OLD TESTAMENT WISDOM AND POETRY

Job through Song of Solomon

An Outline

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Hesed Publications
112 Longwood Lane
Easley SC 29642

2021

Other Works by the Author

Books, monographs (available on Amazon), and periodicals

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Preface

For eight years, I taught students historical books, prophets, and wisdom literature at Dallas Theological Seminary, and at Capital Bible Seminary for 30 years. It gives one great joy to see many of those students entering the ministry and serving the Lord.

Wisdom (Proverbs) and Psalms are favorite parts of the Bible to believers. Job is known primarily through chapters 1-2 and 42. The rest of Job is usually ignored, and Ecclesiastes is especially avoided. It is hoped that these notes will bring enlightenment on these books and, perhaps, lead the reader into a fuller understanding of their intent and content.

Suggestions, criticisms, and corrections are always welcome.

Introduction to Wisdom

Wisdom literature has two types of literary genre that are very significant and quite different from the material found in the Historical books: Hebrew poetry and Hebrew wisdom literature. We will give a cursory introduction now so that we can appreciate the material we are studying.

1. Hebrew Poetry. See p. 116, for a discussion under Psalms.

2. Hebrew Wisdom Literature

   LaSor, *et al*. point out two main types of wisdom writing: proverbial wisdom—short, pithy sayings which state rules for personal happiness and welfare or condense the wisdom of experience and make acute observations about life; and contemplative or speculative wisdom—monologues, dialogues, or essays which delve into basic problems of human existence such as the meaning of life and the problem of suffering. They hasten to add that "speculative" and "contemplative" should not be interpreted in a philosophical sense because the Hebrews always thought in historical, concrete terms.[1]

   Most of Proverbs fit the first category, and Job and Ecclesiastes (Qoheleth) fit the second. Some of each will be found in the Psalms, and other parts of Scripture. Some of Jesus' teaching will fall into the category of wisdom literature as he uses proverbs, pithy sayings, monologues and essays to convey his teaching. See also p. 216, for a discussion of Psalm 49 as a wisdom Psalm.

   I am putting Proverbs first in the notes because they are in the first category. We know from 1 Kings 4:29-31 as well as the extrabiblical literature, that wisdom was common in that world. Wisdom deals with what is "under the sun." In other words, how do we conduct ourselves in this world. All wisdom teaching was concerned with right conduct, but Proverbs brings an element absent from non-biblical wisdom: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of

[1]S. LaSor, *et al, Old Testament Survey*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982, pp. 533-34.

wisdom." Generally speaking, wisdom teaches that A (right conduct) leads to B (God's blessing), C (wicked conduct) leads to D (God's judgment). John 9:1-3 is an example of how the disciples were still following this paradigm. Job and Qoheleth are attacking the absolute application of this formula. Of course, it generally works out according to the paradigm, but not always. Wise conduct is always right, but it does not always bring the looked-for blessing. Still, it is to be followed.[2]

[2]See further, p. 7, "Proverbs tend to be stated in absolutes"

PROVERBS

I. Introductory data.

A. Contents. "Proverbs seems to contain at least eight separate collections, distinguishable by either an introductory subtitle or a striking change in literary style. Prov. 1:1-6 is a general introduction or superscription, clarifying both the book's purpose and its connection with Solomon, Israel's master sage."[3]

Contents—LaSor, eight separate collections, Crenshaw, James L. *Old Testament Wisdom, an Introduction*, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981, in brackets.

Introduction (1:1-6) (Superscription whole book.)

[a. 1:1—9:18. Proverbs of Solomon, son of David, King of Israel

1. Importance of Wisdom (1:7—9:18)
2. Proverbs of Solomon (10:1) (10:1-22:16)
   375 lines equivalent to the numerical value of Solomon's name— שְׁלֹמֹה
   ש: 300, ל: 30, מ: 40, ה: 5 = 375
   S l m o

[b. The Proverbs of Solomon]

3. Words of the Wise (22:17—24:22) [c. The Sayings of the Wise]
4. Additional sayings (24:23-34) [d. More Sayings of Wise Men]
5. Hezekiah's work on Solomon's material (25—29) (cf. Ecc. 12:9-14). For Hezekiah's interests see 2 Chron. 29:25-30. [e. More Proverbs of Solomon, transcribed by the men of Hezekiah, King of Israel]

[3]LaSor, *et al., OT Survey*, pp. 548-49. See also B. S. Childs *OT as Scripture*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979, pp. 551f for the monarchy as the cradle of the Proverbs.

Skehan proposes that since there are about 130 proverbs here, we should see again, the numerical value of Hezekiah's name.[4]

ח: 8, ז: 7, ק: 100, י: 10, ה: 5 = 130
H z k i h

6. Words of Agur (30:1-33) [f. 30:1-9 Sayings of Agur, son of Jakeh, from Massa]
[g. 30:10-33 (no super-scription)]
7. Words of Lemuel (31:1-9)
[h. Sayings of Lemuel, King of Massa]
8. Conclusion (31:10-31). I would treat this as an editorial conclusion to balance the woman who is wisdom in chapter 1. [i. (no superscription)]

Skehan: Solomon = 375; David = 14; Israel = 541 = 930; 932 lines in Proverbs.

B. Authorship. There is more than one author to the proverbs. Solomon, as the principal and best-known author is listed in the heading, but there are others, some of whom are non-Israelite. Kidner is probably correct about the *composition* of the book: "As to its *editing* Proverbs gives us one statement (25:1), which shows that the book was still in the making at *c.* 700 BC, about 250 years after Solomon. It is a fair assumption, but no more, that chapters 30-31 were added later as existing collections, and chapters 1-9 placed as the introduction to the whole by the final editor."[5]

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[4]P. Skehan, *Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom*, CBQMS, Washington, D. C., 1971.

[5]D. Kidner, *Proverbs, an Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, Downers Grove, IL Intervarsity Press, 1964, p. 26. See also Roland Murphy, *The Tree of Life*, New York: Doubleday, p. 3, says, "The Sages—Who Were They? We can answer this question in a limited way. We know that Qoheleth was a sage, for in Eccl 12:9 he is called a *hakam*, who 'taught the people knowledge, and weighed, scrutinized and arranged many proverbs [*meshalim*].' But the precise circumstances of his activity are unknown to us." Crenshaw, p. 31, says, Sirach 38:24—39:11 The wise man

C. "Limits of Wisdom. In seeking to interpret the various proverbs and apply them to life, one must bear in mind that they are generalizations. Though stated as absolutes—as their literary form requires—they are meant to be applied in specific situations and not indiscriminately. Knowing the right time to use a proverb was part of being wise: 'A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver' (25:11)."[6] "Haste makes waste. "He who hesitates is lost."

D. Proverbs tend to be stated in absolutes: A = B; that is, if one obeys God, one is blessed with health, long life, and prosperity. On the contrary, C = D; that is if one disobeys God, one is cursed with bad health, early death, and poverty. Job and Ecclesiastes are wisdom books written to wrestle with the exceptions. Job's friends are determined to prove that in his case the prevailing idea of wisdom controls: C = D. Job, however, argues (rightly) that in his case A = D. He can only conclude that God is unjust. In the end, the question of "why" is not answered; God simply says, I am sovereign and can do what I wish. Man must trust God; that He will always do right. But even in Proverbs A does not equal B and C does not equal D. See Prov. 16:8, 16, 19, 32; 17:1.

E. The place of *torah* תּוֹרָה (law) in the book.

The word "law" occurs in the introduction (1:8—9:18) six times; in the proverbs of Solomon (10:1—22:16) one time; in Solomon's proverbs copied out by Hezekiah's men (25:1—29:27) four times; and in the section by Lemuel's mother one time.

At no time is the phrase "the law of Moses" used, nor "God's law," nor any other phrase that would tie the teaching of Proverbs directly to *the* law. However, the phrases "my law," "the law of your mother" (parallel to "instruction of your father" and "commandment of your father") seem

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must have leisure to study the law. Hence, he probably belongs to the upper class. Furthermore, he will not make "prophetic statements" but rather observes what happens in life. He has no political power to implement his observations, he can only comment on what should be.

[6]LaSor, et al., *OT Survey,* pp. 557-58.

to have a subtle indication that behind the instruction of father, mother, teacher, lies the covenant law of God. This is particularly indicated in such phrases as "wreath to your head" and "ornaments about your neck," (1:8,9); "bind them about your neck; write them upon the tablet of your heart," (3:3, here it is kindness and truth) "bind them continually on your heart; tie them around your neck; when you walk about, etc.," (6:21-22) "bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart," (7:3); which sound much like the Deuteronomic admonitions that eventually led to the practice of wearing phylacteries (Deut 6:1-9). The pertinent references are 1:8; 3:1; 4:2; 6:20,23; 7:2; 13:14; 28:4,7,9; 29:18; 31:26.

There is a cluster at the beginning and one at the end of the book. 13:14 could be mere teaching (vs. *the* law), but all the other references are set out on the backdrop of the Mosaic covenant (with the exception of 31:26 and even there it is the "law of kindness" *torath ḥesed* תּוֹרַת חֶסֶד). Consequently, at least in these two units where the clusters occur, it would be inappropriate to argue that *the* law is not subtly in the background.

F. At the same time, we must understand a distinction between the casuistic law of Moses and wisdom. The emphasis on the latter is the practical outworking of the "instruction of Yahweh" and, therefore, must be understood as the kind of conduct experience has taught is the right way to be "perfect" with God and man.[7]

G. Bad side of wisdom.[8]

1. Serpent who was subtle or crafty (Gen 3).
2. Jonadab and Amnon (2 Sam 13).

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[7]Roland Murphy, *The Tree of Life*, New York: Doubleday, 1990, p. 1, says, "The most striking characteristic of this literature is the absence of what one normally considers as typically Israelite and Jewish. There is no mention of the promises to the patriarchs, the Exodus and Moses, the covenant and Sinai, the promise to David (2 Sam 7) and so forth."

[8]Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom, an Introduction*, p. 49.

3. Wise woman of Tekoa (2 Sam 14) and the wise woman of Abel (2 Sam 20) seemed to use wisdom for questionable ends.

H. Jeremiah 18:18 seems to indicate a separate class of Wise Men. See also 25:1, Hezekiah's Men.

I. Categories:

1. Proverbs (*mašal*): basic similitude, likeness, or a powerful word (second meaning of this word is "to rule").
2. Parables (*melişah*) seems to point in the directions of sayings which carry a sting hidden within their clever formulation and may by extension refer to admonitions and warnings.
3. Wise Sayings: general category and serves as headings.
4. Riddles: (*ḥidoth*) designates enigmatic sayings and perhaps even extensive reflections on the meaning of life and its inequities. (1 Kings 10:1-13 Solomon with Queen of Sheba).
5. Two *allegorical* texts stand out as worthy links with riddles (old age Ecc 12:1-8 and marital fidelity Prov 5:15-23)
6. *Didactic narrative* (Prov 7:6-23 Seductress leading the fool).[9]

J. The canonical book of Proverbs has been given a carefully worded introduction which functions to set the several collections into a common framework. This valuable section (Proverbs 1:2-7) uses many different words to characterize those who master the Solomonic proverbs: wisdom (חָכְמָה *ḥokmah*), instruction, (מוּסַר *musar*) understanding (בִּינָה *binah*), intelligence, discretion (הַשְׂכֵּל *haśkil*), righteousness (צֶדֶק *ṣedek*), justice (מִשְׁפָּט mišpat), equity (מֵישָׁרִים *mešarim*), knowledge (דַּעַת *da'ath*), prudence (עָרְמָה *'armah*), learning (לֶקַח *leqaḥ*), and skill (מְזִמָּה *m^{e}zimah*).[10]

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[9]See *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[10]*Ibid.*, p. 32.

K. Some structural observations.

1. Two invitations (1:8-33).
   a. Sinners call (1:8-19).
   b. Wisdom calls (1:20-33).
2. Right relationships (3:1-35).
   a. With the Lord (3:1-12) "Lord," "God," and "He" appear 10 times in 1-35.
   b. With Wisdom (3:13-26).
   c. With your neighbor (3:27-35).
3. Contrasts (5:1-23).
   a. Sin with an adulteress (5:1-14). Live righteously with your wife (5:15-23).
   b. The adulteress (7:1-26). Lady wisdom (8:1-36).
   c. Lady wisdom (9:1-6). Rival minds: wisdom (9:7-12//folly (9:13-18).
4. Numerology
   a. Proverbs of Solomon (10:1-22:16) 375 lines = Solomon (300, 30, 40, 5).
   b. Hezekiah's men (25—29) 130 lines = Hezekiah (8, 7, 100, 10, 5).
   c. Total proverbs (1-31) c. 932 lines = David (14), Solomon (375), Israel (541) = 930.
5. Fear of the Lord
   a. 9:10 end of first unit.
   b. 15:33 Middle of book and of second unit (Massora = middle is 16:18)
   c. 31:30 End of the book.
6. Acrostic (31:10-31).

L. Sources of Wisdom

1. Family or clan (father and mother as teachers and son, may be taken literally).
2. Court (perhaps "men of Hezekiah")
3. School (perhaps, but definitely in Ben Sira).[11]

[11]*Ibid.,* p. 57.

II. An Attempt to Develop Principles for Interpreting Proverbs.

A. We must understand dispensational truth.

This principle means that God revealed certain things in certain periods of time that had limited application (to that period). Failure to distinguish this basic hermeneutical principle will result in the error of Seventh Day Adventism. On the other hand, some truths are universal and will be valid in each of the dispensations. The problem is distinguishing these two types of revelation.

B. Old Testament teaching must be sifted through the grid of revelation given directly to the Church: Acts and the Epistles.

Each teaching of the OT must be compared with Church teaching to see whether it is applicable in the current dispensation. At least three types of statements would be applicable:

1. Reiterated statements.

These are statements that appear in the NT epistles in the same or similar form. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against your neighbor" Exod. 20:16. This statement appears in Eph. 4:25 as "Stop lying to one another." The Christian knows that this is wrong, not because it appears in Exodus, but because it appears in Ephesians. The fact that it appears in both shows its universality and allows the Christian to emphasize it from both dispensational passages.

2. Quoted statements.

When the OT passage is quoted in the NT as an applicational truth, it should be considered applicational to the Church. "If your enemy hungers, feed him" Prov. 25:21 (cf. also Matt. 5:44). Paul quotes this proverb in Rom. 12:20.

3. Parallel statements.

This is similar to 1 above. It differs in that the parallels will be more

general than "reiterated statements." "That they [wise words] may keep you from the adulteress, from the foreigner who flatters with her lips" Prov. 8:5. This *idea* is found in 1 Thes. 4:3: "For this is the will of God even your sanctification that you abstain from fornication."

4. Items that do not fall under these categories, i.e., neither commanded nor forbidden in the NT, should not be treated as commands. If they are consonant with NT teaching in general, they may be applied as principles. An example would be tithing which is taught in the Law and practiced before the law. However, since it is not taught in the NT, and Paul does not mention it in the passages where he talks about giving, it should not be considered binding teaching on the Church. Some may follow the practice, but they should not impose it on others.

C. Proverbs presents special problems for interpretation and application.

The very nature of wisdom literature is that it is the distillation of observation of human nature and is designed to provide general guidance for right living. It is indeed inspired literature, but its genre demands that we understand it to be a collection of general observations and principles of wise conduct. Take the statement: "Wealth brings many friends, but a poor man's friend deserts him." This is comparable to our proverb: "A friend in need is a friend indeed." The proverb means that people with money tend to attract those who hope to receive benefits, but when wealth is gone, such people tend to disappear. It is not saying that wealth always brings friends, nor that poverty always causes friends to desert; it is saying that such behavior often occurs. Each proverb must be studied carefully in its context and under the discipline of NT revelation to determine whether and how the statement is to be applied in the church age.

D. The following proverbs are a paradigm for interpretation. Ask how each one fits into the above scheme of things and see whether it is a general observation or a universal truth (text from the NASB).

10:4 Poor is he who works with a negligent hand,
But the hand of the diligent makes rich.

Exceptions: Not all diligent workers become rich.

NT parallels: For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat (2 Thes. 3:10).

10:5 He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, *but* he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully.

Exceptions: No. This is a statement that is general and always true. It makes no specific promise.

NT parallels: Perhaps: "Whatever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord rather than for men" Col. 3:23.

12:11 He who tills his land will have plenty of bread. But he who pursues vain *things* lacks sense.

Exceptions: We all know believers and unbelievers alike who work hard but do not have plenty of bread. This is still a general observation of what is usually true.

12:24 The hand of the diligent will rule, But the slack *hand* will be put to forced labor.

Exceptions: Do all diligent people wind up in places of leadership?

12:27 A slothful man does not roast his prey, But the precious possession of a man *is* diligence.

13:4 The soul of the sluggard craves and *gets* nothing, But the soul of the diligent is made fat.

14:23 In all labor there is profit, But mere talk *leads* only to poverty.

Exceptions: Not all labor brings profit, although it usually does.

All general observations

15:19 The way of the sluggard is as a hedge of thorns, But the path of the upright is a highway.

18:9 He also who is slack in his work, Is brother to him who destroys.

19:15 Laziness casts into deep sleep, and an idle man will suffer hunger.

19:24 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish and will not even bring it back to his mouth.

20:4 The sluggard does not plow after the autumn, so he begs during the harvest and has nothing.

20:13 Do not love sleep, lest you become poor; Open your eyes, *and* you will be satisfied with food.

21:25 The desire of the sluggard puts him to death, For his hands refuse to work;

21:26 All day long he is craving, While the righteous gives and does not hold back.

22:13 The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside; I shall be slain in the streets!"

26:13 The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road! A lion is in the open square!"

26:14 *As* the door turns on its hinges, so *does* the sluggard on his bed.

26:15 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; He is weary of bringing it to his mouth again.

26:16 The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes, than seven men who can give a discreet answer.

28:19 He who tills his land will have plenty of food, but he who follows empty *pursuits* will have poverty in plenty.

III. Outline notes on Proverbs.

A. Introduction (1:1-7).

The introduction is written to establish at the outset the primary place of wisdom as "godliness in work clothes." Verse 7 can be taken as the overriding theme in the book: Even though Proverbs is the practical outworking of the religious life, it is a covenant book that never strays from the foundation of Yahweh's covenant with His people. This verse contains six words that will recur again and again in the book: fear, Yahweh, knowledge, fools, wisdom, and instruction.

B. Importance of Wisdom (1:8-9:18).

In 2 Kings we meet Solomon's son, and we are not impressed with his wisdom. As a matter of fact, he followed the foolish advice of his younger contemporaries and lost most of the kingdom. This might lead us to question whether this section represents Solomon addressing his son, and the answer is "probably not." This unit is more likely the product of the "sages" who compiled the book of Proverbs. The father in this unit is the teacher and the son is the pupil.

The teacher addresses the pupil as son.[12] His purpose is to draw a contrast between the results of seeking and finding wisdom and those of pursuing a life of folly.[13]

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[12]In the Old Testament context, the son was the center of attention. Consequently, the gender references will be in that light. In the modern context, the proverbs should be looked upon without respect to gender, i.e., women should reverse the gender where appropriate.

[13]Cf. Isa. 32:6 for a summary of a fool, and see Kidner, *Proverbs* pp. 39ff for an excellent discussion. Chaps. 1-9 primarily clarify the issues involved in the choice of wisdom or folly, righteousness or wickedness and to prepare for several hundred proverbs that follow. (See LaSor, *et al.., OT Survey*.)

1. Two invitations and two refusals (1:8-33).

   a. The invitation from sinners (1:8-19).

      The enticement from these wicked people is to become involved in violent stealing (mafia style). Becoming rich is the lure, but the method is to lie in wait like brigands along the highway. In actuality these people bring death to themselves through their illicit actions: the wealth gained by stealth actually deprives its possessor of life itself. In the contemporary atmosphere this is a very apropos warning.

   b. The invitation of wisdom (1:20-33).

      Stark contrast is wisdom, personified as a lady, who stands in the street and beckons to any who will hear to come to the place in life where they can "live securely and be at ease from the dread of evil." She addresses the "naive ones" (*pethim* פְּתִים). This word as a verb is translated "entice" at 1:10. This person is an easily enticed person. "Scoffers" (*leṣim* לֵצִים) appear some seventeen times in Proverbs. Kidner says: "His presence there [coupled with the fool] makes it finally clear that mental attitude, not mental capacity, classifies the man. He shares with his fellows their strong dislike of correction . . ., and it is this, not any lack of intelligence, that blocks any move he makes towards wisdom."[14] The "fools" (*kesilim* כְּסִילִים) hate knowledge. These strong terms are used to describe deliberate rejection of God's truth. They are not to imply, as Kidner says, lack of intellectual capacity, but lack of moral strength. Their way is correctable, but they must choose to follow wisdom not folly.

