoughts to the providential rule of God and envisages that providential rule with gratitude and joy, he is thus taught to discern in material benefits the visible proof of the benevolence of his God.” (Weiser)

1. Inheritance from *I AM*

5—6

a. Inheritance of I AM

5

“Allotted portion”: Sovereign defines the boundaries of nations and tribes (Dt. 32:8).

“*I AM* my ...portion”: like Levites who had no life in the land but only in God.

“My cup”: Metaphor of Sovereign handing king a cup to drink

“Let others choose for themselves portions, earthly and temporal, to enjoy; the portion of saints in the Lord is eternal. Let others drink of deadly pleasures, the portion of my cup is the Lord” (Augustine)

“You”: emphatic

“Hold”: “take hold of” (?): i.e., you decide my destiny

: “hold fast” (?): You secure my relationship to God

b. inheritance of possessions

6

“Boundary lines” or “measuring line”:

metonym for his lot/portion

and metaphor for his favored life

“Fallen”: assumes metaphor of casting lots

“My inheritance”: a correlative term for assigned portion/lot; it includes divine counsel

2. Instruction from I AM 7—8

a. Praise for I AM's instruction 7

“I will bless”: pronounce to *I AM* that he source of beneficial power that he benevolently bestows on the one praising him as such.

“Counsels”: one with authority to give advice lays a plan of action for success.

“Instruct”: communicate knowledge in order to shape specific conduct

“At night”: not distracted by the world

Conscience: Lit. “kidneys” (associated with emotions)

b. Keeps eye on I AM and God protects 8

“I place *I AM*”: Always keeps his eye on *I AM* whether by Torah or by conscience

“At my right hand”: full circle to “keep me safe.” Right hand is place of strength

“I will not be toppled”: In death saint is hit by shadow of a truck but not by the truck

B. Commitment of corpse to God 9--11

1. Confident of God's presence in death 9—10

a. Emotions joyful for body secure 9

Therefore. Because of his trust in *I AM* in life, he is confident of God's protection in death “Heart ... liver”: “Her [Anat's] liver swells with laughter, Her heart fills up with joy; Anat's liver exults.”

“Glad ... rejoices”: Based on faith's certainty that God will not hand his body over to Grave to have the last word.

“Indeed”: In addition to inward joy, even his fleshly body confronting death rests secure.

b. Body secure with reference to the grave 10

“Because”: reason he exults and body rests secure

“Abandon”: hand over and leave

“Grave”: Lit. Sheol

“Devoted one”: See vv. 1--5

“Corruption”: raised before fourth day to avoid corruption (cf. Jn 11:38)

שָׁחַ (shah/.at): crux interpretum:

1. A homonym: many uses are indecisive whether it means “pit” or “corruption.” LXX διαφθοράν interpreted to mean “corruption” (so New Testament).

If derived from verb *shuah/.* (“sink down”), *shah/.at* is a feminine noun and means “pit” (BDB, HALOT, NRSV). None deny this term may mean pit

If derived from *shah/.at* (“decay”), noun is masculine and means “corruption.”

In Hebrew language all nouns are either so-called masculine or feminine in form. (Sexual terms derived from animate nouns). In languages with this gender inflexion poets personify abstract and inanimate nouns according to the gender form of that noun. Masculine noun attested in Job 17:14: “If I say to corruption (*shah/.at*, masc), 'You are my father,' and to the worm (שָׂרָף, fem.), 'My mother' or 'My sister' (Job 17:14)

Homonymns distinguished by collocation with verb

shah/.at (fem., “pit”) with verbs of motion (e.g., descend, enter, etc.) denotes a place, not a state

shah/.at (masculine) with verbs of experience (e.g. “to see,” etc.) denotes a state, not a place

Conclusion: LXX (διαφθοράν), other ancient versions and KJV, ASV, NIV, ESV got it right; not BDB, HALOT, JPS, NAB, NRSV

2. Confidence of presence with God after death

11

A parent may reward a child for practicing scales on a piano with an ice-cream cone, but the reward is unrelated to the investment. God’s reward consummates the investment. The child who practices today can anticipate playing beautiful music tomorrow. So the joy of fellowship with God in this world will be rewarded with the reward of overflowing joy when we see him face to face. Tears of joy will flow like a river.

“you will make known to me”: God will continue to make him experience the path of life

“life”: qualitatively (v, 11 α , an abundant life in fellowship with God) and quantitatively (11 β , eternal).

21. Wisdom Psalms and Psalms 19, 73

Instruction (Wisdom/Torah) Psalms

Part I: Introduction

I. Definition of *Hokmah* (“Wisdom”):

Hokmah (traditionally translated “wisdom”) denotes “masterful understanding,” “skill,” “expertise”: e.g., technical and artistic skills (Exod. 28:3; 31:6), of the arts of magic (Exod. 7:11), of government (Eccl. 4:13; Jer 50:35), of diplomacy (1 Kings 7:11; Isa 3:3), and of war (Isa 10:13). In wisdom literature (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, selected psalms and prophecies), “wisdom” refers to the skill of living in the way of eternal life. This entails social skill with God (“fear of the LORD”) and mankind (“righteousness”).

II. Correlative with “righteous”

The term “wisdom” (“skill”) is morally neutral and so in Biblical literature is correlative with ethical terms such as “righteousness” (See Proverbs 1:2—6; *passim*).

III. Form⁴⁵⁹: admonition and instruction

A. Positive admonitions (cf. Proverbs):

To trust in YHWH, to fear YHWH,⁴⁶⁰ to do good,⁴⁶¹ to avoid sin,⁴⁶² to confess [sin] at the proper time,⁴⁶³ or to watch one's tongue.⁴⁶⁴ Quite typically, a beautiful promise is added to these admonitions, sometimes introduced with “for.”⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁵⁹ See Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to the Psalms*, 293—305.

⁴⁶⁰ I.e., “to obey his Word out of awe for his person”: Pss 34:10; 37:5, 7, 34; 62:9; cf. Prov 3:5; 16:3; Sir 2:6ff; 11:21

⁴⁶¹ Ps 37:3, 27, 37

⁴⁶² Ps 37:27; cf. Sir 38: 10

⁴⁶³ Ps 32:6f, 8f; cf. Lam 3:26; cf. Job 5:8; 85; 1 l:13ff; 22:21ff

⁴⁶⁴ Ps 34:14; cf. Prov 4:23f

⁴⁶⁵ Ps. 37:3f, 5f, 27, 34, 37; cf. Lam 3:31ff; Prov 3:5f, 7f, 9f, 21ff; 4:6ff, 10, 13, 23; Sir 4:10;

B. Negative warnings in connection with theodicy (Job and Ecclesiastes)

Against becoming disgruntled by misfortune,⁴⁶⁶ provoked by the wealthy godless,⁴⁶⁷ marveling over riches, or trusting in them.⁴⁶⁸ The reason for heeding the warning is the terrible fate of the wicked.⁴⁶⁹

1. *Torah* denotes “catechetical instruction” and so in Psalter may refer to Mosaic Law or sayings of the wise
2. Admonition may pertain to theodicy

C. Commonly in direct address

⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.

⁹ Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.

¹⁰ Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him.

¹¹ Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart! (Ps 32:8—11).

C. Instruction sometimes introduced by “blessed is” (cf. Psalm 1, 119).⁴⁷⁰

The short sayings are sometimes introduced with "behold" (*hinneh*),⁴⁷¹ as are the religious didactic sentences.⁴⁷² Another introduction of the speeches is the sentence: "It

7:32; Wis 1:2

⁴⁶⁶ Ps 32:8; cf. Job 5:17.

⁴⁶⁷ Ps 37:1, 7, 8; cf. Prov 3:31; 23:17; 24:1, 19; Qoh 8:14; Sir 11 :21f.

⁴⁶⁸ Pss 49:17; 62:11; cf. Sir 9:l

⁴⁶⁹ Ps 37:1f, 8f, 27f; 49:12, 20; 73:17—20; cf. Prov 3:1f, 11ff, 31f; 4:14ff; 6:20ff, 25f; 7:25f; 22:22f; 23:10fy 17f, 20f; 24:15& 19f, 21f; Sir 3:10, 23f; 4:23f; 5:6f, 8; 7:1f; 8:14ff; 9:10, 11; 18:30f; 19:8f; 32:14f; 38:9; 40:28ff; 41:3ff; Wis 1:3ff.

⁴⁷⁰ “One of the surest signs of ‘wisdom’ is that the reward and the virtue of the righteous are praised in the form of a "beatitudo" ("happy is the one who . . . " (Pss 1: 1-3; 32: 1f ; 34:9b; 91 :l ff. 94:12; 112:lff, 5f; 119:l; 127:5; 128:1, 2; cf. Prov 3:13ff; 8:32ff; 14:21; 16:20; 28:14; 29:18; Job 5:17; Isa 3:10; Jer 17:7f; Sir 14:1, 2, 20; 25:7ff; 26:1; 28:19f; 31:17; 34:8; 50:28; Wisd 3:13” (Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction* ,p. 302).

⁴⁷¹ Pss 127:5; 133:l

⁴⁷² Pss 33:18; cf. 73:27; 92:10; 121:4; 128:4

is good,"⁴⁷³ or "How good it is."⁴⁷⁴ The opposite also appear as introductions: "It is bad;" "It is difficult;" "how great."⁴⁷⁵

IV. Classification of Psalms

- A. *Torah*: Psalms 1, 19, 119
- B. Positive admonition: 78 (story-telling); 112 [paired with hymn of 111]; 127; 133
- C. Negative admonition (theodicy): 37, 49 (see pages 300—302), 73

Part II: Psalm 19: Instruction Through Praise

Introduction

I. Sitz im Buch

- A. Ps 15 (entrance liturgy)
 - B. Ps 16 (song of Trust)
 - C. Ps 17 (prayer for help)
 - D. Ps 18 (royal psalm)
 - X. Ps 19 (praise psalm: creation/*torah*)
- D.' Pss. 20—21 (royal psalm)
 - C' Ps 22 (prayer for help)
 - B.' Ps 23 (Song of Trust)
 - A.' Ps 24 (entrance liturgy)

⁴⁷³ Cf. Lam 3:26f; Tob 12:6f, ll

⁴⁷⁴ Ps 133:l; cf. Sir 25:4f.