2. The benefits of seeking wisdom (22 lines as in the alphabet) (2:1-22).

   The sage uses a series of protases ("if" clauses) to lay down the conditions for blessing (2:1-3). The result of the first series is in 2:5: "Then you will discern the fear of the Lord, and discover the knowledge of God." (Note the equation of fear [*yir'ath* יִרְאַת] and

[14]Kidner, *Proverbs*, pp. 41-42.

knowledge [*da'th* דַּעַת]. Note further the covenant name of Yahweh.) The apodoses ("then" clauses) come in 2:5-11. The practical outworking of such acquisition is given in 2:12-22: "To deliver you from the way of evil;" "To deliver you from the strange woman."

3. The Father (teacher) encourages his son to have the right relationship with the Lord, wisdom and his neighbor (3:1-35).

   This triad is in the list in the same sequence of their appropriation: God must be first. There is a great emphasis on knowing God. Practical wisdom is very important, but it never supersedes God. "Lean not to your own understanding," is a warning from a *sage* with much understanding. Knowing God brings wisdom, the marvelous ability used by God in creating the universe. Finally, when one has come to know God, and through that knowledge, wisdom, he is in a position to act with propriety toward his neighbor. This order is essential in the Christian ministry. You will only be able to deal with people properly when you are in proper vertical relationship with God. This in turn gives you wisdom to deal with people.

4. The Father (teacher) instructs the son to seek the traditional value of wisdom (4:1-9).

   As the sage was taught as a youngster by his father and mother, so he instructs his pupil to accept proper teaching. The effect on his life will be as a garland on the head. His life will be graceful and gracious.

5. The father (teacher) instructs the son to choose the way of righteousness and avoid the way of wickedness (4:10-19).

   Habitual conduct cuts both ways. The one who lives a habitually wicked life will become entrenched in such conduct. Conversely, the one who makes it a practice to do right will find that becoming his character. The student is urged to pursue the right way.

6. The father instructs his son to discipline himself (4:20-27).

   Good words are important. What one reads and listens to will have an

effect on him. This proper attitude, of course, requires discipline, but the impact is well worth it.

7. The father instructs his son against harlotry (5:1-23).

   Two unchanging truths are presented in this chapter: the avoidance of the prostitute and the pursuit of a proper relationship with one's wife. This theme appears several times in Proverbs. Adultery is devastating (5:22-23), and no one is above the possibility. It is God who watches all and sees all. This chapter should be read often by all those in Christian work.

8. The father instructs the son about three follies and seven abominations to the Lord (6:1-19).

   "Co-signing" is a dangerous process. However, like all the proverbs, there may very well be times when it is the proper thing to do. Because it is dangerous, the student is advised to avoid it with all diligence (6:1-5).

   Laziness is the second folly. It is a thief of productivity and happiness. Avoid it in the Lord's work as well. Since there is often little or no supervision, the full-time Christian worker must be careful not to be lazy (6:6-11).

   The third folly is worthlessness. This is the word we encountered in earlier books (*b^{e}liyya'al* בְּלִיַּעַל): "without value." What a pronouncement to be made over a person! This individual is slick and devious; to be avoided at all costs (6:12-15).

   The seven abominations to Yahweh are: haughty eyes (pride), lying tongue (deceit), hands that shed innocent blood (violence), heart that devises wicked plans (deviousness), feet that run rapidly to evil (immoral conduct), a false witness (perversion of truth), and one who spreads strife (divisive spirit) (6:16-19).

9. The father instructs the son against adultery (6:20-35).
   The sage returns to this serious problem of adultery. Walking in the

truth of the Scripture will avoid this devastating entanglement with another person's spouse.

10. The father gives a description of two women—the harlot and wisdom (7:1—8:36).

    The sage seems to blend the idea of literal adultery with that of spiritual unfaithfulness. The positive is pursuit of wisdom, the negative is the harlot (or lack of wisdom). A detailed description is given of the seduction of a young man (7:1-27).

    Having dealt with the negative facet of purity, the sage now turns to the positive: wisdom. The student is to listen to the call of the one who brings sound living and conduct. The closing part of this praise of wisdom (8:22-36) personifies wisdom almost the same way as does John the Logos (John 1:1-12).[15]

11. The father speaks of two rival feasts and two rival minds (9:1-18).

    The introduction to Proverbs is ending, and the statement that the fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom is reiterated (9:10). Wisdom has attractively prepared a feast to call the simple to the place of understanding (9:1-6).

    But some minds are so set against spiritual truth that they obstinately refuse to be instructed. The wise man becomes wiser (the one talent is given to the man with ten), but the foolish man becomes more foolish. Yet there is hope: if the fool will turn to God, he can become wise (9:7-12).

    The woman of folly (literally the prostitute, but figuratively the rejection of wisdom) calls people to her feast also, but the end of it is the depths of Sheol (9:13-18).

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[15]See R. B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs* in Anchor Bible, NY: Doubleday, 1981, pp. 69-73, for an excellent discussion of this issue of the hypostasis of wisdom.

C. Proverbs of Solomon (10:1—22:16).

The biblical claims for Solomonic activity in the realm of wisdom are found in 1 Kings 4:29ff; Prov. 1:1; 10:1; 25:1. There are approximately 375 proverbs in this section.[16] They are primarily based on practical observations from everyday life. They are very practical, and stress the profits or rewards of right living.

Scott says: "'The Wise Sayings of Solomon,' covers the collection of independent and mostly miscellaneous two-line aphorisms and precepts which comprise Part II. A second collection, also connected with the name of Solomon, is found in chaps. xxv-xxix (Part IV); it is broadly similar to the first collection but is more secular and less didactic in tone."[17]

Rather than go through the section verse by verse, we will arrange the proverbs topically, following Scott's layout.[18]

Read through the following proverbs, synthesize them and summarize the teaching in each group.

1. A son and his parents.

A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish son is a grief to his mother (10:1).

He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, *But* he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully (10:5).

13:1, 24; 15:20; 17:21, 25; 19:26; 20:20.

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[16]P. W. Skehan, *Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom*, p. 25, shows that the name Solomon numerically equals 375. He further argues that there are a total of 932 lines in Proverbs. Solomon = 375, David = 14, Israel = 541 for a total of 930.

[17]Scott, *Proverbs*, p. 83.

[18]Scott, *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

2. Character and its consequences.

   What the wicked fears will come upon him, And the desire of the righteous will be granted (10:24).

   The hope of the righteous is gladness, But the expectation of the wicked perishes (10:28).

   11:27, 30; 12:3, 7, 12, 20, 21, 28; 13:6, 9, 10; 14:19, 22, 30, 32; 16:20; 17:19, 20; 18:3; 19:16; 20:7; 21:5, 16, 17, 18, 21; 22:5.

3. Providential rewards and punishments.

   The Lord will not allow the righteous to hunger, But He will thrust *aside* the craving of the wicked (10:3).

   The way of the Lord is a stronghold to the upright, But ruin to the workers of iniquity (10:29).

   11:18, 21, 23, 25, 31; 12:2; 13:21, 22; 14:9, 11, 14; 15:6, 10, 25; 19:29; 20:30; 22:4.

4. Poverty and wealth.

   Ill-gotten gains do not profit, But righteousness delivers from death (10:2).

   Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, But the hand of the diligent makes rich (10:4).

   10:15, 22; 11:4, 24, 28; 13:8, 11; 14:20; 18:11, 23; 19:1, 4, 7, 22; 20:21; 21:6, 20; 22:27.

5. Good and evil men.

   Blessings are on the head of the righteous, But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence (10:6).

The memory of the righteous is blessed, But the name of the wicked will rot (10:7).

10:9, 10, 11, 16, 21, 25, 27, 30; 11:5, 6, 8, 19, 30; 12:5, 26; 16:27, 28, 29, 30; 17:4; 21:8, 12, 26, 29; 22:10.

6. Wise men and fools.

The wise of heart will receive commands, But a babbling fool will be thrown down (10:8).

On the lips of the discerning, wisdom is found, But a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding (10:13).

10:14, 23; 12:1, 8, 15, 23; 13:15, 16; 14:6, 7, 8, 15, 16, 18, 24, 33; 15:7, 14, 21; 17:10, 12, 24.

7. Slander.

He who conceals hatred *has* lying lips, And he who spreads slander is a fool (10:18).

The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts of the body (18:8).

19:5, 9, 28.

8. The self-disciplined life.

He is *on* the path of life who heeds instruction, But he who forsakes reproof goes astray (10:17).

The one who despises the word will be in debt to it, But the one who fears the commandment will be rewarded (13:13).

13:14, 18; 16:32.

9. Foolish talk, temperate speech, and wise silence.

   When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise (10:19).

   The tongue of the righteous is *as* choice silver, The heart of the wicked is *worth* little (10:20).

   10:31, 32; 11:12, 13; 12:6, 13, 14, 18; 13:2, 3; 14:3, 23; 15:1, 2, 4, 23, 28; 16:21, 23, 24; 17:27, 28; 18:4, 6, 7, 13, 20, 21; 20:19; 21:23; 22:11.

10. Work and idleness.

    Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, So is the lazy one to those who send him (10:26).

    He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, But he who pursues vain *things* lacks sense (12:11).

    12:24, 27; 13:4; 14:4, 23; 15:19; 16:26; 18:9; 19:15, 24; 20:4, 13; 21:25; 22:13.

11. Women and marriage.

    A gracious woman attains honor, And violent men attain (only?) riches (11:16).

    As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, *So is* a beautiful woman who lacks discretion (11:22).

    12:4; 18:22; 19:14; 21:9, 19.

12. Family relationships.

    He who troubles his own house will inherit wind, And the foolish will be servant to the wise-hearted (11:29).

Grandchildren are the crown of old men, And the glory of sons is their fathers (17:6).

18:19; 19:13.

13. Civic morality.

When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, And when the wicked perish, there is glad shouting (11:10).
By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, But by the mouth of the wicked it is torn down (11:11).

11:14, 26; 14:34; 21:15.

14. Rash promises.

He who is surety for a stranger will surely suffer for it, But he who hates going surety is safe (11:15).

A man lacking in sense pledges, And becomes surety in the presence of his neighbor (17:18).

20:16, 25.

15. Truth and falsehood.

He who speaks truth tells what is right, But a false witness, deceit (12:17).

Truthful lips will be established forever, But a lying tongue is only for a moment (12:19).

12:22; 13:5; 14:5, 25; 17:7.

16. Honesty and dishonesty.

The righteous has enough to satisfy his appetite, But the stomach of the wicked is in want (13:25).

He who profits illicitly troubles his own house, But he who hates bribes will live (15:27).
16:11; 20:10, 14, 23.

17. Morality and religion.

He who walks in his uprightness fears the Lord, But he who is crooked in his ways despises Him (14:2).

The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, That one may avoid the snares of death (14:27).

21:3, 4, 27.

18. A king and his people.

In a multitude of people is a king's glory, But in the dearth of people is a prince's ruin (14:28).

The king's favor is toward a servant who acts wisely, But his anger is toward him who acts shamefully (14:35).

16:10, 12, 13, 14, 15; 19:12; 20:2, 8, 9, 26, 28; 21:1.

19. Material and moral values.

Better is a little with righteousness Than great income with injustice (16:8).

How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver (16:16).

16:19; 20:15; 22:1.

20. The administration of justice.

Abundant food *is in* the fallow ground of the poor, But it is swept away by injustice (13:23).

He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the righteous, Both of them alike are an abomination to the Lord (17:15).

17:23, 26; 18:5, 17, 18; 21:28.

21. The discipline of education.

A fool rejects his father's discipline, But he who regards reproof is prudent (15:5).

He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof Will dwell among the wise (15:31).

15:32; 17:16; 18:15; 19:8, 18, 20, 27; 22:6, 15.

22. God's oversight of man's life.

The plans of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the Lord (16:1).

All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the Lord weighs the motives (16:2).

16:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 33; 17:3; 19:21; 20:12, 24, 27; 21:2, 30, 31; 22:12.

23. Behavior acceptable to God.

The perverse in heart are an abomination to the Lord, But the blameless in *their* walk are His delight (11:20).

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, But the prayer of the upright is His delight (15:8).

15:9, 26, 29.

24. The nemesis of folly and wrongdoing.

A rebellious man seeks only evil, So a cruel messenger will be sent

against him (17:11).

He who returns evil for good, Evil will not depart from his house (17:13).

19:19; 20:17; 21:7; 22:8, 16.

25. Happiness.

A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, But when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken (15:13).

All the days of the afflicted are bad, But a cheerful heart *has* a continual feast (15:15).

15:16, 17, 30; 17:22.

26. Cruelty and compassion.

A righteous man has regard for the life of his beast, But the compassion of the wicked is cruel (12:10).

He who despises his neighbor sins, But happy is he who is gracious to the poor (14:21).

14:31; 17:5; 19:17; 21:10, 13; 22:9.

27. The path of life.

There is a way *which seems* right to a man, But its end is the way of death (14:12).

The path of life *leads* upward for the wise, That he may keep away from Sheol below (15:24).

16:12, 17.

28. Various virtues and vices.

    Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all transgressions (10:12).

    A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, But a just weight is His delight (11:1).

    11:2, 3, 9, 17; 12:9, 16, 25; 13:7; 14:17, 29; 15:12, 22, 33; 16:18; 17:9, 11, 17; 18:1, 12, 24; 19:2, 6, 11; 20:1, 6, 11, 22; 21:24.

29. The power of religious faith.

    In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, And his children will have refuge (14:26).

    The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, That one may avoid the snares of death (14:27).

    18:10; 19:23.

30. Sickness and grief.

    The heart knows its own bitterness, And a stranger does not share its joy (14:10).

    Even in laughter the heart may be in pain, And the end of joy may be grief (14:13).

    18:14.

31. Quarrels.

    A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger pacifies contention (15:18).

    Better is a dry morsel and quietness with it Than a house full of feasting with strife (17:1).

17:14; 20:3.

32. Plans and expectations.

When a wicked man dies, *his* expectation will perish, And the hope of strong men perishes (11:7).

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But desire fulfilled is a tree of life (13:12).

13:19.

33. Wisdom and folly.

The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish tears it down with her own hands (14:1).

Understanding is a fountain of life to him who has it, But the discipline of fools is folly (16:22).

20:5, 18; 21:22.

34. Divine omniscience.

The eyes of the Lord are in every place, Watching the evil and the good (15:3).

Sheol and Abaddon *lie open* before the Lord, How much more the hearts of men! (15:11).

35. Old age.

A gray head is a crown of glory; It is found in the way of righteousness (16:31).

The glory of young men is their strength, And the honor of old men is their gray hair (20:29).

36. Gifts and bribes.

    A bribe is a charm in the sight of its owner; Wherever he turns, he prospers (17:8).

    A man's gift makes room for him, And brings him before great men (18:16).

    15:27; 21:14.

37. Messengers and servants.

    A wicked messenger falls into adversity, But a faithful envoy *brings* healing (13:17).

    A servant who acts wisely will rule over a son who acts shamefully, And will share in the inheritance among brothers (17:2).

38. Good and bad company.

    He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm (13:20).

    The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit; He who is cursed of the Lord will fall into it (22:14).

D. Words of the Wise (See NIV) (22:17—24:22).

The phrase "words of the wise" (*divre ḥ^{a}kamim* דִּבְרֵי חֲכָמִים) was probably originally a heading that later became part of the first line. The authorship is unknown, but these proverbs may have been copied out by Hezekiah's scribes as in 25:1. They are usually longer than those of the previous section. The phrase "thirty [sayings]" (22:20) may have some connection with Egyptian wisdom (as did the last two sections). Kidner says, "Egyptian jewels, as at the Exodus, have been reset to their advan-

tage and put to finer use."[19]

1. Introduction (22:17-21).

   a. The student is admonished to listen to wise words (22:17).
   b. The results of listening will be pleasant (22:18).
   c. The teacher speaks of his curriculum (22:19-21).

2. There are thirty precepts in what follows: (22:22—24:22).

   a. The student is admonished not to take advantage of helpless people (22:22-23).
   b. The student is warned against associating with hot-tempered people (22:24-25).
   c. He is warned against co-signing for people (22:26-27).
   d. He is warned against moving boundary markers (22:28).
   e. He is admonished to become skillful in his work (22:29).
   f. He is taught to use discretion when eating at a ruler's table (23:1-3).
   g. He is warned against the struggle to be rich (23:4-5).
   h. He is warned against becoming entangled with a selfish man (23:6-8).
   i. He is warned against wasting his wisdom on fools (23:9). "Do not cast your pearls before swine."
   j. He is warned again about moving boundary markers (23:10-12). Note the word Redeemer (Heb.: *goel* גֹּאֵל); the same designation as in Job 19:25 with a similar function.
   k. He is instructed to discipline children (23:13-14).
   l. He is told that his wisdom will make his teacher happy (23:15-16).
   m. He is to put his confidence in the Lord and not be envious, for God promises him a future (23:17-18).
   n. He is to avoid incontinence in drinking and eating (23:19-21).
   o. He is to listen to sound advice and thus "buy truth and get wisdom" (23:22-23).
   p. He is encouraged to be wise and to listen to his teacher (23:24-25).

[19]Kidner, *Proverbs,* p. 24. Cf. "The Instruction of Amen-em-opet" *ANET*, p. 421.

q. He is warned to avoid the harlot (23:26-28).
r. He is warned against drunkenness (23:29-35). (This is the description of an alcoholic).
s. He is warned against envy of evil men (24:1-2).
t. Wise living brings good results (24:3-4).
u. Wisdom brings victory (24:5-6).
v. Wisdom is not for fools (24:7).
w. Trouble makers are fools (24:8-9).
x. The wise person is not to withdraw in a time of distress (24:10).
y. He is to deliver those being taken to death (24:11-12). (He cannot make an excuse that he did not know.)
z. The teacher compares wisdom to honey (24:13-14).
aa. The wicked is warned not to cheat the righteous (24:15-16).
bb. The student is admonished not to rejoice at the fall of his enemy (24:17-18).
cc. The student is told not to be envious of the wicked (24:19-20).
dd. The student is admonished to respect existing institutions (24:21-22).

E. Additional Sayings of the Wise (24:23-34).

These are the product of an anonymous group of wise men.

1. Fairness and justice are a blessing (24:23-26).

2. Diligence requires work to be done that produces money before work that produces relaxation (24:27).

3. The student is warned about being a false witness (24:28-29).

4. He is warned against laziness (24:30-34).

F. Proverbs of Solomon Copied by Hezekiah's men (25:1-29:27).

Hezekiah was interested in the temple, singing, Psalms, and other liturgy (2 Chron. 29:25-30). This is a brief glimpse into some of the process of collecting wisdom sayings and transmitting them.

The following topical arrangement comes from Scott, *Proverbs*, p. 171.

1. The discipline of education.

   Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold Is a wise reprover to a listening ear (25:12).

   Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another (27:17).

   29:1, 15, 17, 19, 21.

2. Reward and retribution.

   He who digs a pit will fall into it, And he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him (26:27).

   He who tends the fig tree will eat its fruit; And he who cares for his master will be honored (27:18).

   28:10, 17, 18, 19, 20, 25.

3. Good and evil men.

   The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, But the righteous are bold as a lion (28:1).

   Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, But those who keep the law strive with them (28:4).

   28:5, 12, 16, 28; 29:6, 7, 10, 27.

4. The fool. 26:1-12.

   Like snow in summer and like rain in harvest, So honor is not fitting for a fool (26:1).

   A whip is for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, And a rod for the back of fools (26:3).

26:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11; 27:3, 22; 29:9.

5. Wisdom and folly.

   Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him (26:12).

   He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But he who walks wisely will be delivered (28:26).

6. Gossip and slander.

   Do not go out hastily to argue *your* case; Otherwise, what will you do in the end, When your neighbor puts you to shame? (25:8).

   Argue your case with your neighbor, And do not reveal the secret of another (25:9).

   25:10, 11, 18, 23; 26:22.

7. Other vices and follies.

   Like one who takes off a garment on a cold day, *or like* vinegar on soda, Is he who sings songs to a troubled heart (25:20).

   Like a trampled spring and a polluted well Is a righteous man who gives way before the wicked (25:26).

   25:27, 28; 26:13, 14, 15, 16; 27:4, 8, 13, 20; 28:22, 23; 29:22, 23.

8. Various virtues.

   Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest Is a faithful messenger to those who send him, For he refreshes the soul of his masters (25:13).

   Like clouds and wind without rain Is a man who boasts of his gifts falsely (25:14).

25:15, 16, 17, 19; 27:9, 10, 12; 28:27.

10. Morality and religion.

    He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, Even his prayer is an abomination (28:9).

    He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes *them* will find compassion (28:13).