⁴⁷⁵ Cf. Sir 25:l0; 28:21; 29:28

II. Translation

A Psalm of David.

The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
² Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.
³ There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose [heaven's] voice is not heard.
⁴ Their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.
In them he has set a tent for the sun,
⁵ which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.
⁶ Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them,
and there is nothing hidden from its heat
. . .
⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;
⁸ the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;
⁹ the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.
¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
¹² Who can discern his errors?
Declare me innocent from hidden faults.
¹³ Keep back your servant also from the insolent; let them not have dominion over me!
Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.
¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

To the choirmaster.

Notes:

v. 8: right: *Yashar*: “upright”

v. 9 fear of the LORD: revelation + humble obedience

v. 13 Also, keep back: two petitions.

v. 13 insolent (traditionally, “presumptuous sins”): The root of “the insolent” (*ze/-/di/^/m*), *ze/-/d*, occurs 13 times, always in plural apart from Prov. 21:24. This masculine substantival adjective does not have as its antecedent the feminine noun “errors” (*s/^/ni/^/’ot*). *Ze/-/di/^/m* elsewhere is used with several types of insolent people: those who challenge God (Mal. 3:15), attack the psalmist (86:15), reject Jeremiah’s prophecy (Jer. 43:2), mock the pious without restraint (119:51), forge lies (119:69) and dig pits (119:85). The psalmist prays that God will put them to shame (119:78) and not let them oppress him (119:122). *I AM* is said to rebuke them (119:21), and he will cause their arrogance to cease (Isa. 13:11; cf. Mal. 4:1 [3:19]). Prov 21:24: “The **proud** (**זַדִּי**) and arrogant person--"Mocker" is his name-- behaves with insolent fury.” In light of these 12 other occurrences of *zedi/^/m*, the conclusion can be drawn that *zedi/^/m* refers to people who, from their exaggerated and prideful opinion of their self-importance and sufficiency, disregard both *I AM*, the wise and revealed truth.

III. Structure of Psalm

Superscript

- | | |
|--|--------|
| A. Heavens displays knowledge (omniscience) of God | 1--6 |
| B. Torah displays moral excellence of God | 7—10 |
| Janus: Torah: great reward; Petition: Warned | 11 |
| C. Prayer to keep Torah | 12--13 |
| D. Dedicatory prayer | 14 |

Postscript

IV. What is connection of these three stanzas?

A. Unifying elements of stanzas

1. Fishbane. Speakers: Heavens (vv. 1-6), the LORD (vv. 7 -10), Psalmist (11-14)
2. Meinhold, Subjects: Words about God (1—6), from God (7—10), to God (11—14)
3. Broyles:
 - a. Contracting movement: vastness of skies, Law, Worshipper.
 - b. Contracting of Names of God: El (Creator of all), LORD (Israel's Covenant God) , My Rock and Redeemer (Personal).

B. Unifying logic of stanzas

1. Praise of God for two fundamental types of his revelation of himself to the world: natural/general revelation in creation and special revelation in Word.

Immanuel Kant also included conscience in general revelation, and both the witness of the heavens and of his conscience filled him with awe: “Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me. I do not seek or conjecture either of them as if they were veiled obscurities or extravagances beyond the horizon of my vision; I see them before me and connect them immediately with the consciousness of my existence.” (*Critique of Practical Reasons*),

2. Waltke: Comprehensive knowledge necessary for absolute/certain knowledge.

a. In creation: dams, fire, Westminster Seminary

b. In Wisdom Literature

1.) Job 28: 12---28

2.) Prov. 8;22--36

3.) Proverb. 30:1—6. Summary

a.) Confesses ignorance: does not have knowledge

b.) Confesses inability to have certain knowledge

c.) Confesses that LORD has that knowledge

d.) Confesses that one is a son (disciple) of God

²⁹ Who has gone up into heaven, and taken her [wisdom],
and brought her down from the clouds?

³⁰ Who has gone over the sea, and found her,
and will buy her for pure gold?

³¹ No one knows the way to her,
or is concerned about the path to her.

³² But the one who knows all things knows her,
he found her by his understanding.

³⁴ The one who prepared the earth for all time
filled it with four-footed creatures;

³⁵ This is our God;
no other can be compared to him.

³⁶ He found the whole way to knowledge,
and gave her to his servant Jacob and to Israel,
whom he loved. (Baruch 3:29—36)

e.) Confesses God revealed himself in Scripture.

Exposition

I. God's knowledge (omniscience) displayed in creation 1–6

A. Exegesis

1. Firmament declares God's glory/knowledge: 1–4b

a. Temporal universality of firmament's praise 1--2

b. Spatial universality of firmament's praise 3--4

NB. Declares: vv. 1, 3

NB. Universal: in time and space, 2, 4.

2. Sun in the heavens 4c–6

a. Bridegroom: youthful freshness, beauty, vigor, joy

b. Runner: sprinter and long-distance.

B. Christ: The Word that brought about the Creation

C. Moral: see Psalm 8 (pp. 93–96)

Joseph Addison's paraphrase of Psalm 19:1–6

What though in solemn silence all⁴⁷⁶

Move round the dark terrestrial ball?

What though nor real voice nor sound

Amid their radiant orbs be found?

In reason's ear they all rejoice

And utter forth a glorious voice,

For ever singing, as they shine,

'The hand that made us is divine.'⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁶ Aristotle (384 BC), cited by Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, 125.

⁴⁷⁷ J. Barr (*The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective* [(Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999)]) rightly restores the role of natural theology and of science and reason to overcome dialectical theology.

II. Moral excellence of Torah:

“The ever recurring mention of the commands are prized more highly than all creation, including the sun” (Gunkel & Begrich, *Introduction Psalms*, P. 11, 4 (p. 397).

A. Torah’s essence (complete, flawless, righteous and eternal):

1. 7a: Perfect (complete). Spurgeon: “It is a crime to add to it, treason to alter it, and felony to take from it.”⁴⁷⁸
2. 7b: sure > reliable. See comprehensive knowledge
3. 8a: Upright (faultless)
4. 8b Pure (scoured until it shines)
5. 9a clean > Pure (no mixture), enduring forever (like without disease)
6. 9b true > firm (steady: cannot be overturned, unlike human judgments;
7. righteous: in conformity to God’s character and will,

B. Torah’s rewards: life:

1. renews vitality, to restore life to the sad and discouraged. Cf. Ru. 4:15: He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age.
2. gives life-giving and social skills to the “simple” (open to God’s word).
3. rejoices the heart. Painting: objective (shape, color); imagination (imagination that delights in moral order).
4. enlightening the eyes. Clean and radiant commands light up the eyes.
5. better than gold: house versus home; food versus fellowship; jewelry versus love:
6. sweeter: to a healthy taste. Contra Psalm 2:2.
7. warned
8. great reward

⁴⁷⁸ Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, 129.

III. Prayer: remove past sin; restrain from future sin

12--13

Introduction:

1. 2 petitions: hidden sins and insolent men
2. Righteousness of law made him aware of sin
3. Expresses his humility; acknowledges his moral weakness.

A. Hidden sins

1. Lauds: "Most merciful God
2. Hidden: so cannot renounce and confess.

B. Hold back from rule of insolent men

1. Petition: hold back from insolent men

- a. none is free from danger of apostasy. "Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it."
- b. "Without help from God, none of us are a match for Satan."

2. Reason

- a. Keep integrity.
- b. Great transgression: rebellion > rebellion against rule/ > breaking faith with him. ,
"Whoever commits *pes/^\a* ' does not merely rebel or protest against Yahweh but
breaks with him."⁴⁷⁹

IV Conclusion

¹⁴ May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

A. Protocol of royal court

Asking for the favor of acceptance:

B. Words

1. For praise of heavens > Christ the Creator
2. For Torah > :
 - a. New covenant
 - b. Christ the sinless lamb of God

C. My Savior

No legalism. Humble dependence on Christ to keep from insolent people.

D. Found favor for “words of my mouth” accepted into canon

22. The Editorial Approach

Editing the Book of Psalms

I: Titles

A. Hebrew Bible

1. Bible: none (cf. Ps 72:20: “prayers of David son of Jesse”)
2. Rabbinic and subsequent Hebrew literature: Sefer Tehillim or simply Tillim or Tille = “[Book of] Praises”)

B. Greek Bible

1. Codex Vaticanus (B): psalmoi
2. Codex Alexandrinus (A): psalteriou > Psalterium > English "Psalter"

C. Latin:

Liber Psalmorum or simply Psalmi. DebnSong sung with accompany of musical instruments; connotes as "a sacred song or hymn."

II: Process of Composition

Introduction: "Anyone who seeks to understand this development should think of the way a river is formed: it takes innumerable little springs and streams to feed even a brook, and many brooks and small rivers must flow into its long meandering course before the full width of the river flows down to the sea."

Editors worked with material similar to the redactor of Proverbs. Cf. medieval woodcuts

A. First stage: individual psalms for or away from temple (see “Form Criticism”).

B. Second stage: “For director of music”: adapted for temple use

N.B. Masoretic oral tradition suggests versification is original.

N.B. 11QPs^a: no stichometry apart from 119; 4Q: some stichometry in keeping with verse structure.

N.B. Western Masorah: 2,527 verses; Eastern Masorah: 2,524 (combines 22:5-6; 52:1-2; 53:1-2; and 129:5-6, and divides 90:1 into two verses)

N.B. Printed editions of BH: must have at least three words to constitute a verse. Superscription with three or more words receives a separate enumeration.