    28:14; 29:25, 26.

10. Character.

    As in water face *reflects* face, So the heart of man *reflects* man (27:19).

    The crucible is for silver and the furnace for gold, And a man *is tested* by the praise accorded him (27:21).

11. Rich and poor.

    A sated man loathes honey, But to a famished man any bitter thing is sweet (27:7).

    A poor man who oppresses the lowly Is *like* a driving rain which leaves no food (28:3).

    28:6, 8, 11; 29:13.

12. The royal court.

    It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter (25:2).

    As the heavens for height and the earth for depth, So the heart of kings is unsearchable (25:3).

25:4, 5, 6, 7.

13. Rulers.

By the transgression of a land many are its princes, But by a man of understanding *and* knowledge, so it endures (28:2).

Like a roaring lion and a rushing bear Is a wicked ruler over a poor people (28:15).

29:2, 4, 8, 12, 14, 16, 18.

14. Foolish speech.

A lying tongue hates those it crushes, And a flattering mouth works ruin (26:28).

Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth (27:1).

27:2; 29:11, 20.

15. Father and son.

Be wise, my son, and make my heart glad, That I may reply to him who reproaches me (27:11).

He who keeps the law is a discerning son, But he who is a companion of gluttons humiliates his father (28:7).

28:24; 29:3.

16. Enemies.

If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink (25:21).

For you will heap burning coals on his head, And the Lord will reward

you (25:22).

27:5, 6.

17. Women and marriage.

    It is better to live in a corner of the roof Than in a house shared with a contentious woman (25:24).

    A constant dripping on a day of steady rain And a contentious woman are alike (27:15).

    27:16.

18. Good news.

    Like cold water to a weary soul, So is good news from a distant land (25:25).

19. Curses.

    Like a sparrow in *its* flitting, like a swallow in *its* flying, So a curse without cause does not alight (26:2).

    He who is a partner with a thief hates his own life; He hears the oath but tells nothing (29:24).

20. Quarrels.

    Like one who takes a dog by the ears Is he who passes by *and* meddles with strife not belonging to him (26:17).

    For lack of wood the fire goes out, And where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down (26:20).

    26:21.

21. Hypocrisy.

    Like an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross Are burning lips and a wicked heart (26:23).

    He who hates disguises *it* with his lips, But he lays up deceit in his heart (26:24).

    26:25, 26; 29:5.

22. The practical joker.

    Like a madman who throws Firebrands, arrows and death (26:18).

    So is the man who deceives his neighbor, And says, "Was I not joking?" (26:19).

    27:14.

23. The diligent farmer.

    Know well the condition of your flocks, *And* pay attention to your herds (27:23).

    For riches are not forever, Nor does a crown *endure* to all generations (27:24).

    27:25, 26, 27.

G. Words of Agur (30:1-33).

The word "oracle" is the Hebrew word Masa (מַשָּׂא) but may refer to a tribe rather than an oracle. The tribe would be a descendant of Ishmael (Gen 25:14). The use of this material indicates the international character of wisdom literature, which, under divine inspiration, was brought into the canon.

The two names in v. 2 should probably be repointed and divided into

phrases rather than proper names: "I have wearied myself, Oh God, I have wearied myself and am consumed."[20]

This material is different from the preceding both in content and style.

1. The greatness of God is extolled (30:1-4).

   The section sounds like Job.

   "What is His name or His son's name?" should be related to 8:22-31 where wisdom is personified in the creation process. We indicated there that the mediating "word" was a subtle reference to the coming "Word." The "son" of this section should be related to the wisdom of chapter 8. Delitzsch: "God the creator and His son the mediator."

2. The word of God is extolled (30:5-6).

3. The prayer of the King is not to have too much or too little (30:7-9).

4. A general statement is made about slandering slaves (30:10).

5. There are four kinds of evil men: those who curse parents, profess to be pure when filthy and are arrogant (30:11-14).

6. A series of truths are set forth in the ascending number style (30:15-31).

   a. Things never satisfied: Sheol, barren womb, arid earth, and fire. (An additional statement about mocking parents) (30:15-17).
   b. Amazing things: eagle, snake, ship, and man with a maid (30:18-20).
   c. Obnoxious things: slave/king, fool/sated, unloved woman/marries, maidservant/supplanting her mistress (30:21-23).
   d. Small but capable things: ants (strong), badgers (in rock houses), locusts (form ranks), lizard (lives in kings' houses) (30:24-31).

[20]So NIV in the margin.

e. He then gives a conclusion about self-control (30:32-33).

H. Words of King Lemuel (31:1-9).

King Lemuel is unknown apart from the passage. The Rabbis identified him with Solomon, but most would argue that he and Agur the Massite are probably from the same place (see Gen. 25:14; 1 Chron. 1:30).

The unit consists of his mother's sage advice to prepare him to rule.

1. The king's mother teaches him (31:1-2).

2. He is warned against dissipation with women (31:3).

3. He is warned against drunkenness (31:4-7).

4. He is admonished to protect the weak (31:8-9).

I. The Paean to the excellent woman (31:10-31).

This is an acrostic piece that is thus different from the rest of Proverbs and should be considered as a unit.

"This portrait of an industrious, competent, conscientious, pious woman is a conclusion well-suited to a book which teaches the nature and importance of a life lived in obedience to God in every detail."[21] Perhaps it is tied in with "wisdom" as a woman (Cf. chaps. 1—9).

The word excellent in Hebrew is *ḥayil* חַיִל usually translated "strength," "wealth," or even "army." Here it is speaking of the high qualities of the woman.

1. She provides an excellent counterpart to her husband (31:10-12).

2. She provides food like a merchant ship (31:13-14).

[21]LaSor, *et al., Old Testament Survey,* p. 557.

3. She rises early to provide for her household (31:15).
4. She barters real estate (31:16).
5. She looks after crops (31:17-18).
6. She spins and helps the needy (31:19-20).
7. She provides clothes for her family (31:21-22).
8. Her character lends dignity to her husband (31:23).
9. She makes enough to trade (31:24-25).
10. She speaks wisely (31:26-27).
11. Her husband and her children praise her (31:28-31).

This woman is a paragon, to which all may aspire, but few attain. In Proverbs, the woman often has more than a literal meaning. So here, this paragon may also represent wisdom.

Thus, ends the book of Proverbs. a veritable mine of wise teaching. May the Lord help us to become more like the Christian ideal through its reading.

JOB

See standard introductions but especially Marvin H. Pope, *Job,* in the *Anchor Bible* and LaSor, Hubbard and Bush, *Old Testament* Sur*vey.*

Job and Qoheleth are a response to Wisdom teaching in the ancient middle east. It is good to act wisely, but one should not expect the outcome of one's acts to turn out as hoped or expected. Job is the ideal person as a man of integrity (תָּם *tam*). Therefore, his life and example are a response to the common, absolute ideas about wise living.[22]

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I. Date of the book

Since wisdom literature is found in surrounding cultures as early as the second millennium, Pope says that the core of Job could have originated that early. He places the composition in the seventh century. Certainly, the setting of the book is patriarchal.[23] The events of the book are surely from the patriarchal period, but the book was probably not put into writing until the heyday of wisdom literature which began with Solomon (1 Kings 4:29-34) and included Hezekiah (Prov. 25:1).

II. The Text of the Book

The Hebrew of Job is very difficult in places. Not only is it poetry, itself enough of a problem, linguistically it has at least one hundred *hapax legomena* (words used only one time in the Bible). Attempts to understand these words through cognate languages helps, but not all the problems are solved at this

[22]See further p. 7.

[23]See Pope's discussion (M. Pope, *Job* in Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday, 1965), as well as any standard introduction. See also M. Dahood, *Psalms* in Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday, 1965, 1:xxxv. The divine, covenantal name Yahweh is used only in chapters 1-2 and 42 (the one use in poetry is questionable textually). Patriarchal names, El, Elohim, Eloah, El Shaddai, are used in the poetry.

point.

III. The Message of the Book

We have been saying that Samuel/Kings in particular have been based somewhat on the Deuteronomic or Palestinian covenant that taught the Israelites that God blessed those who were obedient to Him and judged those who were disobedient. This concept of retribution theology is certainly correct to a point, but God is not limited to that *modus vivendi*. He also reserves the right to postpone judgment for sin or blessing for obedience. The failure to comprehend this led to the debate in the book of Job in which both Job and his friends argued from the retributive base alone. Job says God must be unjust for punishing him when he is innocent, and his friends say that God would not be punishing him if he were not guilty. What they both failed to reckon with was God's sovereign right to allow just people to suffer and unjust people to prosper. The psalmist grapples with this same situation (Ps. 73) as does Jeremiah (12). The disciples of Jesus reflect the same error when they ask their master, "Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2).

Delitzsch on Job.[24]

A. The Book of Job shows a man whom God acknowledged as his servant after Job remained true in testing.

1. "The principal thing is not that Job is doubly blessed, but that God acknowledges him as His servant, which He is able to do, after Job in all his afflictions has remained true to God. Therein lies the important truth, that there is a suffering of the righteous which is not a decree of wrath, into which the love of God has been changed, but a dispensation of that love itself."

B. Not all suffering is presented in Scripture as retributive justice.

2. "That all suffering is a divine retribution, the Mosaic Thora does

[24]F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Book of Job*, pp. 1-4.

not teach. Renan calls this doctrine *la vieille conception patriarcale*. But the patriarchal history, and especially the history of Joseph, gives decided proof against it."

3. "The history before the time of Israel, and the history of Israel even, exhibit it [suffering that is not retributive] in facts; and the words of the law, as Deut. viii. 16, expressly show that there are sufferings which are the result of God's love; though the book of Job certainly presents this truth, which otherwise had but a scattered and presageful utterance, in a unique manner, and causes it to come forth before us from a calamitous and terrible conflict, as pure gold from a fierce furnace."

C. Suffering is for the righteous a means of discipline and purification and for *dokimos* testing of his righteousness.

4. "(1.) The afflictions of the righteous are a means of discipline and purification . . . (so Elihu) … (2.) The afflictions of the righteous man are means of proving and testing, which, like chastisements, come from the love of God. Their object is not, however, the purging away of sin which may still cling to the righteous man, but, on the contrary, the manifestation and testing of his righteousness."

IV. The Structure of the Book

PROLOGUE			DIALOGUE			POST-DIALOGUE			EPILOGUE
1—2			3—27			28—42			42:7-17
Prologue	Job's Monologue	First Cycle	Second Cycle	Third Cycle	Wisdom Poem	Job's Monologue	Elihu's Speeches	God/Job	Epilogue
1—2	3	4-14	15-21	22-27	28	29—31	32—37	38:1—42:6	42:7-17
PROSE		POETRY			POETRY				PROSE

V. Comparisons of lines in the cycles

First cycle:

Job's monologue = 52

Eliphaz	97	Bildad	43	Zophar	40	Total	180 27%
Job	109	Job	120	Job	159	Total	488 73%
Total lines (excluding monologue)							668 52%
							of grand total

Second cycle:

Eliphaz	70	Bildad	41	Zophar	62	Total	173 45%
Job	82	Job	59	Job	68	Total	209 55%
Total lines:							382 30%

Third cycle:

Eliphaz	58	Bildad	10	Zophar	0	Total	68 30%
Job	90	Job	24	Job	44	Total	161 70%
Total lines:							229 18%

Grand Total: Job: (excluding first monologue)		858 67%
	Friends:	421 33%
Grand Total:		1279

VI. Outline of Job.

A. The prologue (1:1-2:13).

1. Job is introduced as a man who worships God (1:1-5).

Job lived in the land of Uz (an ancient name) and was a righteous man. God's blessing in his life was evidenced by his physical wealth and large family. He is described as a תָּם *tam* man. This word means that he was a man of integrity.

There are two areas that have been identified with Uz. The first is around Damascus and linked with the Arameans. The second is Edom and the area of the Edomites.[25]

2. Job is tested to prove that his faith is not dependent upon his wealth (1:6—2:10).

   a. The first test comes in the loss of children and wealth (1:6-22).

      The two great symbols of God's blessing for faithfulness and righteousness in the OT are wealth (things and children) and health. The book of Job sets out to test the retributive thesis on these two grounds immediately. The first great test comes in the loss of his animal wealth (note the dramatic effect as the story unfolds). Then the word comes that he has lost all his children. Job accepts his fate and refuses to blame God.

      The heavenly scene in this chapter is striking indeed. We have a person named the Satan (הַשָּׂטָן *haśatan* who appears in the heavenly court to accuse Job. The Hebrew word *satan* as a verb means "to accuse." Consequently, the noun means "the Accuser." This scene teaches us a number of things: Satan has access to God in some way; he accuses people to God; God allows Satan certain latitude in dealing with people; and God protects people from Satan. These issues are all peripheral to the story that Job, a good man, suffers unjustly because of Satan's accusations.[26]

   b. The second test comes in the loss of his health (2:1-10).

      The speech of Job's wife is interesting. The Hebrew gives her six words, but the Greek adds four verses. The most common attitude about this addition is to assign it to the imagination of the Greek translator or a later editor who, as Davidson says, felt "no doubt, nature

[25]See Pope, *Job*, for a good discussion.

[26]See all the commentaries for discussion of the message of Job, but see especially Pope in *Job*.

and propriety outraged, that a woman should in such circumstances say so little."[27]

3. Job's friends come to "comfort" him (they become the foil in the debate about retributive justice) (2:11-13).

Eliphaz the Temanite: "Meaning, possibly, 'God is fine gold.' According to the genealogies, Eliphaz was the firstborn of Esau and the father of Teman, Gen xxxvi 11,15,42; I Chron 1 36,53"[28] Teman is from the Hebrew word *yamin* or right hand (looking east, the right hand is south). It is associated with Edom (cf. e.g., Jer. 49:7). Bildad the Shuhite: The name Bildad is of uncertain origin. Shuah is the son of Abraham and Keturah. Zophar the Naamathite: the name is found only here, and the location is uncertain. The point of the passage is that these men represent very wise men of the east who are capable of locking horns with Job on this difficult subject of suffering.

B. The Dialogue (3:1—27:23).

1. Job's monologue (3:1-26).

a. Job laments that he was ever conceived (3:1-10).

The whole point of the curse is to say that he should never have been born. It is not so much that he wants to curse his birthday as to say "my life is so bad, it would be better if I had never been born" (cf. Jer. 20:14-18).

b. Job laments that he did not die at birth (3:11-19).

If it were necessary for Job to have been born, he should at least

[27]A. B. Davidson, *A Commentary on the Book of Job (1-14)*, 1862, (quoted in Gray, The Book of Job, Pt. I, 25).

[28]Pope, *Job*, p. 23.

have died at birth.[29] The Hebrew is *nephel tamun* (נֵפֶל טָמוּן), lit.: a hidden fall.) Had he died at birth he would have been in Sheol where he would be suffering no pain. (The Hebrew concept of Sheol was vague. It was a place where all went after death [righteous and wicked]). It is rather shadowy and fearful, but better than painful life. Otherwise it is to be avoided. The NT reveals the One who came to "deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:15).

c. Job laments that he cannot die (3:20-26).

Job says, finally, that if he had to be conceived and born, at least he should be allowed to die in the midst of suffering.

2. The dialogue with the three "friends" (First Cycle) (4:1—14:22).

c. Eliphaz' response to Job's monologue (4:1—5:27).

He chides Job for being impatient and complaining but acknowledges his piety (4:1-6).

Eliphaz begins the argument that will be repeated in a dozen different ways throughout the book. Blessing comes on the obedient and suffering on the disobedient, *ergo*: Job has sinned. Eliphaz begins gently with Job, but when Job stubbornly defends his position, the men get more severe in their statements.

He argues that sin brings judgment (4:7-11).

All human experience, he says, proves that the innocent do not suffer (if they suffered they were not innocent). This flies in the face of actual experience unless one interpret circumstances to fit the theory (which they apparently did).

He argues (quoting his vision) that man cannot be just before

[29]This is one of the few references to "miscarriage" in the Old Testament.

God. This seems to be a statement of frustration: man cannot avoid trouble (4:12-21).

There is no use calling on even angels to help because man is destined to trouble (5:1-7).

He argues that there is still hope in God who sets all things right (5:8-16).

God is the great creator. He is beyond human comprehension, but He still has compassion on the human being. He will judge the wicked and vindicate the just. Therefore, he pleads for Job to repent.

He argues that reproof and correction are part of God's works, and that man should submit to their inevitability and reap their benefit (5:17-27).

The implications of this argument are clear enough: Job has sinned and is therefore suffering. If he will accept God's punishment and repent, he will be restored to a place of blessing.

d. Job responds to Eliphaz' arguments (6:1—7:21).

Job complains about his painful state (6:1-7).

He says that his pain ought to be measured and examined so that people would understand what he is going through. God's unfair punishment has been harsh, and he suffers from it. He would not be complaining if he did not have good reason.

Job cries out for God to finish him off (6:8-13).

Since God has brought this great pain to Job, he insists that God should finish what He has begun and kill him. For his part, he has not denied the words of the Holy One, therefore, the least God can do is put him out of his misery.

Job complains about the lack of support from his friends (6:14-23).

He likens them to a wadi (that only occasionally has water). The caravans hurry their steps toward it thinking they will get water only to find it dry. So are Job's friends. He has never asked them for money or help; now he only asks them for understanding, but they will not give it.

He demands they tell him what they think he has done (6:24-30).

Job speaks harshly of his friends' injustice. He says they would cast lots for orphans and barter over a friend. In other words they are completely unjust in dealing with him. He demands that they stop treating him as they have.

He complains again of his state (7:1-10).

It is not only his own situation of which he speaks: mankind in general suffers like one impressed into harsh labor, like a slave panting for the shade. So is Job: he suffers physically, his days are short, and he expects to go to Sheol.

He complains of God's constant demands upon him for right living (7:11-21).

Job says that God has put a constant watch over him like the sea or the sea monster. This watch is not for his good, but to catch him in evil so as to judge him. Job says that God is unrelenting in his demands, and there is no way to escape Him. God will not pardon him, and he expects to die.

c. Bildad gives his first speech (8:1-22).

He challenges Job to confess and be restored (8:1-7).

Bildad angrily tells Job that God is not unjust, and therefore whatever has happened is just. However, in the retributive justice

argument, this means that Job's sons must have sinned to deserve death. Job need only seek the forgiveness of the Almighty to be restored to the place of blessing.

He tells Job that the wisdom of the ages teaches that those who forget God are judged. Therefore, Job needs to confess (8:8-22).

e. Job responds to Bildad's arguments (9:1—10:22).

He says that God is sovereign and inscrutable (9:1-12).

Part of Job's defense is that God cannot be approached by one who wants to present his case. In this unit, he sets forth the idea that no one can enter a court case with God, because God is completely dominant and man is fragile and weak before Him.

He says that God is unfair in his treatment of Job (9:13-24).

Job's words reach the point of blasphemy (as his friends later point out). Job is defenseless before Him, He abuses Job with suffering, and even though Job is absolutely innocent, God declares him guilty.

He says that he is not equal to God and therefore cannot defend himself (9:25-35).

No matter what he might do to cleanse himself, God would push him into the mud and declare him polluted. There is no lawyer to stand between God and Job to give him a fair hearing. If God would remove His punishing rod, Job would not be afraid to confront Him, but God is completely unfair in the way He deals with His creatures.

He says that God does not understand the human state (10:1-7).

Since God is not human, He cannot possibly understand human suffering. He claims that God knows that he is innocent and yet refuses to deliver him from suffering.

He says God created him but has cast him off (10:8-17).

Job speaks bitterly of the finite being God has created only to abandon to suffering. Not only so, but God judges him even if he is righteous. Job dare not lift his head lest God hunt him like a lion.

He returns to his lament about death in chapter 3 (10:18-22).

Job pleads with God to withdraw from him and let him die in peace. If God allowed him to live at the beginning, surely he can give him some peace now.

e. Zophar gives his first speech (11:1-20).

He charges Job with arrogance in saying he is innocent (11:1-6).

The rhetoric begins to heat up as Zophar charges Job with scoffing by saying "My teaching is pure, And I am innocent in your eyes." He wishes God could speak! If He could, He would say that Job had not suffered enough, since God has not held all his iniquity against him.

He argues that God is transcendent (11:7-12).

Job's finiteness means that he cannot take on God in this discussion of righteousness. God knows false men, and obviously He knows Job. Man is a fool to try to argue with God.

He argues that Job should confess and then enjoy the forgiveness and blessing of God (11:13-20).

In a beautiful poem, Zophar tells Job of the great blessing that would ensue on the repentance of this sinner. He must put iniquity far away, but if he does he will find unprecedented blessing.

f. Job responds to Zophar's arguments (12:1—14:22).

Job chides his friends and says that God is responsible for all things (12:1-6).