N.B. English versions never count superscriptions

C. Third stage: collected into groups:

Process of collecting occurred early to judge from cuneiform parallels as early as 2334-2279 B.C.E, if not earlier (Wilson, 23)

1. by author: see 1 Chron 16:4; 2 Chron 29:30; Psalm 72:20

a. *ldwd* "of David": 3-41 (except 10 and 33); *ldwd*: 51-65, 68-70/1⁴⁸⁰

Psalm 72:20: "The prayers of David son of Jesse are ended."

b. *lbny qrh* "of the sons of Korah": 42/43-49, 84—85; 87--88

c. *l'sp* "of Asaph": 50, 73-83. ⁴⁸¹

d. *lmsh* "of Moses": 90

N.B. In book V: *hllwyh* "halleluyah" and *hwdw* "give thanks" pss groupings

2. by genre

a. *mzmwr*: 3-6, 19-24; 29-31; 38-41; 47-51; 62-68; 75-77; 82-85; 108-110; 139-141

b. *mktm*: 56-60

c. *mskyl*: 42/3-46; 52-55; 88-89

⁴⁸⁰ 54 of 72 in Books I and II (75%); one in Book III (6%); two in Book IV (12%)/ Two small groups in Book V (1108---10; 138—45 25%); 3 of Psalms of ascent (so 32% Book V)..

⁴⁸¹ For Psalms of korah and of Asaph see Alastair G. Hunter (*An Introduction to the Psalms* [t & t Clark, 2008], 21—24.

d. *hm'lw*: Pss 120-134

3. Elohistc Psalter (Psalms 42—83)

a. Striking statistical contrast between use of *YHWH* and *'lhym* with rest of Psalter.

1) In Psalms 1--41 and 84--150: *I AM* 584 x; *'lhyim* 94 x

2) In Psalms 42--83: *I AM* 45 x and *'lhym* 210 x

b. Most occurrences of alternative due to parallelism. In 1--41 and 84--150 *I AM* in A verset and *'lhym* in B verset; in 42-83 reversed.

c. In synoptic psalms names are reversed: Cf. Ps 14:2, 4, 7 with 53:3, 5, 7; 40:14a, 17 and 70:2a, 5 (cf. also Ps 50:7 with Exod 20:2; Ps 68:2, 8-9 with Num 10:35 and Judges 5:34-35).

Psalm 14

Of David.

¹ The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.

² The *LORD* looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.

³ All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

⁴ Do all these evildoers know nothing? They devour my people as though eating bread; they never call on the *LORD*.

⁵ But there they are, overwhelmed with dread, for God is present in the company of the righteous.

⁶ You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor, but the *LORD* is their refuge.

⁷ Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the *LORD* restores his people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

Psalm 53

A maskil of David.

¹ The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, and their ways are vile; there is no one who does good.

² *God* looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek *God*.

³ Everyone has turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

⁴ Do all these evildoers know nothing? They devour my people as though eating bread; they never call on *God*.

⁵ But there they are, overwhelmed with dread, where there was nothing to dread. *God* scattered the bones of those who attacked you; you put them to shame, for *God* despised them.

⁶ Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When *God* restores his people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

- d. Otherwise unknown combinations occur in 42--84: *Elohim Elohai* (43:4) and *Elohim Elohekha* (45:8; 50:7).
- e. Davidic core (51—72) surrounded by two Levitical collections: Korahite (42—49 [50 by Asaph) and Asaphic (73—83).
- f. The number 42 figures prominently in ancient Near Eastern collections of poetry and in this collection: there are 42 psalms and it begins with Psalm 42. Elsewhere, in the Old Testament the numeral 42 is used in the contexts of judgment/premature death (Judg. 12:6 [Ephraimites]; 2 Kgs 2:24 [children]; 10:14 [relatives of Ahaziah]); Rev. 13:5 [beast's authority]).
- g. To lament destruction of temple in 587 and to express hope for renewal beyond it. Both Levitical collections begin with lament either of absence from temple (42) or from *God*'s favor (73), followed by in both cases by communal laments of defeat (44) and of the destruction of temple (74). Asaph collection contains other communal laments (79, 80, 83). Psalm 83 concludes with a plea for *God* to deal with national enemies and to assert *God*'s world-encompassing sovereignty. (See Joel S. Burnett, "Forty-Two Songs for *Elohim*: An Organizing Principle in the Shaping of the Elohist Psalter," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 36 (2006): 81-101.⁴⁸²)

- h. Songs of Zion in both Levitical collections (46, 48, 76).
- i. Psalms 84—89 an appendix: 88 is the darkest psalm; 89 the failure of Davidic covenant most sorely lamented. But also songs of Zion (84, 87).
- j. The combination gives an eschatological, Messianic hope for Jerusalem and temple after its destruction.

4. by thematic groupings

The principle of homogeneousness is the old Semitic mode of arranging things, for in the alphabet, the hand [*yodh*] and the hollow of the hand [*kaph*], water [*mem*] and fish [*nun*], the eye [*ayin*] and mouth [*pi*], the back [*qoph*] and front [*resh*] of the head have been placed together. In like manner also the psms follow one another according to their relationship as manifested by prominent external and internal marks.

- a. Morning prayers (cf. 3:5; 5:3; 7:6) alternate with evening prayers [4:8; 6:6],
- b. Psalms 7 (v. 17) and 9 (v. 2) end and begin with “I will sing the praises of the/your name [of] the LORD Most high and Psalm 8 begins and ends with “How majestic is your Name.”
- c. 93, 96-99: so-called "Enthronement Psalms" (“*I AM* reigns”)⁴⁸³:

⁴⁸³ David M. Howard, Jr. (*The Structure of Psalms 93—100* [Biblical and Judaic Studies, vol. 5 ; Winona Lake, Indiana : Eisenbrauns, 1997]) identifies the shared language, themes and motifs of the enthronement psalms, and so forming a logically coherent unity of psalms, all concerned with Yahweh’s kinship in one way or another.

5. by other techniques

a. Juxtaposition by same or similar incipit

- 1.) Pss 103 and 104 both begin and end with identical phrases: "Praise/Bless *I AM* my soul."
- 2.) Pss 105, 106, and 107 share identical initial terms ("Give thanks to *I AM*), while 106 and 107 have completely identical first lines: "... for he is good."

b. Unique title "A song of Ascent (120—134).⁴⁸⁴

c. "Catch phrases" to indicate connection.

- 1.) Pss 1-2 '*shre* "blessed" (1:1; 2:12); *torah/hoq* "law"/"statute" (1:2; 2:7); *yhgh* "meditate" (1:2; 2:1); *derek ... to'bed/to'bdu derek* "way ... perish"/"perish...way" (1:6; 2:12); *ysb* (1:1; 2:4).
- 2.) Pss 3 and 4: *skbty w'yshn* "I lie down and sleep" (3:6) and '*skbh w'ysn* (4:8)

d. *hllwyh* pss indicate the conclusion of segments; *hwdw* pss introduce segments.

- 1.) four groups of *hllwyh* pss, all of which mark the conclusion of Psalter segments: 104-106; 111-117; 135; 146-150.
- 2.) In each of the first three instances, this concluding group of *hllwyh* pss is related to an immediately following ps (107; 118; 136) unrelated to the group and beginning with the phrase: *hwdw lyhwh ky twb ky l`wlm hsdw* "give thanks to the LORD for he is good; his love endures forever".
- 3.) Resulting inclusions⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁴ See Alastair G. Hunter (*An Introduction to the Psalms* [t & t Clark, 2008], 1920).

⁴⁸⁵ Some speculate that Psalms 1 and 2 together with 118 and 119 from abracketing of an edition of the Psalter already perceived as a book for private study and messianic expectation.

D. Stage 4: Collection of Psalms into Five Books

Later than early groupings. Book III (72—89) splits Elohistic Psalter into Book II (42—72) and Book III (73—83; appendix 84--89).

1. Evidence of a five book arrangement

a. Doxologies consciously at end of 41, 72, 89, 106

b.) Rabbinical tradition

a.) “As Moses gave the five books of laws to Israel, so David gave five Books of Psalms to Israel, the `Book of Psalms entitled *Blessed is the man* (Ps 1:1), the Book entitled *For the Leader: maschil* (Ps 42:1), the Book, *A Psalm of Asaph* (Ps 73:1), the Book, *A Prayer of Moses* (Ps 90:1), and the Book, *Let the redeemed of the Lord say* (Ps 107:2).”⁴⁸⁶

b.) The oldest explicit testimony to the five-fold partion of the Psalter occurs in the poorly preserved liturgical fragment, 1Q30, dating to the turn of the Christian era.⁴⁸⁷

c.) Change of authors at seams

d.) ANE parallels: In the Mesopotamian hymns and catalogues, "praise" and "blessing" (Hallel and Doxology) frequently concluded documents or sections within documents (Wilson, 186).

e.) Initial and concluding psalms of each of five books can be interpreted as inclusios.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁶ William G. Braude, *The Midrash on the Psalms* (1954)

⁴⁸⁷D. Barthelemy and J. T. Milik, *Qumran Cave I: DJD, I* (Oxford, 1955), p. 133 and Anton Arens, *Die Psalmen in Gottesdienst des Alten Bundes* (Trier, 1961), 107

⁴⁸⁸ Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew psalter* (SBLDiss. Series 76; Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1985), 187-190

2. Contrast of Books I—III [earlier] and IV—V [later].⁴⁸⁹

- a. Books I-III conclude with doxology formulae; Book V with a series of *hllwyh* pss. Book Four (90-106) combines the two methods with a series of *hllwyh* (Pss 104-106) and doxology (106:48).
- b. The technique of concluding segments with *hllwyh* ("halleluyah") and introducing segments with *hwdw* "give thanks" pss is confined to Books IV and V.
- c. The separating/binding function of author/genre groupings is far more prominent in Books I-III and is practically non-existent in the later books.
- d. The marked concentration of "titled" pss in Books I-III.
 - 1.) 18 psalms of Books IV—V bear no s/s as opposed to only six psalms without s/s in Books I—III: 90% with verse 30% with. pss (1-89, 90%) without s/s in all the foregoing: 90% w. s/s (Books 1-III); 30% w. s/s (Books IV-V).
 - 2.) no musical or liturgical headings in Books IV
- e. The appearance of "Royal Psalms" at the "seams" of books I-III: 2, 72, 89
- f. Qumran scrolls show much the same form as Books I—III while Books IV and V vary considerably..