He argues that he is as intelligent as they are. In his past he trusted God and was known as a man of prayer to whom God listened. But now he sees that those who reject God are at ease and those who serve Him are in trouble.

He says that even nature teaches that God is responsible for all things (12:7—13:2).

He then proceeds to list all the things, good and bad, for which God is responsible. God seems to take delight in turning things on their head ("He makes fools out of judges"). Life, says, Job is unfair; he has seen it all and knows that what he says is true.

He demands an audience with God and declares that his friends would be routed if they met God (13:3-12).

God, says Job, does not need a defender, least of all those who would be dishonest in their dealings with Him. They must stand before God someday, and God will pronounce them guilty for their false charges against Job. Their arguments are completely worthless.

He declares his innocence (13:13-19).

In spite of all the harsh things Job has said about God, he says that He will trust Him even if He slays him. He believes he would be cleared if he could only argue his case before God.

He challenges God to be fair to him (13:20-28).

He asks God for two things (stated in reverse form) (1) to remove His hand from him and (2) not to terrify him with fear. If God will do that then Job will be able to speak to Him and defend

himself. He demands that God tell him what his sin is and why He is causing Job to suffer so.

He argues that since man is born as a finite creature, God should let him alone (14:1-6).

Mortal man stands no chance before God. He is weak and limited, yet God judges him. If man is indeed innately sinful and mortal, how can God expect an unclean person to be clean. He therefore pleads with God to avert His face from this weak creature.

He argues that man's life is hopeless (14:7-12).

He extends the mortality theme by contrasting man to a tree. The tree can flourish even after it has been cut down, but man dies and that is the end. Job believes in life after death, but that life is not in the normal sense. There will be no return to life on earth as now known.

He prays for God to have mercy on him (14:13-17).

Since Job is suffering unfairly from the wrath of God, he pleads for God to hide him (as far away as Sheol) to give God's anger an opportunity to subside. If he dies, he will not live again (in the normal sense on the earth), therefore, he prays for God to let him live until God's anger is turned back. So that God will remember him after His wrath has subsided, he wants God to set a limit or mark to remind Him that He has hidden Job. The word "change" in 14:14 (*ḥ^{a}liphathi* חֲלִיפָתִי) is the same as the word "sprout" in 14:7 (*ya ḥ^{a}liph* יַחֲלִיף). Job is asking God to let him return to earth again in a renewed body.[30]

He complains that God is almighty and unmerciful (14:18-22).

Job's defense has moved from declaring his innocence (which he

[30]See, Hartley, *The Book of Job*, NICOT, pp. 236-237, for a good discussion.

continues to do) to arguing from the mortality of the human race. Since God created man, He should not hold man's limitations against him. He should give him a break by recognizing his weakness and not judging him.

3. The dialogue with the three "friends" (Second Cycle) (15:1—21:34).

   a. Eliphaz responds the second time to Job's speech (15:1-35).

      He rebukes Job for his lack of respect for God (15:1-6).

      Job's blasphemous words have been created by the guilt within him. His own bitterness and rebellion are evidence that he is not innocent. His evil defense makes it even more difficult to get at the matter spiritually.

      He rebukes Job for arrogance in assuming he knows more than others, even more than God (15:7-16).

      Eliphaz demands that Job recognize the wisdom of others and to accept their conclusions. Man is indeed mortal as Job has said: why then should he think he could argue with God. God does not even trust his holy angels, why should he declare sinful man innocent?

      He details the suffering of the wicked man who rebels against God (15:17-35).

      Eliphaz lays out in great detail the problems that come to a man who arrogates himself against God. He seems to be including Job in that category.

   b. Job responds the second time to Eliphaz' speech (16:1—17:16).

      He complains about the lack of sympathy in his three friends (16:1-5).

      A speech dripping with sarcasm is delivered against the three

friends. They are "sorry comforters." They sit in self-righteous comfort and condemn a man who suffers. Their statements are therefore worthless.

He details the suffering he has undergone at the hands of evil-doers and even at God's own hand (16:6-17).

As Eliphaz sets out the sufferings of the unrighteous man, Job lays out the unjust sufferings he has endured All this has happened even though there is "no violence in my hands, and my prayer is pure."

He cries out for vindication before God (16:18—17:2).

Job has been wronged as was Abel. Abel's blood cried for vengeance, so does Job's. Only it is God who has committed the crime. Who then can defend Job? He asked for an umpire in 9:33 (*mokiaḥ* מוֹכִיחַ), a vindicator (redeemer) in 19:25 (*goel* גֹּאֵל); an interpreter in the passage before us; and an intercessor in an extended passage in 33:23ff. Job is begging for someone to stand between him and a holy righteous God. While Job is accusing God of injustice, he has also pled the cause of mortal man. This thinking, preliminary as it is, underlies the idea of the mediator who was Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5).

He asks for someone to defend him (17:3-5).

Job wants God to exchange pledges with him so that there will be integrity in their argumentation. He challenges the integrity of the friends by saying that they lack understanding and are really informing against a friend for a share of the spoil. This is a strong charge.

He says he suffers as a righteous man and therefore other right-eous people will be appalled (17:6-16).

Job argues that people who are righteous and discerning will understand that he is suffering wrongfully. The clear implication

is that his friends are not righteous. In spite of his suffering, he will maintain his integrity and ultimately expects to be vindicated (as he indeed was).

c. Bildad responds the second time to Job's speech (18:1-21).

He rebukes Job for his outburst against his friends (18:1-4).

He asks Job why he thinks he should receive special treatment. Will the earth be abandoned for Job's sake or the rock moved from its place? Who does Job think he is?

He sets forth in elaborate and gruesome detail the fate of the wicked (18:5-21).

d. Job responds the second time to Bildad's speech (19:1-29).

He rebukes his friends again and specifically states that God is the cause of his problems (19:1-6).

He complains that God will not give him justice (19:7-12).

No matter where he turns, God is against him. When he cries out for help, God does not answer him. God has treated him as an enemy and has brought his army against Job.

He complains that everyone has turned against him (19:13-22).

All his family, his wife, his friends and acquaintances have turned away from him. Even his three friends are mistreating him in the same way God is doing.

He cries out for a recording of his justice and gives a strong testimony of faith in God (19:23-29).

19:25, 26 says: "And as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth." "Even after

my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God."[31]

The *minimum* this means is that Job believes in some kind of a mediator, a goel, and that there will be a time after death in which Job will stand before God. Whether that is *from* the resurrected body or *apart from* his human body, he will be there. Consequently, this verse refers at least to life after death.[32]

e. Zophar responds for the second time to Job (20:1-29).

He states again the fate of the wicked (20:1-11).

If indeed, as Job says, the wicked do prosper, it is only for a little while. Sooner or later, everything catches up with them and they lose everything and get what they deserve.

He argues that ill-gotten gain will cause later suffering (20:12-19).

The man who cheats to get the nice things in life will have to pay the piper before he dies. He will be unable to enjoy the fruits of his dishonesty for "He swallows riches, But will vomit them up."

He says that having devoured others, the wicked man will himself suffer (20:20-29).

With rising crescendo Zophar paints a picture of a man full of lust for material things and pursuing the goal of getting everything he wants until he finally falls and receives the judgment of God.

f. Job answers Zophar for the second time (21:1-34).

He questions why the wicked prosper (21:1-16).

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[31]B. C., "Whence a word, 'skin of my teeth,'" *BAR*, 2020 (46:3), p. 59, who argues that Job's teeth are falling out.

[32]See Dahood, *Psalms* II in Anchor Bible, p. 196 who repoints "from my flesh" to mean "refleshed by *him*" and believes that this refers to a new body.

He continues to argue that wicked men often prosper and that their fate is the same as that of the righteous (the argument seems to have been made that some of his punishment might have come on his children) (21:17-26).
He says that the friends' argument offers no comfort because there is no evidence that the righteous fare better than the wicked (21:27-34).

4. The Dialogue with the three "friends" (Third Cycle) (22:1—27:23).

   a. Eliphaz answers Job for the third time (22:1-30).

      He speaks strongly to Job charging him with immoral acts (22:1-11).

      In chapter 4 Eliphaz acknowledges Job's righteousness, but in this chapter, his anger seems to get away from him and he accuses Job of things that he has not done. Perhaps Job's stubborn self-vindication leads Eliphaz to believe he must take strong measures to crack his armor, but this seems to be quite extreme.

      He denies that God is obscure and argues that He sees all and is involved in all (22:12-20).

      God is most certainly sovereign, as Job has said, but His remoteness in heaven only gives Him a better view of human existence. God gives good things to the wicked (including Job), and when they turn against Him, He takes it away, but that is as it should be.

      He appeals to Job to repent (22:21-30).

      As has been done on more than one occasion, Eliphaz pleads with Job to recognize his sinfulness and repent so that he might be restored to the place of blessing and become in turn a blessing to others. Even another sinner will be delivered through Job's restoration, although this "humble person" may be Job.

b. Job responds for the third time to Eliphaz (23:1—24:25).

He argues that if he could only present his case to this inscrutable God, he would be vindicated (23:1-7).
Job pathetically cries out for a fair hearing. He is convinced that if he could only find this *deus absconditus* and present his case before Him, that he would be fully vindicated and delivered from his judge.

He says that God is inscrutable and sovereign, but he still trusts Him and has obeyed Him (23:8-17).

No matter where he turns, Job cannot seem to find God. It is frustrating that he cannot confront him, but in spite of this, he believes that God knows all about him and will one day vindicate him. This is a marvelous statement of faith in the midst of a situation of despair.

He says that God does not pay attention when many injustices are committed (24:1-12).

Job lists a series of crimes he knows are committed by wicked people. The poor suffer at their hands dreadfully. The only conclusion at which Job can arrive is that God does not pay attention. If He knows everything, and yet does nothing about this situation, at what other conclusion, asks Job, can one arrive?

He says that many deeds are done in darkness (and implies that God does nothing about them) (24:13-17).

He speaks of God's injustice to people (is Sheol being personified?) (24:18-25).

This is a very strong statement and is really blasphemous. Job charges God with complete injustice toward the poor and innocent. He sustains them long enough to abandon them. Job demands that people prove him a liar if what he has said is not true. Job's theology can only lead him to this conclusion, for he

does not understand that all suffering is not the result of sin nor is all unpunished wickedness forever unpunished.

c. Bildad answers Job for the third time (25:1-6).

He gives a brief response much like previous ones: God is holy and transcendent while man is utterly insignificant, so why does Job think man has any right to claim standing before God?[33] Bildad's argument in 25:4-7 is parallel to that of Eliphaz in 4:17-19.

d. Job answers Bildad for the third time (26:1-14).

He rebukes his friends for being no help (26:1-4).

The strong, almost bitter, statements in the mouths of the three friends have not intimidated Job. He lashes out one more time against the insipid counsel of these men. The book of Job is teaching that the theology of these men is incorrect. Job's evaluation of it and them is accurate as his vindication at the end proves. But his own theology was not accurate either and needed to be set straight. This was done in God's speeches.

He speaks of God's omnipotence and omniscience (26:5-14).

Job's final thrust at Bildad is to show again the remoteness and inaccessibility of God. He speaks of His creatorship and control over nature. He uses imagery drawn from Canaanite mythology (here used probably as we use Greek mythology) to show the greatness of God.[34] Even though Job has hardly scratched the surface of God's ability, we have seen enough to know how great He is and yet, says Job, we hear scarcely a word from him.

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[33]P. Skehan, *Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom*, p. 112, says "Bildad's speech is short because Job cuts him off and answers for him."

[34]We might say, God controls the waters that flow through the pillars of Hercules without claiming to believe in that mythological person.

e. Job answers a final time though no opponent's speech is given (27:1-23).

Job stoutly maintains his own righteousness and avers that he will never admit to the correctness of his friends' accusations (27:1-6).

He says that God will indeed cut off the wicked (27:7-12).

This section is strange, not only because Zophar does not speak a third time, but because Job seems to acknowledge what he has been denying.[35] Keil and Delitzsch may be right in arguing that Job throws their own argument back at them and says that he does not fit it.[36]

He then lists the fate of the wicked (27:7-23).

Has Job shifted arguments? Earlier he was saying that since he was suffering, but had not sinned, God must be unjust. Perhaps he is saying that God does indeed judge the wicked, but since Job is not wicked, he will be vindicated. Delitzsch says that Job holds up the same mirror his friends have been showing him. Job argues that he does not fit the image.

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[35]Because of this, critics reconstruct the passage and put these words into the mouth of Zophar, see, e.g., Pope, *Job*.

[36]Dillard and Longman say, "Note that at the end of the third cycle Bildad's speech seems truncated: Zophar lacks a speech, and Job says things that simply contradict everything else he says (27:13-23). The third cycle probably suffers from an error in textual transmission (see extended discussion in Zerafa) in that Job's words in 27:13-23 are either a part of the Bildad speech or the missing Zophar speech. Even with this minor textual correction, however, the short speeches of the third cycle complete the process that was begun in the second—that is, a rapid shortening of the speeches. In this way, the dialogue communicates that the three friends ran out of arguments against Job. This literary device leads nicely to the speech of the frustrated Elihu (chaps. 32-37)." *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 203.

C. Post dialogue (28—42:6).

1. A wisdom poem (28:1-28).

This poem does not seem to fit well with the argument, and it has no heading. As a result, the critics see it as a beautiful poem, probably composed by the author of the dialogues, but not part of the original Job story. It would be better to see it as an addendum to Job's speech showing that wisdom, so necessary in understanding God's dealings with mankind, is very rare and valuable. His friends certainly do not have it, and Job himself could stand a larger portion.[37]

a. There is a source for all kind of things (28:1-11).

Job describes some of the mining techniques of ancient times as people searched for Iron ore, gold and other precious stones and metals. Man's ingenuity has gotten him much material.

b. However, wisdom cannot be found (28:12-22).

Job refers to all the ancient places from which precious metals and other desirable objects were brought. However, without exception, they say that they do know where wisdom may be found. Not even Abaddon and Death (place of the body after death) can say more than that they have heard of wisdom.

c. God is the sum of wisdom and he tells man that wisdom is to fear the Lord (28:23-28).

God as the great creator and sustainer has the wisdom necessary for such activity. He has also instructed his human creatures that to fear Him is wisdom and to depart from evil is understanding.

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[37]Skehan, *Ibid*., p. 79, says, "There seems no adequate reason to deny this poem to the original author of Job; it draws from the dialogue the only general conclusion that can be drawn from it and balances very well Job's bitter outcry of chapter 3. This would be the only place in the poetry where the author speaks his own name (at least in 28:28)."

2. Job's monologue and final statement (29:1—31:40).

   a. Job speaks of his past glory (29:1-25).

      He was a highly respected man (29:1-11).
      He was respected because of his deeds (29:12-20).
      (1) Orphans (12-14).
      (2) Widows
      (3) Weak (15-16).
      (4) Anti wicked (17).
      (5) He thought all this would bring God's blessing (29:18-20).

      He returns to discuss his past glory (29:21-25).

   b. Job speaks of his current misfortunes (30:1-40).

      Insignificant people mock him (30:1-8).
      He is in constant danger from them (30:9-15).
      His physical pain is great (30:16-23).
      He says it is normal to cry out in distress (30:24-31).

   c. Job defends his integrity (31:1-40).

      God knows his conduct (31:1-4).
      He has been honest (31:5-8).
      He has been moral (31:9-12).
      He has been just (31:13-15).
      He has been compassionate (31:16-23).
      He has been free from greed (31:24-28). True piety.
      He has been tolerant (31:29-37).
      He has treated his land well (31:38-40).

   With this last strong statement, supported by a series of oaths, Job makes his last self-defense. He is innocent of any sin. His hands are clean.

3. Elihu's speeches (32:1—37:24).[38]

   a. Elihu introduces himself to the scene (32:1-22).

      Elihu's background is given (32:1-10).

      The three friends stop talking. They have been unable to answer Job's arguments. Furthermore, Job has spoken so strongly (even taking oaths) that they have been compelled to silence. Elihu (He is my God) comes unannounced on the scene. He is the son of Barachel the Buzite of the family of Ram. This person seems (like the other three) to have connections with the relatives of Abraham. He is a member of the bystanders who believes he must respond to the failure of the position of both Job and his friends. Gordis' remarks are insightful: "In essence, Elihu occupies a middle ground between Job and the Friends. The Friends, as protagonists of the conventional theology, have argued that God is just, and that suffering is therefore the consequence and the sign of sin. Job, from his own experience, has denied both propositions, insisting that since he is suffering without being a sinner, God is unjust. Elihu rejects both the Friends' argument that suffering is always the result of sin and Job's contention that God is unjust. He offers a new and significant insight which bears all the earmarks of being the product of the poet's experience during a lifetime: suffering sometimes comes even to upright men as a discipline, as a warning to prevent them from slipping into sin. For there are some weaknesses to which decent, respectable men are particularly prone, notably the sins of complacency and pride" (32:1-5).[39]

      Elihu is angry because Job has justified himself before God, and the friends are unable to refute him. Therefore, he decides to speak up, arguing that wisdom is not necessarily with the aged

[38]Is Elihu a transition to God's speeches by his emphasis on sovereignty?

[39]R. Gordis, *The Book of Job*, NY: JTS, 1978, p. 358.

and so his youth is not a hindrance (32:6-10).

Elihu says he has listened carefully to all the arguments and no one has refuted Job, but he is able to do so (32:11-14).

Elihu says he is indwelt by the spirit and that he can no longer refrain from speaking (32:15-22).

b. Elihu says that God disciplines people for their own good (33:1-33).

He challenges Job to the debate (33:1-7).

He summarizes Job's position: he is innocent, and God is unjust (33:8-12).

He argues that God works in His own ways to keep man on the right path (33:13-18).

He argues that man is chastened physically to cause him to confess so that God can deliver him from going down to the pit (33:19-28).

He summarizes his point that God disciplines people for their own good (33:29-33).

c. Elihu argues that God is sovereign in all His acts (34:1-37).

He criticizes Job for his rebellion against the sovereign God (34:1-9).

He argues that the sovereign God would not act unrighteously (34:10-15).

He argues that God's sovereignty precludes wrong acting (34:16-20).

He argues that the sovereign God scrutinizes men's ways and

requites them their evil (34:21-30).

He argues that finite man should bow before God's sovereignty and confess his sin (34:31-37).

d. Elihu argues that God does not need men (35:1-16).

He tells Job that God is not troubled with Job's unhappiness (35:1-8).

He says that God's failure to answer Job's complaint is God's prerogative—not Job's (35:9-16).

e. Elihu argues that God is just in all His deeds (36:1-33).

He says he wants to argue further, and he knows what he is talking about (36:1-4).

He argues that God is mighty but fair—even to the wicked whom He admonishes to repent (36:5-16).

He admonishes Job not to be too hard on the wicked lest he become condemned (36:17-23).

He argues that man's chief end is to exalt the creator God (36:24-33).

f. Elihu finalizes his argument by appealing to the greatness of God in creation (37:1-24).

He argues that God's control of nature (storms, snow, rain, etc.) is for the good of all (37:1-13).

He challenges Job to match his ability against God's (37:14-20).

He argues that God is transcendent but fair (37:21-24).

Elihu's approach throughout is to defend the justice of God. The

friends of Job were concerned to prove him guilty. Elihu sets out to show that God is righteous and fair. In the process he alludes to God as creator (especially in his last speech, 37:14-20). This paves the way for God's addresses in chapters 38ff. Elihu's conclusion also is a link with the wisdom speech in chapter 28. "Therefore, men fear Him; He does not regard any who are wise of heart" (37:24).

3. God and Job (38:1—42:6).

   a. God challenges Job with a series of references to nature:

      He calls Job into the arena of argument (38:1-3).
      He speaks of the creation of the earth (38:4-7).
      He speaks of the creation of the sea (38:5-11).
      He speaks of the day (38:12-15).
      He speaks of the hidden recesses (38:16-18).
      He speaks of light and darkness (38:19-24).
      He speaks of wadis, rain, seed and frost (38:25-30).
      He speaks of the heavenly hosts (38:31-33).
      He speaks of clouds, rain and lightning (38:34-38).
      He speaks of the provision for wildlife (38:39—39:4).
      He speaks of the wild donkey and ox (39:5-12).
      He speaks of the ostrich (39:13-18).
      He speaks of the horse (39:19-25).
      He speaks of the hawk (39:26-30.)

   b. God elicits a response from Job (40:1-5).

      He calls Job a faultfinder (40:1).
      Job responds contritely (40:2-5).

   c. God takes up His argument again (40:6—41:34).

      He chides Job for complaining against Him (40:6-9).

      He challenges Job to be able to control mankind as He does (40:10-14) (then he can declare himself just).