E. Stage 5: final canon of Masoretic Text

1. Qumran (See 11QPs^a) has a somewhat different arrangement (143 > 133 > 144), a more inclusive canon with different theological motives than rabbinic canon.⁴⁹⁰ Skehan/Talmon think 11QPs^a is a liturgical adaptation of canonical text stabilized by 400 B.C. But Peter Flint thinks other DSS favor James Sanders and Gerald Wilson, who regard the Qumran scroll as reflecting a different canon.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁹ Yet the only psalms directly cited in liturgical contexts in Chronicles come from Books IV (105) and V (141)

⁴⁹⁰ See Peter W. Flint, "UnRolling the Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls," in *The Oxford Handbooks of the Psalms* (Oxford: The University Press, 2014), 233; _____, "Apocryphal Psalms in the Psalms Scrolls and in Texts Incorporating Psalms," in *The Oxford Handbook*, 621—638. The scroll originally contained 56 compositions of which 48 are drawn from Books IV and V, and the remainder from other known and otherwise unattested sources. It displays a "strong Davidic character," so that 'by inserting titled Davidic Psalms among untitled ones, the compiler of 11QPs^a has succeeded in permeating the entire collection with Davidic character and giving 'orphan' Psalms a Davidic home (*The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms* (STD 17; Leiden and New York: Brill, 1997): 193--94

⁴⁹¹ Peter W. Flint, "Unrolling the Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls," 229--252

2. Syriac apocryphal psalms normally numbered 151—155. Psalm 151 long known from LXX 151. 154 and 155 attested in Qumran.⁴⁹²
3. Rabbis rejected Qumran canon and Qumran canon ceases at end of 1st cent. B.C. with MT's 150 psalms the exclusive canon.

III. Significance of Shaping of the Canon

“Collection bears the impress of one ordering mind” (Delitzsch): Pss 1-2 the introduction; Pss 146- 150 the concluding hallel.

People’s petitions and praises to God now become God’s word to the people, profitable to make them wise to salvation.

Priestly editors transformed the psalms used in Israel’s temple liturgy to reflective meditation in the synagogue. According to Jenni, “the people's 'Amen' no longer responds to the deeds of God but to the mighty words of God (tr. mine).”⁴⁹³

Perhaps as early as 520 B.C. the psalms were edited in such a way to focus upon the king. This editing significantly affects both the Psalter's interpretation and theology.

A. Introduction: Psalm 1-2

1. Introduction: Psalm 1 & 2 linked as introduction; 146-150 as conclusion
2. *Torah* in Psalm 1:2 could refer to teachings of Book, but usage in Psalter points to Mosaic covenant. Mount Zion meets Mount Sinai at Canossa.
3. Comparison and contrast of Psalms 1 and 2:
 - a. Ps. 1 is concerned for justice; Psalm 2: the king dispenses justice.
 - b. Psalm 2 escalates the wicked of Psalm 1 to a cabal of nations and narrows the righteous individual to the Davidic king.
 - c. Psalm 1 profiles the cause and consequence of the righteous individual against that of the wicked; Psalm 2 profiles the cause and consequence of the rebels

⁴⁹² Alastair G. Hunter (*An Introduction to the Psalms* [t & t Clark, 2008], 29.

⁴⁹³ Jenni, Ernst, “Zu den doxologischen Schlussformeln des Psalters” *TZ*, 40 1984 pp. 117f.

against God and his king. The way of wicked is at war against *I AM*'s rule (Psalm 1) and against his ruler (Psalm 2). Psalm 1 theologically declares *I AM* will destroy the way of the wicked; Psalm 2 politically declares *I AM*'s king will destroy their way.

4. The editor's two introductory psalms prepare those who meditate on his anthology of petitions and praises to interpret the psalms both with respect to the king and to themselves as individuals within his kingdom. The Church by its baptism into Christ Jesus is "a royal priesthood, a holy nation?" who prays with their king (1 Peter 2:9).
5. Royal psalms in beginning and end of Books I--III: Psalm 2, 72, 89.

B. Books I and II (Psalms 1-72).

Synopsis: Chiastic structure of books

Pre-exilic monarchy (I—II): Lament for lost Jerusalem (III): Post-exilic Messianism (IV—V)

1. Psalm 2 elucidates entailment of Davidic covenant that king inherits the earth and instructs him to pray for it.
2. Psalms 3 begins the king's prayers for that inheritance.
3. King plays crucial role at seams of Books I-III. Books I through III are clearly royal, as the colophon of Ps. 72:20 infers.⁴⁹⁴
4. Psalm 72 has multiple promises that David's son will inherit a universal kingdom in space and time.
5. Psalm 72 contains multiple petitions for the king's righteous son to enjoy universal and eternal rule. Wilson argues: "so the covenant which YHWH made with David (Ps 2) and in whose promises David rested secure (Ps 41) is now passed on to his descendants in this series of petitions in behalf of the king's son' (Ps 72)."⁴⁹⁵
6. Psalm 41 is not a royal psalm but attending to the needs of the poor is primary function of the king (see 72:1—7, 1—114, so Psalm 41 has clear resonance with the royal psalms. "Blessed" occurs in Pss 1, 2, 41.

⁴⁹⁴ Wilson, p. 208.

⁴⁹⁵ Wilson, p. 211,

C. Book III (Psalms 73-89): Dark Book with Zion songs

1. Long considered to be the dark book of the Psalter, Book III portrays a people that are collectively questioning their place in God's plan as well as God's covenantal faithfulness in the midst of exile.
2. Book III contains the highest concentration of communal laments in the whole Psalter. Essentially undisputed that Psalms 74, 79, 80, 83, and 85 are communal laments; argument can be made to include Psalms 77, 82, 85, and 89.7.
3. Some scholars would suggest that this book represents the collapse of the Davidic Covenant and prepares the way for God to be the true king, but recent scholarship has noted the continuation of Royal Psalms in the latter portions of the Psalter (suggesting that the Davidic Covenant has not completely disintegrated).
4. On top of this, McCann [Waltke independently] has noticed that there is an alternation of lament and hope in Book III that propels the people to hold strong in the time of exile.

Psalm 74 (-) destruction of temple and 75 (+) asserts God's sovereign rule. Ps 76 (+) asserts God's political rule and 77 (-) laments he no longer performs miracles. Ps. 78 (-) recounts Israel's historic waywardness and Psalm 79 (+) pleads for restoration. Psalm 80 (+) pleads for restoration and 81 (-) reasserts Israel's covenant obligations. Psalm 82 (-) condemns unrighteous "gods" and Psalm 83 (+) predicts God's destruction of pagan nations.

5. Andrew Litke argues the structure of the book is two-fold: the first section (Pss. 73-83) is comprised of a rehearsal of the original covenant and invocations for God to judge righteously; the second section (Pss. 84-89) represents a development of the Davidic Covenant under Zionist theology.
 - a. Ps 73: Psalmist, questioning God's rule, finds comfort in covenant temple.
 - b. See alternation of psalms 74—8
 - c. Psalm 84 a pilgrim joins pilgrimage to temple to pray for king and Psalm 85 pleads for forgiveness and receives assurance of covenant. Psalm 86 prays for salvation from enemies and Psalm 87 praises God for Zion's future. Psalm 88 prays for salvation from death and finds no salvation and Psalm 89 laments the apparent failure of the Davidic covenant enacted in the distant past with David.

D. Book IV (Psalms 90-106)

With Book IV yet another perspective is achieved.

1. Looks back to Moses. Moses is now mentioned seven times (90:1; 99:6; 103:7; 105:26; 106:16; 23, 32), whereas heretofore he was mentioned only once (77:20 [21]), and whose only song in the Psalter introduces Book IV. Moses was the great intercessor for sinful Israel (see Psalm 90).
2. Looks back to their eternal king, I AM: "O God our help in ages past, our hope in years to come" (cf. 90:1-2). He has been Israel's refuge in the past, long before monarchy existed; he will continue to be Israel's refuge now that monarchy is gone; and blessed are they that trust in him."
3. Looks ahead to the LORD's future kingship. Psalm 93 initiates a series of seven psalms in which God is described or proclaimed as "king." Psalm 94 speaks of him as "judge of the earth." This proclamation culminates in Moses' Song of the Sea (Exod. 15:18).

E. Book V (Psalms 107-150).

Ps 106:47 concludes Book IV with the petition, "Save us, *I AM* our God, and gather us from the nations," and Book V begins with praise to *I AM* for answering their prayer: "he gathered us from the lands" (107:3). The troubles of the Exile have been overcome. Two groups of Davidic collections are found in this book, 108-110; 138-145, who probably serves as a model in response to the concerns of the psalms which precede them. Moreover, there is a prominent Messianic hope in some of these Davidic psalms

F. Conclusion: 146—150

Of Psalm 150 deClaisse⁴⁹⁶/-Walford concludes:

But this 'unfettered' praise is only possible at the *end* of the story of the Psalter. The postexilic community must understand where it has come from (the 'Who are we?') and where it is going (the 'What are we to do?') before it can participate in the praise of YHWH the king. Thus the story of the Psalter become a story of survival in the changed and changing world with which the postexilic Israelite community is confronted.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁶Nancy deClaisse⁴⁹⁶/-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning: The Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 103.

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