He challenges him to examine an outstanding example of His creatorship—Behemoth (40:15-24). Hebrew: *b^{e}hemoth* בְּהֵמוֹת a feminine plural noun probably used to denote a very large animal. This may be the hippopotamus.

He challenges him to examine a second outstanding example of His creatorship—Leviathan (41:1-34). Hebrew: *livyathan* לִוְיָתָן. This may refer to the crocodile or it may be one of those mythological allusions discussed early in the lectures. Whatever it represents, the message is that God controls it, and Job cannot.

4. Job confesses that he has been wrong in his evaluation of the situation (42:1-6).

   a. He confesses to the greatness of God (42:1-2).
   b. He confesses to his own ignorance (42:3).
   c. He admits to willingness to be instructed (42:4).
   d. He acknowledges that God has revealed Himself to him (42:5).
   e. He repents in sackcloth and ashes (42:6).

D. The Epilogue (42:7-17).

1. God charges Job's friends with error and requires sacrifice from them (42:7-9).

2. God restores Job's fortunes (42:10-17).

   a. His relatives come back to him (42:10-11).
   b. His animal wealth is restored twofold (42:12).
   c. His children are replaced (42:13-15).
   d. Job lived a patriarchal age and died (42:16-17).

As we go through the wisdom literature, we will compare Job with Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes) and Proverbs. Proverbs presents the classic statement that, generally speaking, obedience will be rewarded with blessing and disobedience with cursing. This thesis may underlie some of the presentation in Samuel—Kings. Job is a challenge to that thesis. Indeed, it is normally true, but there are many exceptions. Theodicy is a difficult topic (always has been). Job does not give the last

word, because it probably cannot be given. We must trust the sovereign God to do what is right even though experientially we do not always see what we think would be right. Qoheleth argues that in light of that fact, we must enjoy life, do the best we can, expect to see contradictions, and trust God for the outcome.

Excursus on Job: The idea of an intercessor

See, first, Job's view of death (ch. 3; ch. 14).

1. The umpire (*mokiaḥ* מוֹכִיחַ)

   Job complains in 9:32-33 that God is not a man like him so that he could respond to God and take him into court (*mišpat* מִשְׁפָּט). "For *He is* not a man as I am that I may answer Him, that we may go to court together. There is no umpire between us, Who may lay his hand upon us both." Therefore, Job wishes for an intercessor who could place his hand on both God and Job. The verb *yakaḥ* יָכַח means "to decide, judge," "convince," "convict, "correct," "rebuke," "vindicate." The participle (*mokiaḥ* מוֹכִיחַ) appears also at 32:11 (none to answer Job's words) and 40:1 (God says "let him who reproves God answer").

   Dhorme: links it with 5:17; 16:21 for an arbiter. In 9:33, it is the one who decides what is right between two parties.

   Hartley: Eliphaz argues in 5:1 that if Job hopes for an angel to intercede for him, his hope is vain. Job in 9:33 senses his alienation from God and desperately longs for a mediator to settle the dispute, but it is not forthcoming.

   Gordis: This is the first of three passages revealing Job's attitude toward God. (16,19 the others.) The second (16:19) he sees God as his witness; the third (19:25) he beholds Him as vindicator and redeemer.

2. The witness (*'ed* עֵד)

Laban and Jacob entered a covenant and a cairn became a witness between them (Gen 31:45-52). Jacob called it in Hebrew *gal'ed* גַּלְעֵד, Laban called it *śah^{a}dutha* שָׂהֲדֻתָא (31:47). The purpose of this "witness" was to call into account before God the wrong actions of the participants.

In Exodus 19:20 it is used in the sense of warning, but in 20:15 it is the commandment prohibiting false testimony against one's neighbor. In Exodus 25:16 (and many other places) the ark is a testimony (*ha'edath* הָעֵדָת) of Yahweh's covenant with his people. The witness for the "prosecution" is found in Leviticus 5:1.

The word witness is found in Job three times (10:17; 16:8; 16:19). (1) You renew your witness against me (said of God). (2) His body testifies against him: that he has sinned, even though he has not. (3) Job demands that his blood not be covered (Cain/Abel), but he affirms that he has a witness in heaven on high (both *'ed* עֵד and *sah^{a}di* שָׂהֲדִי appear as in Gen. 31). Job 16:18-21: "O earth, do not cover my blood, and let there be no *resting* place for my cry. Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven and my advocate is on high. My friends are my scoffers; My eye weeps to God. O that a man might plead with God as a man with his neighbor!"

Gordis and Hartley argue that this can only refer to God. Even though He is just, he is also merciful and loving. Job appeals to this aspect of God.

Dhorme: Job cries for an unrealizable thing: that God might intercede between Himself and mankind. Gordis agrees. Hartley: Essentially agrees. The witness can only be God. Job wants God to witness against himself, because he knows that God is just in spite of what He has been doing to Job.

3. The Redeemer (*go'el* גֹּאֵל)

Job 19:26-27 is the most discussed passage in the book. "Oh that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book! That with an iron stylus and lead they were engraved in the rock forever! And as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even

after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God; Whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes shall see and not another. My heart faints within me."

Dhorme: God Himself is the goel. So Gordis. Hartley: Goel is often used of Yahweh; Isa. 41:14; 44:24; 49:7-9, 26. The Goel is not the arbiter for which Job wished (a futile hope), but is an expression of confidence in a living God who will intercede for him. Job's hope is that he will be vindicated before he dies. The following are a distillation of Hartley's discussion (NICOT).

a. Discusses various meanings of Goel—Avenger of blood, redeemer of property, vindicator of family, God as the redeemer of Israel from Egypt (thus in Isaiah as second exodus).

b. Goel does not refer to a mediator (angelic or otherwise), but to God Himself (cf. Gordis' discussion of God as prosecutor and defense). (So Gordis; Ringgreen [TDOT] says it cannot be God unless the logic is very loose.) Since Goel refers to God so often, the author would have chosen a different word if he did not mean God. In Job 9, it is an unrealistic wish. Here it is real.

c. God will vindicate him, but when? Not while he is in Sheol, for the dead do not know what is going on (14:21)

d. God will vindicate him when he raises his body—not because that would be the climax of the book, and the resurrection is not mentioned again in the book. (As Job's ash heap.)

e. Conclusion: Job has confidence that God will vindicate him (stand on the dust) while he is still alive and restore him to his former position (as he does). ("End" refers to the time in Job's life when God will vindicate him.) What about "from my (suffering) flesh"?

4. The angelic mediator (*melits* מֵלִיץ)

Job 33:23-34. cf. the idea of metatron in later Judaism (Jewish Encyclopedia).

"If there is an angel as mediator for him, one out of a thousand, to remind a man what is right for him, then let him be gracious to him, and say, deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." Who is the angel? Some say the Angel of Yahweh, some say a human friend, some say a conscience. What is the ransom? No answer is given, only God knows. But it is accepted by the mediating angel and the death angel is forced to relinquish his victim.

ECCLESIASTES

I. Introductory data.

The name of this book in the Hebrew is Qoheleth from the word *qahal* to call an assembly (the verb) or an assembly (the noun). (Note the similarity to Greek *kaleo* and English "call"). The LXX working from *ekklesia* translated it as Ecclesiastes or one who speaks to an assembly. The idea of the "preacher" is not so much the modern one, but refers to a teacher of disciples.

Tradition relates this book to Solomon, and the opening chapters (1:1, 12, 16) imply that he is the subject. When this is added to Solomon's identification with wisdom literature in general, it is possible that Solomon was the author.[40] But it could just as easily come from a later king. "Son of David" merely means descended from David (cf. Matt. 21:9).

We must keep in mind the place of wisdom literature in progressive revelation. The concept of the afterlife was ill-formed and dim. The emphasis was on this life, and blessing was viewed in terms of long life, full days, and gray hair. Sheol was a dim dark place where all went at death. It was unknown and unknowable. Only the NT revelation brings the light of Christ's resurrection to bear on the problem of the afterlife (Heb. 2:14-15). The NT believer has hope as never before. The OT saint had hope beyond the grave, but it was circumscribed by the limits of his revelation. Consequently, the preacher's message refers to this life. It would appear that Qoheleth is designed to counter a glib, unbridled optimism about life. We have seen that the proverbs are generalizations that teach what normally happens. However, there are always exceptions to the generalization. Qoheleth is dealing with the "buts" of life: the exceptions to the generalizations.

Qoheleth sounds pessimistic. He is often called a skeptic, but if that were true,

[40]See Gleason Archer, *A Survey of OT Introduction*, for a discussion of the authorship.

life would be so futile it could only lead to suicide. On the contrary, he says: "Go then, eat your bread in happiness, and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works" (i.e., enjoy life) (9:7). Delitzsch aptly points out that while the book of Esther makes no direct mention of God, Ecclesiastes refers directly to God 37 times (there are also 38 references to "vanity"). "The Book of Qoheleth is, on the one side, a proof of the power of revealed religion which has grounded faith in God, the One God, the All-wise Creator and Governor of the world, so deeply and firmly in the religious consciousness, that even the most dissonant and confused impressions of the present world are unable to shake it; and on the other side, it is a proof of the inadequacy of revealed religion in its O. T. form, since the discontent and the grief which the monotony, the confusion, and the misery of this earth occasion, remain thus long without a counterbalance, till the facts of the history of redemption shall have disclosed and unveiled the heavens above the earth."[41]

Qoheleth argues that while wisdom teaching is correct, there are many exceptions to it. Normally, just living will produce long life and wicked living will produce shortened lives, but this is not always the case. Wisdom teaching says that there is a proper time for everything. Qoheleth says, "yes there is, but only God knows what that time is." Consequently, since we do not know the future, we can only trust God for it and live the present with keen enjoyment even as we expect some calamities to take place. People are responsible to use well what God has given, e.g., wealth. The balanced life is the emphasis. Yet, God will ultimately judge everything, so we must be careful how we live.

Contribution to OT Theology. LaSor, *et al.* list the following contributions to OT theology:

A. Freedom of God and Limits of Wisdom.

1. People are limited by the way in which God has determined the events of their lives (1:5, 7:13).

[41]Keil and Delitzsch, *Job* in Commentary on the Old Testament, p. 184.

2. Human creatures are limited by their inability to discover God's ways. They know He controls their lives, but they cannot understand how or why (3:11).

B. Facing Life's Realities.

1. Grace—2:24ff; 3:13 (God gives to man the ability to enjoy life).

2. Death—2:14f; 9:2f. Death is the great unifying force. It is inevitable and comes to all alike.

3. Enjoyment. Even though toil dominates Qoheleth's thinking, he speaks often of joy or enjoyment—2:24f.; 3:12, 22; 5:18-20; 7:14; 8:15; 9:7-9; 11:8f.

C. Preparation for the Gospel.

There is no explicit prophecy or even typology that refers to the Gospel, but "its realism in depicting the ironies of suffering and death helps explain the crucial importance of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Qoheleth's insistence on the inscrutability of God's ways underscores the magnificent breakthrough in divine and human communication which the Incarnation effected."[42]

II. Outline of Ecclesiastes.

A. Introduction (1:1-11).

1. The author is Qoheleth, the son of David, King in Jerusalem. This requires it to be a king and possibly Solomon. But the point is not to provide biography but a philosophy.

2. The main idea of the book is set out in verse 2 with the oft recurring phrase: "Vanity of Vanities." This word is used 38 times in the book. It is intensive in 1:2; 12:7: "the most futile."[43] The word "God"

[42]LaSor, *et al.*, *Old Testament Survey*, p. 599.

[43]See ""Vanity' It Certainly is not," *The Bible Translator* 38:3 [1987] 301-07. He

appears 39 times in the book. "Under the sun" occurs 29 times.

3. The preacher begins to develop his theme: the repetitive nature of life (1:3-11).

   a. People come and go in the same way (1:3-4).
   b. Nature comes and goes (1:5-7).
      The sun (1:5).
      The wind (1:6).
      The rivers (1:7).
   c. People are not able to comprehend all that transpires (1:8).
   d. Nothing new occurs; all that is, was (1:9-10).
   e. Each new generation forgets what went on before (1:11).

B. The preacher provides a counterpoint to the teaching of wisdom by showing the exceptions to the general rule (1:12-18).

   1. His position allowed him to pursue wisdom (1:12).

   2. His search showed him that life is full of futility (1:13-16).

      a. The crooked cannot be made straight (i.e., what God has done cannot be undone) (1:15).
      b. Wisdom, though it is the result of fear of the Lord, brings pain because of the knowledge it provides (1:17-18).

C. The preacher sets out to determine what would make life worthwhile (2:1-26).

   1. He discusses the process of the search (2:1-11).

      a. He tested pleasure, laughter, and wine (2:1-3).
      b. He tested building projects (2:4-6).
      c. He tested life through slaves and other experiences including concubines (2:7-8).

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argues for the meaning of "frustration."

d. He had more than anyone had before him—the result was futility (2:9-11).

2. He evaluates what he has learned (2:12-17).

a. He acknowledges that wisdom is better than foolishness (a standard wisdom teaching, of course) (2:12-14).
b. Yet, he says, both the wise man and the fool must die and there is no memory of them (2:15-16).
c. As a result, he is despondent about his life (2:17).

3. He draws a conclusion from his observations (2:18-23).

a. Since he must leave the results of his labor to others, he hates it (2:18).
b. Even though he does not know whether his heir will be a fool or a wise man, the heir will control the fruit of Qoheleth's labor and receive that for which he has not labored (2:19-21).
c. The laborer has nothing to show for his labor (2:22-23).

4. This brings him to his ultimate conclusion: to the theme of the book (2:24-26).

a. A person must simply enjoy life as it is and not worry about it (2:24a).
b. The ability to enjoy life is a gift from God (2:24b-26).

D. Qoheleth argues that God has a time for everything, but people do not know what that time is (3:1-23).

1. He lists 14 pairs of opposites to show that there is a time for everything (3:1-8).

2. He argues that in this lifetime, even though God has set eternity in the heart (a God consciousness?), man cannot find out God's work (3:9-11).

3. He concludes again that the only thing a person can do is enjoy the

life God has given him (3:12-13).

4. He argues strongly that God is responsible for the universe and everything in it (3:14-15).

5. In spite of that fact, there is injustice and inequity in the world, but God will judge people ultimately (3:16-17).

6. He concludes that God wants people to see their limitations; that they really are like the animal kingdom (3:18-21).

   a. Both people and animals die and go back to the dust (3:18-20).
   b. No one can actually prove that the breath (spirit) of a human goes up (to God) and that the breath of the animal goes down to the earth (3:21). (Does this not show that an idea existed of direction after death?)

7. He reiterates his earlier conclusion—that people must simply enjoy life and not worry that they cannot control events (3:22).

E. Qoheleth discusses again the pain and struggle in the world (4:1-16).

1. Because there is so much inequity, he says it is better to be dead (4:1-3).

2. He argues that skill and labor come about only because of rivalry (4:4).

3. He argues that the fool is a fool because he is not fulfilling his God-given task of working and therefore enjoying life (4:5).

4. He argues that honest rest is better than striving in rivalry to succeed against others (4:6).

5. He argues that it is silly to work hard if you have no heir to receive the legacy (4:7-9).

6. He uses a series of proverbs and shows the exceptions (4:9-16).

a. Two are better than one—but it is bad if there is only one (4:9-10).
b. Two warm one another—but a single person will be cold (4:11).
c. Two are strong as is a cord of three strands (4:12).
d. A poor, wise youth is better than an old foolish king (4:13-16).

He was wise enough to rise from prison to the throne (4:14).
The second lad must be the lad spoken of above (4:15).
The crowds thronged to him at the beginning, but were later unhappy with him (4:16).

F. Qoheleth uses proverbs to urge care in worship (5:1-7).

1. He urges precision in worship (sacrifice) (5:1). (James says "be not many teachers.")

2. He urges care in speaking to God (5:2-3). (Much thought should be given to spiritual communication.)

3. He says that vows should be made carefully and fulfilled when made (5:4-5).

4. In fine he says that care and limits should be placed upon all religious activities, since God is going to hold us accountable for them (5:6-7).

G. Qoheleth returns to his discussion of the vanity of life (5:8-20).

1. Oppression and self-aggrandizement unfortunately are part of the system of human rule (yet, Qoheleth seems to imply that God is watching over them—to judge them) (5:8).

2. An agrarian system in which the king is identified with the earth rather than the despotic system of the normal ruler is better (5:9).

3. Lust for money will bring dissatisfaction (5:10-12).

a. Money will not bring satisfaction to its seekers (5:10).
b. More money will bring more people to consume it (5:11).
c. Honest labor brings sweet sleep (5:12).

4. Hoarded riches will not bring satisfaction (5:13-17).

    a. Riches are hoarded to one's own harm (5:13).
    b. A bad investment can set him back to nothing (5:14-15).
    c. He is no better off than when he was born (5:16-17).

5. The preacher comes to his now recurring conclusion: enjoy life and do not worry over it (5:18-20).

    a. God has given people the privilege of enjoying their work (5:18).
    b. God has empowered them to eat from their wealth (5:19).
    c. By keeping themselves busy and enjoying life, he will not fret over the brevity and difficulty of life (5:20).

H. Qoheleth speaks of the ignorance of what is to come after one dies (6:1-12).

1. He addresses the problem of not being able to enjoy the results of one's labor (6:1-6).

    a. Some men have plenty, but a stranger receives the man's goods (6:1-2). (Does this refer to pillaging by other nations?)
    b. Some have many children, but nothing else and die in poverty. They are worse off than a miscarriage (6:3-6).

2. He speaks of the futility of laboring hard to meet human needs, but the needs are never satisfied (6:7-9).

3. He speaks again of the people's ignorance of the future (6:10-12).

    a. Nothing is new, and man is limited. God is greater than man, therefore, man cannot argue with God (6:10-11).
    b. No one knows what is good for man. His life is like a shadow (6:12). (cf. 7:1.)

I. Qoheleth uses proverbs and their flip side to deal with the realities of life (7:1-14).

Man's limitations prevent him from explaining everything, and so wis-

dom has its limits. Even so, there are some things better than others.

1. The reality of death (7:1-4).

    a. A good name is good—but death is a reality (7:1). (Because it ends life.)
    b. To go to the house of mourning is better than that of feasting, because it reminds us of the reality of death (7:2).
    c. Sorrow is better than laughter for it provokes serious thinking (joy should be tempered with seriousness) (7:3).
    d. Intelligence requires sober thinking about death (7:4).

2. Wisdom is better than foolishness (7:5-7).

    a. Wisdom is better if for no other reason than that it is difficult to listen to fools (7:5-6).
    b. Wisdom brings mental anguish to the wise because he discerns oppression. The connection of this thought with bribery is difficult to see, unless it means that the wise man advises against such conduct, and when it is ignored, he is troubled (7:7).

3. He gives a series of practical wisdom teachings (7:8-9).

    a. End of a matter is better than the beginning (a good beginning is fine, but the obtaining of the goal is better) (7:8).
    b. Patience is better than pride (7:8b).
    c. Anger is devastating (7:9).

4. He gives a summary statement showing his theology (7:10-14).

    a. It is foolish to compare the present with the past (7:10).
    b. Wisdom has its advantages (7:11-12).
    c. God is sovereign but inscrutable (7:13).
    d. Enjoy prosperity while it exists but recognize that God is also the author of adversity. This keeps man humbly unaware of what will come after him (7:14).

J. Qoheleth speaks further on the limits of wisdom and the necessity of balance (7:15-29).

1. He says that wisdom has limits (7:15-22).

a. Wisdom teaches that the righteous man lives long, and the sinner dies early—Qoheleth says he has seen the opposite (7:15). The pursuit of wisdom and righteousness will not protect believers from vanity *hevel*. Yet, in the fear of God, one responds to His special revelation and submits to his general revelation, thus producing righteousness *and* wisdom.
b. Consequently, he argues that since wisdom does not guarantee long life, one should not overly exert himself in obtaining it (7:16).[44]
c. The corollary statement is to avoid wickedness lest it result in early death (7:17). (Perhaps he is arguing that one should shake himself loose from legalism, but not go to a life of license.)
d. Qoheleth's final statement is that a wise person lives a balanced life (7:18).
e. Wisdom indeed strengthens a wise man more than ten rulers in a city, but even so, wise men sin. Therefore, even wise men must be listened to with care (7:19-20).
f. In the same way one should avoid taking too seriously negative comments by his servants (especially when he himself may have spoken in the same way in a light moment) (7:21-22).

2. Qoheleth says that he has searched out wisdom (7:23-29).

a. He was unable to understand the past (7:23-24).
b. He tested folly and foolishness (7:25).
c. His biggest disappointment was a woman of snares (7:26).
d. Few men (one in a thousand) are worthy, but he found no worthy women (7:27-28).
e. God designed men to be upright, but they have sought out many ways not to be upright (7:29).

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[44]If "excessively righteous" means "overly scrupulous," then "excessively wicked" probably means "not to be careless in conduct."

K. Qoheleth questions wisdom teaching in the matter of authority and when to do things (8:1-9).

1. Wisdom is beneficial because it tells one when to make decisions about authority (8:1).

2. Qoheleth says to obey the king because he is in charge and will cause much trouble if there is disloyalty (8:2-4).

3. Qoheleth deals with the other side of the proverb that there is a right time to do everything. No man controls the day of his death or anything else, so obey authority (8:5-9).

L. Exceptions to wisdom ideas do not vitiate them (8:10-15).

1. The wicked die and enter (tombs? perhaps read *q^{e}varim muba'arim* קְבָרִים מוּבָאִים), but those who do justice (*ken* כֵּן) are forgotten (8:10-11).

2. Sometimes sinners live long lives and righteous people do not (8:12-14).

3. In light of this, Qoheleth commends a balanced enjoyed life (8:15).

4. He concludes with the statement that wise men have severe limits on what they can know (8:16-17).

M. A common destiny for all demands a balanced life (9:1-18).

1. No one knows his destiny (9:1).

2. Death awaits all as a common destiny (9:2-6).

3. Therefore, enjoy life (God has approved enjoyment), for this is the reward (9:7-10).

4. Victory is not to those of whom it is expected; so, balance is required (9:11-13).

5. Wisdom is indeed beneficial, but the wise man often goes unrecognized (9:14-17).

6. Furthermore, one sinner can do as much harm as one wise man, and it only takes a few flies to make perfume stink (9:18—10:1).

N. Qoheleth gives a series of proverbs to illustrate his last point (10:2-20).

1. Wise men know the direction of good, but the fool is always lost (10:2-3).

2. Tact in dealing with even an angry ruler will bring good results (10:4).

3. The social order sometimes is upside down (10:5-7).

4. Misconduct will often lead to self-hurt (10:8-9).

5. Sharp tools are more productive! (10:10-11).

6. Fools and unnecessary words go together (10:12-15).

7. A land with a youth for a king and lazy prince is in trouble, and the converse is true (10:16-17).

8. Laziness creates many problems (10:18).

9. Pleasant things are nice, but they cost money (10:19).

10. Keeping one's own counsel is the safest approach (10:20).

O. Qoheleth says that since we do not know what the future holds, we should be diligent to do good (11:1-10).

1. Cast bread on many waters, divide your portion, sow your seed (11:1,2,6).

2. The reason is that we do not know the future (11:4, 5, 6b).

3. Enjoy life to the fullest and expect bad days (11:8).

4. Rejoice in youth and recognize that God will judge you for your conduct (11:9-10).

P. The Creator is to be remembered in youth while the opportunity exists (12:1-8).

1. Youth is urged to enjoy God while he is able (12:1-5).

   a. Before the time of difficulty (evil) (12:1).
   b. Before the body wastes away (12:2-5).

      Watchmen—eyes (Delitzsch says "arms").
      Mighty men—shoulders or legs.
      Grinders—teeth.
      Lookers—eyes.
      Doors—mouth (jaws).
      Grinding mill—noises.
      Fears.

2. Youth is urged to enjoy God before death (12:6-8).

   a. The silver cord, golden bowl, pitcher, and wheel represent life (12:6).
   b. The mortal body will return to the earth, and the spirit will return to the God who gave it (12:7).
   c. All is transient (12:8).

Q. Qoheleth concludes his discourse (12:9-14).

1. Qoheleth accomplished much in the sphere of wisdom (12:9-10).

2. Qoheleth warns his students to pay attention (12:11-12).

3. Qoheleth concludes with the teaching that it is proper to fear God, keep his commandments, and recognize that we must all be judged by Him (12:13-14).

Structure/synthesis of Ecclesiastes

Heading (1:1-2).

Introduction to the problem (1:3-11).

ROUND ONE—God/man and use of human resources (1:3—2:23).

Inquiry into the problem (1:12-2:23).

Wisdom (1:12-18).
Pleasure (2:1-11).
Wisdom better but results same (2:12-17).
Results of Wisdom/work are beyond human control (2:18-23).

Conclusion (2:24-26).

> "There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen, that it is from the hand of God. For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him? For to a person who is good in His sight He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, while to the sinner He has given the task of gathering and collecting so that he may give to the one who is good in God's sight. This too is vanity and striving after wind."

ROUND TWO—God/man and predictable events (3:1-22).

Major premise: God has sovereignly appointed a time for everything (3:1-8).

Minor premise: Man has no profit in his toil, for he cannot discern God's time even though he has eternity in his heart (3:9-11).

Conclusion (3:12-13).

> "I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime; moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor—it is the gift of God."

Sub-major premise: God is involved sovereignly in the events of history so that men should fear Him. Inequity will someday be set right (3:14-18).

Sub-minor premise: Man should recognize his utter dependence on God and his human limitation (3:19-21).

Sub-Conclusion (3:22).

> "And I have seen that nothing is better than that man should be happy in his activities, for that is his lot. For who will bring him to see what will occur after him?"

ROUND THREE (4:1—5:17).

He gives a series of proverbs and observations to warn people to be careful and to point up the futility and temporality of life (4:1—5:17).

Conclusion (5:18-20).

> "Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting; to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward. Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God. For he will not often consider the years of his life, because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart."

ROUND FOUR—Limitations of Wisdom (6:1—9:1).

Conclusion (8:15).

> "So I commended pleasure, for there is nothing good for a man under the sun except to eat and to drink and to be merry, and this will stand by him in his toils throughout the days of his life which God has given him under the sun."

Major conclusion to this point in the book (8:16—9:1).

> "When I gave my heart to know wisdom and to see the task which has been done on the earth (even though one should never sleep day or night), and I saw every work of God, I concluded that man cannot discover the work which has been done under the sun. Even though man should seek laboriously, he will not discover; and though the wise man should say, "I know,' he cannot discover. For I have taken all this to my heart and explain it that righteous men, wise men, and their deeds are in the hand of God. Man does not know whether it will be love or hatred; anything awaits him."

ROUND FIVE (9:2—11:10).

Major premise: All people have the same fate (death) (9:2-6).

Death is the great leveler. God deals with man in his arrogance to show him he is no better than animals.

Conclusion (9:7-10).

> "Go then, eat your bread in happiness, and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works. Let your clothes be white all the time, and let not oil be lacking on your head. Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life, and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun. Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or wisdom in Sheol where you are going."

Major premise: Not ability but time and "chance" determine outcome (9:11—11:4).

Second major conclusion (1:5-6).

> "Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman, so you do not know the activity of God who makes all things. Sow your seed in the morning, and do not be

> idle in the evening, for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed, or whether both of them alike will be good."

FINAL CONCLUSION (11:8—12:7).

> Life is fleeting, enjoy your life while you are young and recognize your responsibility to God as you enjoy it. There are many dark days ahead; bear them in mind as you enjoy the happy days. The Creator should be remembered while you are young, for the time will come for old age and a return of the spirit to God who gave it. The *ne plus ultra* word is "Fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil" (12:13-14). There is nothing worthwhile apart from the fear of God. Ecclesiastes, however good, is an inadequate philosophy of life. The new dispensation also says, "lay hold of life heartily" (Col. 3:17), but there is an eternal motivation that Qoheleth did not have.

More Thoughts on Ecclesiastes

God's sovereignty:

God does things in the world that cannot be changed. "What is crooked cannot be straightened, and what is lacking cannot be counted" (1:15 with 7:13).

The idea that there is a time appointed for everything (3:1-8) implies that God is sovereignly in control of the events of this life. This idea is taken up in 9:1 when he says that "righteous men, wise men, and their deeds are in the hand of God." A similar idea is found in 11:5 where God's work is beyond man's knowledge.

God's work in the lives of people (3:9-11) as well as the fact that God's work will remain forever (3:14) and that nothing can be added or subtracted from it, indicates that God is sovereign.

God has the ability to "empower" men to enjoy life and by implication to restrict them from enjoying it. Hence, he controls the destiny of people (6:2).

God's inscrutability, if not sovereignty, is taught when Qoheleth says that man cannot discover the work of God which He has done under the sun (8:17).

Many of the things listed here can also be subsumed under "man's limitation," but the implication is that God is so controlling the events of this life (under the sun) that man's limitation is a natural result.

Man's limitation

Whatever profit, advantage (*yether* יֶתֶר) means, the implication of 1:3 and other verses like it is that man is limited in his ability to enjoy life. Related to this is the inability of man to comprehend the vast creation of God (1:8). This sounds a bit like Job who is silenced when challenged to do this very thing.

Man's ignorance of life is set out in 3:11 ("yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end"), in 7:14 ("So that man may not discover anything that will be after him") and in 7:24 ("What has been remote and exceedingly mysterious. Who can discover it?"), and 8:17 "Even though man should seek laboriously, he will not discover; and though the wise man should say, 'I know,' he cannot discover." A concluding statement is made about man's ignorance of life in 9:1, "righteous men, wise men, and their deeds

are in the hand of God. Man does not know whether it will be love or hatred; anything awaits him." His ignorance extends to the time events will transpire: 8:7-8 "If no one knows what will happen, who can tell him when it will happen?" This same sentiment is echoed in 11:5-6 where the ways of God cannot be anticipated or known. Unexpected and unhappy things happen beyond one's control according to 9:12.

One's inability to control the events of his life is graphically stated in 9:11: "the race is not to the swift, and the battle is not to the warriors, and neither is bread to the wise, nor wealth to the discerning, nor favor to men of ability; for time and chance (*peg'a* פֶּגַע) overtake them all." This inability is also expressed in 6:2 where God allows a foreigner to eat the wealthy man's goods.

In tones reminiscent of Job, Qoheleth states (without complaining as Job does) that one cannot dispute with God in 6:12 ("for he cannot dispute with him who is stronger than he is").

Above all, man's limitation is illustrated in the matter of life and death. They have only a few days under the sun (2:3); death levels any attempts to climb in life (3:19-20); one leaves life naked just as he entered it (5:16).

Limits of Wisdom

In his opening unit, Qoheleth uses the word "wisdom" five times to say that he used wisdom in the sense of special ability to accomplish something without producing answers to the riddle of life (1:13-18). Furthermore, all the wealth gained by wise actions is eaten up (6:7-9). By wise action, one should be able to learn what life is all about, but Qoheleth says that all his efforts only led him to the conclusion that the wise man cannot really say, "I know" (8:17). The fool and the wise man suffer the same fate, even though "wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness" (2:12-14), and the wise man cannot control what happens to the stuff he accumulated by wisdom after he is gone (2:19-21).

At the same time, it is important to understand that Qoheleth does not deny the importance and primary place of wisdom. He says that a "poor but wise lad is better than an old and foolish king who no longer knows how to receive instruction" (4:13). "Wisdom," he says, "strengthens a wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city" (7:19), even so, no one is perfect (7:20). Wisdom is good because it allows a person to understand a matter (8:1); a poor wise man was able

to deliver a city from the siege of a great king, and so wisdom is better than strength (9:13-18), but the poor wise man was soon forgotten (9:15). Proverbs extolling the virtues of wisdom are found at 10:10-12 and 7:5-7, 11-12. Finally, "the words of the wise are like goads, and masters of these collections are like well-driven nails; they are given by one shepherd" (12:11). That the concept of wisdom is important to Qoheleth is indicated by the fact that *ḥokmah* (חָכְמָה) and *ḥakam* (חָכַם) appear some 59 times. Other key terms are "God" *Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים) (39 x's); "vanity" *hevel* (הֶבֶל) (38 x's) "under the sun" *taḥeth haššemesh* (תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ) (30 x's); "fear" *yare'* (יָרֵא) (6 x's).

Teaching about death

Death for Qoheleth is the linchpin of his argument. In spite of the advantages of wisdom in this life, the wise and the fool die alike (2:16); worse yet, both humans and animals die alike. They all go to the same place (3:19-20; 6:6). The phrase "Who knows that the breath of man ascends upward and the breath of the beast descends downward to the earth?" is taken by Eaton[45] to mean "who knows the spirit of man *which* ascends upward?" In other words, the agnosticism is about the breath/spirit, *not* whether it goes up or not. He bases this on the clearly positive note in 12:7 where the spirit returns to God who gave it. Either way, he is arguing that we are abysmally ignorant about death. Death is humbling, for after entering the world naked and striving to become "something," man dies and leaves the world naked (5:15-16). Not only does death humiliate us, we cannot even predict when it will come about (8:8). Because of the bitterness of oppression, Qoheleth congratulates the dead more than the living (4:1-2).

What happens to a man after he dies *under the sun* is unknown (6:12). The phrase "under the sun" appears some 30 times in the book and should indicate to us that Qoheleth is limiting his discussion to what is observable. He does not enter into the discussion of the afterlife (which he apparently believes in according to 12:7), he is only concerned with this life. Experientially, one *cannot* know what is beyond the grave. In this sense he can say that a living dog is better than a dead lion (9:4), and that no one knows anything in death. There is no activity or planning or wisdom in Sheol (9:10).

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[45]M. A. Eaton, *Ecclesiastes* in Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, Downers Grove: IVP, 1983, pp. 87-88.

The concluding statement in the book (if 12:9-14 is an addendum by the author) speaks of the process of ageing and dying, culminating with a return of the body to dust and the spirit to God. The young person is admonished to remember his creator while he is young, for these declining days will come quickly enough.

Responsibility to God

In spite of the argument often made about the negative tone and "this worldliness" of Qoheleth, it is instructive to see his attitude about human responsibility toward God. The clearest statements are found in 3:17-18: "God will judge both the righteous man and the wicked man." This may indeed be in this life (as the rest of the verse may indicate), but man is responsible for his actions to God, nevertheless; 11:9: "Ye know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things"; finally, the last verse in the book says: "For God will bring every act to judgment." Ecc. 3:15 is difficult, but the NIV renders it: "Whatever is has already been, and what will be has been before; and God will call the past to account."

Implications of accountability come from the idea that man cannot eat or have enjoyment without God (2:25); that God has given a task to man (3:9); that offerings and vows made to God must be carried out properly (5:1-2, 4-7; 8:2); that labor is a gift from God (5:18; 6:2); and that God will reward those who fear him (8:12).

The importance of trusting and rejoicing

Much of what we have discussed of Qoheleth's philosophy to this point can be justly characterized as negative and pessimistic. It comes from the musings of one who has carefully observed life from the perspective of wisdom and has become frustrated with the apparent contradictions to the teaching to wisdom. The tension between his faith in the ultimate outworking of wisdom teaching versus the painful observations of violations of that teaching are illustrated in 8:12-13. His experience tells him that sinners do not always die young nor do righteous people always live to an old age, but his faith tells him that "it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly."

His faith in God gives him the confidence to go on living in spite of the conundrums of life. More even than mere living, he is to rejoice in the life that God has given him. It will contain both good and bad, but he wants to rejoice in the good and be prepared to endure the bad. It seems to me that the "rejoice"

sections fit into the cycles of the book as well. The passages are 2:24-26; 3:12-13; 3:22; 5:18-20; 8:15; 9:7-9; 11:8-9.

Given our ignorance about the future (let alone the afterlife), our confidence in the sovereignty of God, and the limitations of man and his wisdom, it is best to trust God for what is going to happen and to live a balanced life. (Is this the meaning of not being excessively righteous, overly wise, or excessively wicked or a fool? (7:16-17). This then is the message of the book, we cannot control our lives, only God does that. We cannot know everything, only God is omniscient. We cannot determine when we will die or what will happen to us, all that is in the hands of almighty God. What are we left with, discouragement and despair? Not at all "Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might" (9:10 with Col. 3:17, 23). Progressive revelation brings hope unthought-of in the Old Testament, but the teaching of Qoheleth is just as relevant today as it was then. Even with our additional information, the things he speaks of "under the sun" are as inaccessible to us today as they were to him. Consequently, we can learn much about trusting and rejoicing.

PSALMS

Introduction

The Psalms as worship and prophecy loom large in both testaments. David's name, *par excellence*, is associated with the Psalms. Music was very important in the worship of the Old Testament, and Paul includes the Psalms, along with hymns and spiritual songs, as a means to wisdom, teaching and admonition (Col. 3:16). Jesus led his disciples in the singing of a hymn (ὑμνήσαντες *hymnesantes*) at the conclusion of the last supper (Matt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26). This is usually considered to be part of the Hallel Psalms (Pss. 115-118).[46] The prophetic element, especially as it pertains to the Messiah, is set out by Jesus to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and that pattern seems to be followed by Peter and Paul. One has to wonder if that "forty-day post-graduate course" for the disciples did not include instructions on the use of the Psalms.[47] The Psalms have, throughout church history, provided the believers' hymnody. Some groups continue to use only Psalms for their church music. Perhaps the favorite and best-known Scripture is the twenty-third Psalm. The Levite musicians (with the old name Asaph) sang at the dedication of the second temple (Ezra 3:10).

I. The Title of the Psalms.

A. The Hebrew Title: The Hebrew title finally applied by the Israelites to their anthology of hymns used in their temple worship is the Hebrew term *tehillim*, "praise." Because of the many types of songs found in the collection, there is perhaps no single term that is entirely adequate to describe the collection. The term selected, however, is a happy choice for most of the Psalms contain an element of praise.

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[46]H. Alford, *The Greek Testament*, Chicago: Moody, 1958, reprint, I:269-70.

[47]See C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures, the sub-structure of New Testament Theology*, London: Nisbet, 1953.

B. The English Title(s): The English title *Psalter* comes from LXX (A) *Psalterium*; the title *The Psalms* comes from LXX (B) *Psalmos;* and the *Book of Psalms* stems from Jerome's title *Liber Psalmorum*. The Greek term, *psalmos*, in classical times meant "the music of a stringed instrument." It came to have the meaning of "song of praise."[48]

II. Psalmody in the OT

A. Moses. The Song of the Sea. (Exod 15:1-18, 21). After crossing the Red Sea, Moses led the people in celebrating God's victory over the Egyptians. Miriam and the women joined in with timbrels and dancing.

B. The Song of the Ark (Num 10:35-36). In the context, Israel, led by Moses, is on the move, guided by the cloud. The ark of the covenant is part of the move. This brief Psalm ritual indicates the movement of the ark. One must wonder whether David used these words as he "danced with all his might" and acted in the capacity of priest by wearing a linen ephod, when he moved the ark from Kiriath Jearim to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:12-19).

C. The Oracles of Balaam (Num 23-24). The story of Balaam is one of the strangest in the Old Testament. Who was he? How did he know Yahweh? What was his faith? The four oracles of Balaam are pro-Israel and elevate Yahweh. Balaam, in a pagan context, was found in fragmentary wall inscription in Deir 'alla Jordan from about 800 BC.[49]

D. The Song of Moses (Deut 32). This long and beautiful song was spoken by Moses to all the people in the presence of Joshua and the elders. It looks back and forward (prophetically) detailing the rebellion of the people, God's judgment and ultimate vindication. "In this context [approaching demise of Moses and Joshua's assumption of leadership], the song was not only a song of witness for the present, but one that would

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[48]See C. Hassel Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books*, Chicago: Moody, 1979, p. 114 for a fuller discussion. See also, Bruce Waltke, *Notes on the Book of Psalms*, unpublished notes, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1967, p. 1.

[49]J. Hoftijzet and G. Van Der Kooij, eds., *Aramaic Texts from Deir 'Alla*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976.

be sung in the future, thus being a continuing witness of the covenant commitment and reminding the people of the implications of a breach of the covenant."[50]

E. The Blessing of Moses on the tribes (Deut 33:1-29). Much like the blessing of Jacob (Gen 49), Moses promises certain blessings on the tribes. Only Simeon is missing. Later this small tribe will be absorbed into Judah.

F. Book of Jasher. Book of the Upright (Josh 10:12-13). Joshua's victory through the sun standing still is celebrated. David's lament over Saul and Jonathan is contained in that book (2 Sam 1:18). The book is no longer extant. We would love to have it! The same applies to *The Book of the Wars of Yahweh* (Num 21:14-15).

G. Deborah–Judges 5. Deborah and Barak, like Moses, celebrated their victory over Sisera and his army. They refer to past judges and rejoice in Jael who killed Sisera.

H. The Song of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1-10). This precious prayer of Hannah rejoices in the God who gave her a son. As painful as it was to leave her little boy with Eli, she could give thanks. Her reference to a king (whom her son would anoint), is prophetic, as it is in Gen. 17:6 and Deut. 28:36. From the perspective of the writer of 1 Samuel, this is David.

I. David sings a lament at the defeat and death of Saul and Jonathan (2 Samuel 1:18-27). The relationship of David and Jonathan is unique in the Old Testament. The Hebrew says, (וַיְקֹנֵן דָּוִד אֶת־הַקִּינָה הַזֹּאת *wayiqnon David eth hakinah hazoth*) and David lamented this lament. Some argue that there is a lament meter in Hebrew called the qinah meter. That is because these laments (see the Book of Lamentations) often have three words in one colon followed by two words in the second colon. However, there is no consistency in this usage, so we must be careful about assuming such a meter.[51]

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[50]P. C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* in NICOT, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1976, p. 374.

[51]See P. C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* in Word Biblical Commentary, Waco: Word

J. Prophetic books—Isa 5; Ezek 19:1-14; Hosea 6:1-3. Significant parts of the prophetic books are written in poetic form. Isaiah 5 is particularly beautiful poem of God's vineyard. Ezekiel 19 is a long lament for the princes of Judah, and Hosea 6 is an appeal to Israel to repent.[52]

III. Existing Structure (Five books)

The Book of Psalms is composed of five books of Psalms.

Psalms 1 (and perhaps 2) provide the great introduction to the Psalter. Psalms 1 has wisdom motifs: the blessed man does not walk, stand, nor sit in the wrong *way*. Obedience brings blessing; disobedience brings judgment.

A. 1-41(41 chapters) "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel forever and ever; amen and amen" (41:12).

B. 42-72 (31 chapters) "Blessed be His glorious name forever, and may his glory fill all the earth; amen and amen; the prayers of David ben Jesse are completed" (72:19-20).

C. 73-89 (17 chapters) "Blessed be the Lord forever; amen and amen" (89:52).

D. 90-106 (17 chapters) "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel forever and ever; and all the people said, 'amen'; praise the Lord" (106:48).

E. 107-150 (44 chapters) "Hallelujah" (11 times, including the heading) "Let everything that has breath praise Yah; praise Yah" (150:1-6) A total of 13 "Hallelujahs."

Books, 1983, p. 37, 38.

[52]See R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, NY: Basic Books, 2011, pp. 171-204, who discusses prophecy and poetry in his inimitable, insightful way. He argues that prose seems to be used for oracular prophecy and for speech of God to the prophet. Prophetic poetry, on the other hand, is a form of direct address to a historical, real audience (pp. 172-75).

Each of the first four books concludes with a doxology while Psalm 150 is the great conclusion to the entire Psalter.

The explanation of the five-book arrangement: Jewish tradition explains this arrangement as a conscious echo of the Pentateuch. It is more probable that they are the product of the gradual development of the Psalter as book was added to book in chronological sequence until the whole was complete.[53]

IV. Older Structure

A. "To David" Psalms: 3-41; 51-71 (Note 72:20: Prayers of David completed).

B. Korah–42-49.

C. Asaph–50, 73-83.

D. Smaller collections.

Ascents—120-134
Hallel–146-150

V. The History of the Formation of the Psalter.[54]

The Scriptures do not tell us how the various Psalms were written and collected into the books as we now have them. The following is a conjecture of how it may have happened:

A. First Stage: Individual Poems.

It began with poems by individuals: Moses (90) and David. Some poems were selected for the regular worship, others were not, e.g., the song of Miriam (Exod 15), the song of Moses (Deut 32), the song of Deborah (Judges 5), the lament of David (2 Sam 1); the hymn by Jonah, never

[53]Much of this information comes from Waltke, *Notes on the Book of Psalms*," unpublished class notes, DTS, 1967, p. 2.

[54]*Ibid.,* pp. 1-4.

became part of the anthology of songs used in the hymn book of the temple.

B. The Second Stage: Collection of Poems.

These individual songs were then collected. The ancient editorial remark at the end of Psalms 72:20, "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are completed" points to an older collection than the present one, since there are several Psalms preceding this notation which are not by David, and there are seventeen Psalms ascribed to David after this notation.

C. The Third Stage: The Collection into the Current Form.

The collection of these smaller anthologies into the books as we now know them probably represents a third phase in the formation of the Psalter. These collections were made by different persons in successive periods over quite a space of time.

D. The Fourth Stage: The Work of the Final Editor.

Delitzsch points out that the final stage of the production "bears the impress of one ordering mind."[55] All agree that Psalms one and two form a fitting introduction to the entire psalter and that Psalms 146-150 constitute a grand finale to the book.

E. Collection

1. It is probable that the collection of Psalms to be used liturgically took place under David and shortly after his death.

2. The reform under Jehoshaphat emphasizes the Book of the Law (2 Chron 17:7-9) so there may have been some activity.

3. Hezekiah's literary interest is known from Prov 25:1, and he also was interested in the responsibilities of the Levites in Temple worship (2 Chron 29:30).

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[55]F. Delitzsch, *The Psalms*, Tr. F. Bolton, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (reprint), 1952, p. 19.

4. The singing of the Levites at the dedication of the wall indicates that music and, therefore, Psalms were well instituted at that time. This may have been the last stage in the collection process, although there is no reason why other Psalms could not have been written later.[56]

F. The Yahwist and Elohistic Books.

"Book I and Book II are commonly referred to as the "Yahwistic" and "Elohistic" psalters respectively because whereas in Book I the proper name Yahweh occurs 272 times and the generic title *Elohim* 15 times, in Book II *Elohim* occurs 164 times and Yahweh 30 times. Not only do the two books differ in a statistical preference for one title for God over another, but in parallel Psalms Book II normally reads *Elohim*, whereas Book I has Yahweh. Compare, for example, Psalms 14 and 53, and 40:13-17 and 70."[57]

Craigie argues that this is evidence of an earlier time when the divine name was used freely and a later time when there was more reluctance to use it and the generic name (*Elohim*) was preferred, as later Judaism stopped using it altogether.[58]

VI. The Authorship of the Psalms

A. David and the Psalms:

David's musical abilities–1 Sam 16:18, 23; 2 Sam 6:5; Neh 12:36; Amos 6:5.

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[56]P. C. Craige, *Psalms 1-50*, in Word Biblical Commentary, Waco, TX: Word Books, p. 31, says, "It is not known precisely when the task of compiling the Psalter was completed. The psalms within it come from a variety of periods—from before the monarchy (in a few cases) to after the exile. It is probable that the Book of Psalms had reached substantially its present form by the fourth century B.C."

[57]Waltke, *Notes,* p. 2.

[58]P. C. Craige, *Psalms 1-50,* p. 29-30.

David's role as founder or organizer of temple musicology–1 Chron 15:16; 16:7; 25:1; Ezra 3:10; Neh 12:24, 46.

David as founder of Hebrew psalmody–Neh 12:24, 26, 46.[59]

David (*l^e^david* לְדָוִד) (73 Psalms mostly in Books I & II). James W. Thirtle wrote an insightful book over one hundred years ago. He is still being quoted by modern authors. Regarding "to the presenter," he says, "Here we see the distinction between the poet and the presenter—between the Psalmist and the Chief Musician. The songs might be written by David, or Asaph, or the sons of Korah, and it did not particularly matter at what time, or in connection with what circumstances or events; when at length the presenter, or Chief Musician, adapted them for the service of the Temple, they were invested with a new quality. They might be headed Psalm or Song, Michtam or Maschil; they might be historical in origin or not associated with any special occurrence: now they were given a stated and recognized place in 'the praises of Israel.' The preposition *lamed* (לְ) prefixed to [*menaṣeaḥ*] מְנַצֵּחַ must be understood (as already intimated) as meaning that the Psalm *belonged* to the presenter for singing purposes, equally as it *belonged* to the poet as its author."[60]

Thus, the *lamed* refers to authorship, both for the presenter and for David. David is the author; the presenter is the one who sets it to music for the temple, and in that sense, is the author.

B. Moses (Ps. 90).

C. Asaph (Pss. 50, 73-83). David left Asaph and his relatives to minister before the ark continually after he had brought it to Jerusalem (1 Chron. 16:37). See p. 235 for more discussion of Asaph.

D. Heman, the Ezrahite (Ps. 88). In 1 Chron. 25:1-31, David set aside the families of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun to prophesy with lyres, harps,

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[59]See C. Hassell Bulloch, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books*, Chicago: Moody, 1979, p. 116.

[60]J. W. Thirtle, *The Titles of the Psalms*, pp. 6-7. (https://archive.org/details/-titlesofpsalmsth00thiruoft/page/1.)

and cymbals. At the completion of Solomon's temple, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and Levitical singers, celebrated with lyres, harps, and cymbals (2 Chron. 5:12). The word *Jeduthun* shows up in Psalm 62:1 and 77:1 with the preposition עַל, "on Jeduthun." 1 Chron. 15:16-17 says that David told the Levites to appoint singers and musicians. They appointed Heman, Asaph, and Ethan.

E. Ethan, the Ezrahite (Ps. 89).

F. Solomon (Pss. 72, 127).

G. The sons of Korah (Pss. 42-49; 84-85; 87-89). See p. 206 for further discussion.

C. Biblical names for types of Psalms.

1. "Psalm" (Heb. מִזְמוֹר *mizmor*): "a song accompanied by the plucking of the strings of an instrument." Sixty-nine of the Psalms are so labeled.

2. "Song" (Heb. שִׁיר *Shir*): "a song." Thirty of the Psalms are so labeled. Fifteen of these are used with הַמַּעֲלוֹת *hamma'aloth*, which refers to ascent or something upward. It is usually considered to be a pilgrimage song as people were going up to Jerusalem. But see my notes on Pss 120-134 on p. 258. (Pss 30, 45, 46, 48, 65, 66, 67, 68, 75, 76, 83, 87, 88, 92, 108, 120-134).

3. *Maskil* מַשְׂכִּיל: "A contemplative poem." Thirteen of the Psalms are so labeled (32, 42, 44, 45, 52, 53, 54, 55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142). The root *sakal* שׂכל is variously translated as discernment, understanding, and skill. Consequently, in the titles it is usually translated as "contemplative."

4. *Miktam* מִכְתָּם: root meaning is disputed. The word *kethem* כֶּתֶם means gold, but how that fits with a psalm is unknown. It may mean an inscription poem (Pss 16, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60).

5. *Tephillah*: "Prayer." Found in five Psalm titles and Habakkuk 3 (Pss 17, 86, 90, 102, 104)

6. *Tehillah*: "Praise." Found in Psalm 145.

VII. Musical terms:

Thirtle says,

> First, we correct the misplacement of the musical line throughout the Psalms; and then, by applying to the general treatment known facts and teachings, as distinguished from mere conjectures, we deal with the various titles themselves in the light of the Psalms to which they properly belong. We should be rewarded by glimpses of worship in Israel during the great annual feast, also of services in commemoration of outstanding events in the history of the nation. These observations will prepare us for others, which will help us to understand the work of the Chief Musician of the Temple in Jerusalem.[61]

A. "To the chief musician" (Heb. *Lamenasseaḥ*) is a disputed term. Most construe the term to mean "to the choir leader." However, Thirtle argues that he is the "presenter" who sets it to music and, most important, it should be at the end of the Psalm, not a heading. He bases this on Habakkuk 3 which has the author (Habakkuk) in the heading along with the type of music (a prayer) and its special character (*shigionoth*). In the footing is the music director and his stringed instrument. It is found in fifty-five Psalms."[62]

B. "*Jeduthun*" (Pss. 39, 62, 77 or 38, 61, 76 following Thirtle).

Jeduthun was a person, a Levite in the post exilic period (1 Chron. 9:16). He is the father of Obed-Edom in David's time, associated with the ark (1 Chron. 16:38, 42). He was appointed by David to prophesy with musical instruments (1 Chron. 25:1-3). In Hezekiah's day, Jeduthun's sons were appointed to clean out the temple (2 Chron. 29:14). His name is mentioned

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[61]W. Thirtle, *The Titles of the Psalms*, p. 19. Most people dealing with the Psalms refer to Thirtle's discussion on the heading, but, for some reason, no one applies his conclusions to the interpretation of the Psalms. He does this in his own work.

[62]*Ibid.*, pp. 10-16. See above for further discussion.

as a priest in Nehemiah's day (Neh. 11:17). Thirtle argues that Jeduthun, Alamoth, and Sheminith are all choirs. This one especially for prophesy.[63]

C. *"Alamoth"* (Ps. 46): "Upon lyres tuned to the voice of maidens." For Thirtle, this is a ladies' choir.

D. *"Sheminith"* (Pss. 6; 12). Some say with an eight stringed lute. For Thirtle, this is a men's choir.

E. *"Neginoth"* (Pss. 4, 6, 54, 55, 61, 67, 76): "with stringed instruments."

F. *"Neḥilloth"* (Ps. 5): Obscure term ("wind instrument"?). Thirtle, following Keil, argues that the Masoretic pointing is wrong. He points it נְחָלוֹת *neḥaloth*, an inheritance. Thus, the Psalm is exulting in the fact that Israel is God's possession.

G. *"Shoshanim"* (Pss. 45, 69, 80): ("lilies"). I believe Thirtle has made a convincing argument that *shoshanim* represents springtime (as flowers in general) and therefore the Passover. The following term, *gittith*, represents something about wine vats and hence the fall and the feast of booths. They thus represent God's redemption, provision and care.[64]

H. *"Gittith"* (Pss. 8, 81, 84): related to wine press and, therefore, the fall season and the harvest feasts.

I. *"Muth Labben"* As it stands, the Hebrew עַל מוּת לַבֵּן means "pertaining to the death of the son." Commentators make several suggestions, none of which is satisfactory. Thirtle, first, identifies this musical notation with Psalm 8. He also ignores the Masoretic punctuation and goes back to the Targumic explanation which identifies the word with 1 Samuel 17:23 where Goliath of Gath is referred to as אִישׁ הַבֵּנַיִם (*'ish habbenayim)*. This phrase means something about the champion who stands between (בֵּין) the two armies.[65] I have not found anyone who interacts with Thirtle

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[63]*Ibid.,* pp. 116-17.

[64]Ibid. pp. 22-30. He rejects the idea of musical instruments.

[65]P. Kyle McCarter, *1 Samuel* in the Anchor Bible, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980, p. 304, translates it *an infantryman* or a man from the ranks. Keil and Delitzsch,

on this issue, but I believe his point of view is as viable as any other presented and perhaps is better. He believes traces of David's triumph over Goliath can be picked up in Psalm 8 (where he places the phrase *'al muth labben)* and that the Targum has it right. So, it is a musical term related to 1 Samuel 17.[66]

J. *"Shiggaion* שִׁגָּיוֹן**.**" This only appears in Psalm 7:1 and with a slight variant (עַל שְׁגִינוֹת *al shigionoth*) in Habakkuk 3:1. A lot of ink has been spilled over this word, with no satisfactory conclusion as to its meaning. Thirtle says, "A glimpse at Gesenius's *Thesaurus* shows the varied senses that were contended for half a century ago, both as regards *Shiggaion* and *shagah*. On the one hand, *Shiggaion* was rendered 'hymn,' as coming from a root meaning 'to extol'; on the other hand, 'elegy,' or 'song of sadness,' through association with a root presumably akin to שָׁאַג (*sha'ag*), 'to call out, cry out sing aloud.' Either of these meanings is agreeable to the substance of the psalm and the prayer."[67]

K. *"Selah"* (not in superscriptions). "Lift up"? Probably denotes places in the Psalm where worshippers were to lift their voices. It may also indicate a musical pause.

L. *"Higgaion"* "to meditate" on the thing being said. 9:16 (to meditate); 19:14 (different spelling, not a musical term); 92:3.[68]

Commentary on the Books of Samuel, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950, p. 130, translate it as "the champion, (middle-man)."

[66]Except for Waltke, *The Psalter as Christian Worship*, He agrees with Thirtle on placing *lamenatseaḥ* with the preceding Psalm, p. 87.

[67]Thirtle, *The Titles of the Psalms*, pp. 139-40.

[68]*Ibid.*, p. 149-50, argues that it is not a musical term, but should always be translated "to meditate."

VIII. References to events in the headings.

Most modern commentaries dismiss these headings as having been added later. Bruce Waltke has set forth seven reasons to accept their historicity. He has proven *at the least* that they are ancient.[69] Dillard and Longman, on the other hand, give three reasons why the headings are *not* original, the most important of which is that often the heading does not match the contents of the Psalm (e.g., Ps. 30).[70]

Waltke says, "The current, popular, negative opinion concerning the historical reliability of the notations in the headings regarding authorship is reflected in the following comment by Barth: 'Unfortunately, in the form in which the psalms have been handed down to us, they give no clue to the identity of the authors.'"[71]

The headings are not inspired, but they do represent an ancient commentary on the Psalms and should not be ignored.[72]

The heading for Psalm 51, e.g., indicates that the Psalm is one of confession after David's sin with Bathsheba. The context of the Psalm fits that title, except for verse 18 which says, "Build the walls of Jerusalem" and thus seems to point to a post-exilic period. Some interpret it metaphorically, but Waltke says it should be taken literally. However, if so, it refers to the future expansion and prosperity of Jerusalem under Solomon and Hezekiah.[73]

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[69]B. Waltke and James Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, p. 90.

[70]R. Dillard and Tremper Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994, pp. 214-215.

[71]Waltke, "*Notes*, p. 4a.

[72]For an excellent discussion of the headings in the organization of the Psalter, see G. Wenham, *The Psalter Reclaimed,* Wheaton: Crossway, 2013, pp. 86-87.

[73]Waltke, *The Psalms as Christian Worship,* p. 482.

Goulder says, "These old comments are faithfully recorded in the introductions to the standard commentaries, but it is rare for commentators to allow them to affect, let alone shape, their exegesis of the individual psalms.[74]

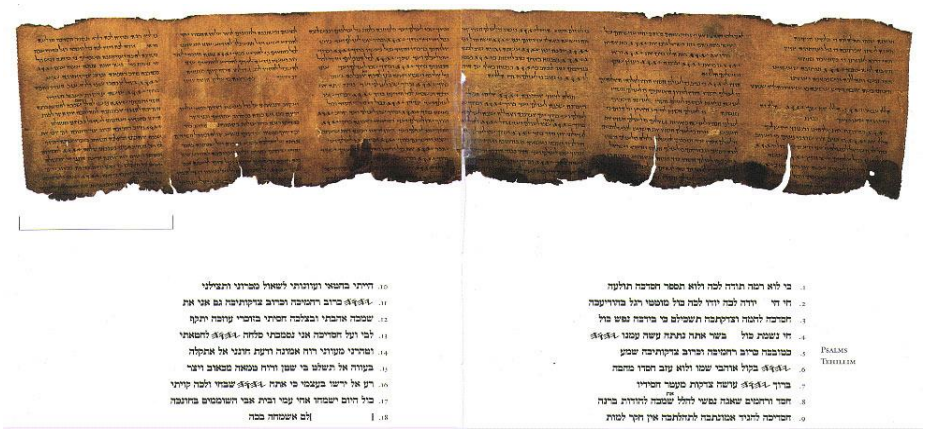
IX. The numbering of the Psalms in the Septuagint and Hebrew.

A. The headings in the Hebrew text are counted as verse 1 making the Hebrew Psalm longer by one verse (if there is a heading).

B. The Septuagint combines some Psalms and divides others: 9, 10 = 9; 114, 115 = 113; 114, 115=116; 146, 147=147. They also have one extra Psalm = 151.

X. Qumran and the Psalms.

The most important of the Qumran finds is identified as 11QPs5. The *editio princeps* is J. A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scrolls of Qumran Cave 11*. Oxford: University Press, 1965.



By Photograph: the Israel Antiquities Authority 1993; photographer not named. - Library of Congress, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4551224

[74]Michael D. Goulder, *The Psalms of the Return (Book V, Psalm 107-150)*, JSOT Supplement Series 258, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998, p. 7.

"The reason this manuscript is of such great interest to scholars is due to its major deviance from the Masoretic Psalter. Its textual makeup is that of 'apocryphal compositions interspersed with canonical psalms in a radically different order.' [Gerald Wilson, 'The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPsa) and the Canonical Psalter: Comparison of Editorial Shaping.' *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 1997]. While some maintain the masoretic order, such as some of the Psalms of Ascent, others are scattered throughout in a different order. It contains approximately fifty compositions, forty of which are found in the Masoretic text. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/-The_Great_-Psalms_Scroll - cite_note-:3-5 While some maintain the masoretic order, such as some of the Psalms of Ascent, others are scattered throughout in a different order. [Lawrence Schiffman, *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls,* NY, Oxford University Press, 2000].

"11Q5 has generated a lot of interest in scholars due to its large difference from the Masoretic Psalter, 'both in ordering of contents and in the presence of additional compositions.' [Peter W. Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms*. New York: Brill, 1997]. 'It contains several compositions that are not present in the Masoretic Psalter of 150 hymns and prayers and therefore, 'challenges traditional ideas concerning the shape and finalization of the book of Psalms' [*Ibid.*]. There are eight non-Masoretic compositions with an additional prose composition that is not formatted like a psalm. Three highlighted compositions include 'The Apostrophe to Zion,' 'Plea for Deliverance,' and Psalm 151; [J. A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scrolls of Qumran Cave 11*. Oxford UP, 1965] in addition, the prose composition is researched to be known as 'David's Compositions.' ["Psalm Scroll 11Q5. *The Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library*. Israel Antiquities Authority. 2012. Retrieved November 4, 2015]. While these are non-Masoretic, one of them, Psalm 151, was known in the Septuagint."[75]

There are disagreements among Qumran scholars as to the reason for the differences. I prefer the one that argues that the different arrangement is for liturgical purposes.

[75]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Psalms_Scroll.

XI. Hebrew Poetry

Western poetry is made up of two things: meter and rhyme. A common English meter is called the Iambus which means every other syllable is accented. The meter is called Pentameter because there are five accented syllables. Hence Iambic Pentameter.

Be not the first by whom the new are tried,

Nor yet the last to lay the old a-side.

Hebrew poetry employees neither of these devices. The most significant characteristic of Hebrew poetry is what is called parallelism.[76] This means very simply that two ideas, concepts or statements are placed side by side. This couplet from Pope's *True Wit* illustrates both rhyme and rhythm. The rhyme is obvious: tried/aside. This meter is very popular in the English language.[77] Western poetry can be "scanned" that is, the accent can be determined.[78]

Hebrew poetry does not rhyme except by coincidence. Much debate has taken place over whether Hebrew has meter. In the past, poetic passages were emended for "metrical reasons." That practice has diminished recently partly under the influence of the new field of studies called Ugaritic. Ugaritic does not seem to admit scanning, and since there is no long period of transmission of Ugaritic poetry, it is harder to refute the lack of metrical structure. Such meter as seems to exist is probably due to the poetical device called parallelism discussed below.

Hebrew poetry does have alliteration (letters agree as in the acrostic psalms or the "l" sounds in ululation). It also has assonance (vowel sounds alike), paronomasia (pun), onomatopoeia (the word sounds like the concept it describes).

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[76]See the chapter on parallelism in Thirtle, *The Titles of the Psalms*, pp. 1-28.

[77]Compare Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales.*

[78]Blank verse is an exception, but even that follows certain rules.

The primary device used in Hebrew poetry is some form of parallelism: synonymous, antithetic, synthetic, and chiasmus. The variety of these forms abounds.

When dealing with poetry (whether western or Hebrew) we must recognize that the genre calls for figures of speech, hyperbole, metaphors, and similes that must be understood for the *literal* idea behind them even though they are not themselves literal. When the Bible says that the "little hills skip like lambs," we understand that this is not to be a geological description but a poetic one. This becomes particularly difficult hermeneutically in prophetic sections as in Isaiah.

In western poetry (or even in prose) we allude to Greek mythology to get a point across. For example, "Damocles' sword is hanging over me" does not mean I believe the story about Damocles, I am simply using the dramatic element in that story to make my point. So, in Job there seem to be a number of references to Rahab, the sea personified (Yam), the fleeing serpent, and other items known in pagan mythology. This is not to suggest that the Scripture writers believed in these myths any more than we believe in Greek myths—they are using them for dramatic effect as we do in our literature.[79]

Types of parallelism are as follows:[80]

A. Synonymous or identical: very close similarity between each of two consecutive lines.

[79]R. Gordis, *The Book of Job*, p xxix, says, "There is, however, an important distinction between references to Leviathan in Job (3:8) or Rahab (26:12), or in Isaiah (27:1), both of whom were thoroughgoing monotheists on the one hand, and the striking parallels cited from Ugaritic and Akkadian literature on the other. The difference has all too often been ignored. For Hebrew writers of the level of Isaiah and Job, such references are literary ornaments, not cosmic truths."

[80]See Todd Beall, *Hebrew Poetry*, unpublished class notes, Capital Bible Seminary, for much of the following discussion.

"The heavens declare the glory of God;

And the firmament shows his handiwork." (Ps. 19:1)

B. Antithetic: opposite statements.

"They are brought down and fallen;

But we are risen and stand upright." (Ps. 20:8)

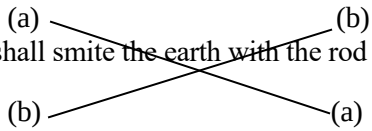
C. Synthetic or progressive: the second line takes up and develops further a thought begun in the first line.

"O Zion, that brings good tidings, get you up into the high mountains;

"O Jerusalem, that brings good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength;

"Lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God!" (Isa. 40:9).

D. Chiasmus: the reversal of the component parts of a line.



"And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips, he shall slay the wicked." (Isa. 11:4).

E. Acrostic: the first word in a line begins with a letter of the alphabet. Pss. 9-10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145, Lamentations.

F. Numeric: Proverbs 6:16 "There are six things which the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to him." This is the only way a second numeric line can be used. It creates a sense of ascension or intensity.

XII. History of the treatment of Psalms

A. The older approach was to deal with historical background and content. The headings were significant in this discussion as were the theological content and ideas. See, e.g., S. R. Driver, for a discussion and list of the various topics. He says, "The Psalms, speaking generally, consist of refle-

xions, cast into a poetical form, upon the various aspects in which God manifests Himself either in nature, or towards Israel, or the individual soul, accompanied often–or, indeed, usually–by an outpouring of the emotions and affections of the Psalmist, prompted by the warmth of his devotion to God, though varying naturally in character, according to the circumstances in which he is placed."[81]

B. A major change in approach came with the definitive work of H. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction* (1862-1932). He argued that the Psalms could be classified (*Gattungen*) according to their common elements. If there are similarities to be discovered between the Psalms, they also probably had similar uses in the religious life. Furthermore, comparative studies with common culture and religion should aid in the understanding of the biblical Psalms. He was therefore primarily concerned with how the Psalms were used in worship; the historical background was not important.[82]

C. Gunkel's categories (with modifications) were as follows:

Hymns (105)
- Victory songs (68)
- Processional hymns (84)
- Zion songs (46)
- Enthronement (47)

Complaints of the people (12)
Complaints of the individual (3)
Thanksgiving songs of the individual (116)
Royal Psalms (2,72)
Wisdom Psalms (1)[83]

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[81]S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (1897, rep. 1956 by Meridian Books), pp 368-69.

[82]H. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction* (1862-1932), Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1967.

[83]See LaSor, *et al,. OT Survey*, 512-523

With Bullock, we need to work with both the historical/content and the form approach.[84]

D. Sigmund Mowinckel went beyond Gunkel in that he tried to identify the feasts with which he believed Psalms related to the festivals of Israel. He leaned very strongly on the Ancient Near East environment to explain Israel's feasts and Psalms.[85] In *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, he says, "From the very principle of cultic interpretation it is plain that a 'feast of Yahweh's enthronement' must have existed, the main foci of which must have been Yahweh's enthronement and his kingship, based on his victory over the powers of chaos and the primeval ocean, and the creation, repetition and re-experience of these 'facts of salvation' in and through the festival, and further, the renewal of the historical 'salvation': the election, the deliverance from Egypt, and the making of the covenant. The most prominent act of this festival was the great procession with its dramatic and symbolic character, the personal presence of Yahweh being symbolized by the ark."[86] He believed this festival was celebrated in the harvest feast.

   Kitchen says, "Mowinckel's festival is principally based on the highly questionable use of supposed allusions in the Psalms, and on a scheme inspired by supposed Babylonian models (through Canaanite intermediaries). The phrase YHWH *malak* in certain Psalms, despite assertions to the contrary, means simply 'YHWH reigns' (or, '. . . exercises kingship'), and not 'YHWH has become king' (implying enthronement) as partisans of the theory have held. No adequate reason has been offered why Israel should import and celebrate an entirely alien type of festival from distant

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[84]C. H. Bulloch, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetical Books*, p. 124.

[85]See, e.g., S. Mowinckel, "The Ideal of Kingship in Ancient Israel," *He That Cometh*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, Reprint 2005, originally published 1956, 21-95.

[86]S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004, Originally published 1962, 1:129-130.

Babylonia, and so far Canaan has failed to yield indisputable evidence for assumed intermediary forms."[87]

Alter rejects the enthronement category, saying, "…there is simply no indication in the biblical corpus or the archaeological record that such a ritual existed in ancient Israel, and surely the Israelites were not such literalists as to be incapable of acclaiming God's kingship without a cultic ceremony of enthronement."[88]

B. S. Childs, consistent with his methodology, views the Psalms from the vantage point of the later believing community. The approach of Gunkel is valid enough, but since the community has used the Psalms much later in their own theological context, it does not matter much what their original form was.[89]

E. I have chosen to ignore Gunkel and Mowinckel and develop my own categories. I will list the Psalms in that category and then expound or discuss one or two of them. I will bold the numbers that I choose to expound.

XIII. Messianism (see Kidner's discussion).[90]

Jesus' discussion on the road to Emmaus provided the early church with a messianic hermeneutic of the Old Testament and Psalms. "And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, he explained to them the things concerning himself in all the scriptures. (Luke 24:27)."[91] Peter

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[87]Kenneth Kitchen *Ancient Orient and Old Testament,* Chicago: IVP, 1966, pp 103-104,

[88]Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry,* pp. xvi-xiii.

[89]B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*.

[90]Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, in Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, D. J. Wiseman, Ed. Downers Grove: IVP, 1973.

[91]See C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures, the sub-structure of New Testament Theology.*

refers, not only to Joel, but to Psalms 16, 132, and 110 (the same Psalm Jesus used with reference to himself (Matt 22:41-46)). "A list of quotations and possible allusions to the Psalms can be found in the 27th edition of *Novum Testamentum Graece*. These quotations and allusions presumably exist in every book of the New Testament except for Philemon, Jude, 2 and 3 John, and 1 Thessalonians. The attribution of authority to the Psalms in Second Temple Judaism stemmed from the widespread belief of Davidic authorship, which was also the case with the writers of the New Testament." [and of Jesus!][92]

XIV. Ugarit and the Psalms.

A. The discovery of a cache of clay tablets at a site called Ras Shamra in Syria during the 1930's provided significant input to Old Testament poetry. The reason is that the materials come from the 14th century, BC, and are thus earlier than most of the Psalms. The language is Canaanite, so a cousin of Hebrew. Mitchell Dahood, in the Anchor Bible Psalms, applied his results of studying Ugaritic to the Hebrew Psalter. The good news is that he pushed the date of the Psalms to an earlier period than most critical scholars. The bad news is that his reinterpretations changed the meaning of the Psalms dramatically. He went overboard and was so extreme that many of his conclusions have been discarded. At the same time, there is still much to be learned from Ugaritic epic poetry. Not only do we know more about the language, but the dates of the Psalms can be reevaluated.

B. Peter C. Craigie, in my opinion, has struck a good balance. He issues the following caveats:

1. There are chronological problems in that Ugaritic is from 2 to 7 centuries earlier than the Psalms.

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[92]Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, "Psalms in the New Testament," *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*, William P. Brown, Ed., Oxford: University Press, 2014. See his p. 92 for a full discussion.

2. There is a problem of geographical control in that Ugarit (Ras Shamra) is North Canaanite. So, there may be dialectical differences.

3. There is the problem of literary forms. There are no Psalms! We would probably call most of the poetry Epic. There is a problem with the state of the texts: many of the tablets are broken and there are unknown words.[93]

C. What should we do, therefore, with Ugaritic vis-à-vis the Psalms?

1. Be aware of the tendency toward extremism (à la Dahood).

2. Be careful of radical re-readings unless there is a problem in the text.

3. Be open to new ideas, but have your eyes open at the same time.

4. Lean on trusted people (such as Craigie).

[93]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*.

Book I (Psalms 1-41)[94]

Some characteristics of Book I.

Attribution of authorship:

1. David: Book one attributes all the Psalms to David (מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד *mizmor l^{e}David*)[95] except for 1 and 2 which form an introduction to the entire Psalter; 10 which was probably originally part of 9 which has the David heading, and 33 which repeats in vs. 1 the words and ideas of 32:11. Psalms 18, 36 both have לְעֶבֶד יְהוָה *l^{e}'ebed Yahweh* "to the servant of Yahweh." So, the compiler(s), at least, attributed all these Psalms to David.

2. No attribution: 1, 2, 10, 33: (4)

Historical notes (4):

> 3: "When he fled from his son Absalom"; 7: "When he sang to Yahweh concerning Cush the Benjamite"; 18: "When Yahweh delivered him from the hand of his enemies and Saul"; 30: "A song at the dedication of the house"; 34: "When he feigned madness before Abimelech, who drove him away and he left." All include events from David's life that can be found in 1-2 Samuel.

Genre:

> *Maskil*: 32 (1)
> *Mizmor* (Psalm): 3-6; 8-9; 12-13; 15, 19-24; 29-31, 38-41: (21).
> *Shir* (song): 30 (1)

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[94]The number of the Psalm to be expounded will be bolded.

[95]Ps. 7 has *shiggaion* of David, and 16 has a *miktam* of David).

Miktam (meaning not clear): 16 (1).
L^{e}hazkir (to remind): 38 (1).
Acrostic: 34, 37 (2).
Shiggaion: 7 (1)
Prayer: 17 (1)

Instruments/tunes:

'Al yeduthun?: 39 (1).
Stringed instrument 4, 6 (2).
Flute: 5 (1)
Eight string Lyre: 6, 12 (2)
*Aijeleth haša*ḥ*ar*: 22 (1)

The Introduction to the Psalter (Psalms 1 and 2)

Psalm 1. This is a "wisdom" Psalm, concerned with the conduct of the righteous.

1. What he does not do (1:1).

   "walk in the counsel of the wicked."
   "Stand in the way of sinners."
   "Sit in the seat of the scornful."

   There is progression in these 3 lines – walk, stand, and sit. This is a pattern of those who do not believe, and a true believer does not follow it.

2. What he does do (1:2).

   As the Lord admonished Joshua (1:8), so he says through the psalmist: the upright man delights in Yahweh's Torah. He meditates in it continually.

3. The result of his right conduct (1:3).

   A tree reaching for water in a dry land is a picture often alluded to in Scripture. Along the Roman aqueduct from Jerusalem to Jericho in the Wadi

Kelt, vegetation grows from the overflow, or as Job says, "when a tree is cut down, at the smell of water, it will flourish." (14:7-9). So, the upright person will flourish like such a tree and prosper.

4. The opposite is true of the wicked man (1:4-5).

   They will be blown away like chaff, nor will they be able to stand in the court of God, nor in the assembly of righteous people.

5. Conclusion (1:6).

   Yahweh takes note of the upright, but the way of the ungodly will perishes.

And so, the great divide between those who put their trust in Yahweh, and those who refused to do so, is established. Many psalms will return to this bifurcation.

Psalm 2. There is neither heading or footing in both Psalm 1 and 2. Consequently, they are usually tied together as an introduction to the Psalter.

This Psalm establishes the sovereignty of Yahweh over the entire world, another theme that shows up, especially in the מָלַךְ (*malak*) or "God rules" Psalms.

1. The nations and their kings are in an uproar against God. They want to serve Chemosh, Ashtaroth, Milcom, and hundreds of other Ancient Near East deities. However, they do not want to obey Yahweh (2:1-3).

2. Yahweh is amazed that such puerile behavior. He scoffs at them, then expresses his hot anger against them (2:4-5).

3. In contrast to the nations and their kings, Yahweh has installed (נָסַךְ *nasak*) his king in Jerusalem (Zion, my holy mountain) (2:6-9).

   Who is this king? In the historical context, it no doubt refers to David. However, this song is a favorite mine for messianic prediction. Thus, its extended meaning refers to Jesus, the Messiah. See acts 4:25-26; 13:33; Hebrews 1: 5; 5:5; Revelation 2:26, 27; 12:5; 19:15.

   This king tells of the decree (חֹק *ḥoq* inscription, a prescription), namely,

"you are my son; this day I have begotten you." Kidner says, "for any earthly king, this form of address could bear only the lightest interpretation, but the New Testament holds us to its full value which excludes the very angels, to leave only one candidate in possession" (Hebrews 1:5).[96]

Much theological ink has been spilled over the word "begotten" here and in John 3:16. One French translation is "*fils unique*" or unique son. In Psalm 2, "begetting the son" refers to the action of making him king.

God has promised his son dominion over all nations. Kidner delightfully compares this to Acts 1:8 where Jesus charges the apostles with reaching these nations with the Gospel.[97]

Category #1: Psalms of complaint/confidence

3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, **19**, 20, 22, 25, 27, 28, 30, 31, 35, 37, 40.

Twenty-two of the 41 Psalms in Book I fall into this category. The psalmist does a lot of complaining regarding his circumstances, but in each Psalm, he comes back to the place of trusting in Yahweh.

Psalm 3

This Psalm is often referred to as a "Morning Psalm" because of v. 5: "I lay down and sept; I awoke, for Yahweh sustains me." Psalm 4 is often referred to as an "Evening Psalm" because of v. 4, "Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still," and v. 8 "In peace I will both lie down and sleep." However, these could be just general statements regarding the psalmist's trust in Yahweh.

This is the first Psalm with a heading. It is attributed to David or at least is said to be about him. It is also to commemorate David's flight over Mt Olivet from his son, Absalom. Craigie, while expressing doubt about the validity of the headings, lists four parallels between the Psalm and David's flight:

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[96]Kidner, *Psalms 1-72,* p. 51.

[97]*Ibid.*

Psalm 3:3	2 Samuel 16:7-8
Psalm 3:4	2 Samuel 15:20
Psalm 3:6	2 Samuel 17:1, 16
Psalm 3:7	2 Samuel 15:13; 17:1
Psalm 3:9	2 Samuel 19:1-2

He concludes, "In summary, the parallels indicate a close link between the Psalm and David's flight from Absalom, but the significance of the parallels could be interpreted in a variety of ways."[98] Kidner accepts the historical validity of the connection with David's flight.[99] The three "selahs" indicate that the Psalm is to be sung.

1. He complains of many enemies (3:1-2).

   He says that he has many enemies, and the parallel line in 1 Samuel says that many have risen up against him. As David fled the city in ignominy, it must have seemed that all were against him. 2 Samuel 5:7 says that even David's counselor, Ahithophel, deserted him as had many people. Some even told him that the heart of the men of Israel was following Absalom, and many were saying that there was no hope for David and were quickly changing sides.

2. His confidence in Yahweh's ability to answer prayer (3:3-4).

   "But you, Oh Yahweh ("you" is emphatic), my glory and the one who raises my head." David and his people had their heads covered (with dust), others joined him in the same act. Yet, the psalmist says that Yahweh is the one capable of raising his head (3). His confidence is expressed in his prayer, "With my voice I was calling to Yahweh, and he answered me from his holy mountain." The tense forms are mixed. "Call" is an imperfect, and "he answered me" is preterit. Some change the preterit to a simple imperfect, making them both future. This translation treats "I call" as an imperfect in past time.

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[98]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, pp. 72-72

[99]Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, p. 3.

3. His complete trust in Yahweh (3:5-6).

   After David's friends met him in Gilead with beds, utensils, and food (2 Sam. 17:27-28), David was able to sleep (emphasis on "I"), and later awoke with renewed confidence in Yahweh. He was no longer afraid even if ten thousand people set themselves against him.

4. He prays for victory (3:7-8).

   The two tenses in v. 7 are perfects, and therefore sometimes translated in the past. They could be prophetic perfects (he will smite/shatter), but Dahood makes a good case for the precative (wish) form: "O that you yourself would smite . . ."[100]

   The climax is reached in v. 8: "To Yahweh belongs deliverance; your blessing is upon your people." As can be seen in the other twenty-one Psalms of complaint and trust, the psalmist has worked through his struggles to complete trust in Yahweh.

Psalm 19

This beautiful Psalm deals with God's divine revelation of himself, and the results that should follow. I have placed it in the category of confidence in Yahweh, although it really is a Psalm of God's revelation of himself to humanity.

1. Natural Revelation (19:1-6).

   By this is meant that God has revealed himself through nature. Romans 1:18-32 is a diatribe against the Gentiles who should have known enough of God to turn to him in faith. Says Paul, "They are without excuse." This Psalm could easily be the backdrop of Paul's argument, but he does not cite it directly. He does refer to v. 4 in Romans 10:18. In that passage, he refers to the Jews.

   The psalmist asserts that God reveals himself in the sky (19:1-6). The ancient

[100]Dahood, "Psalms 1-50," in *AB,* NY: Doubleday, p. 20.

world was steeped in astronomy/astrology, especially in Mesopotamia from which the three wise men came to worship Jesus. Thus, the psalmist's appeal to the heavens resonated in the ancient world, though with all their searching, they missed the one true God, and "worshipped the creature more than the creator."

Both in the daytime through the sun and at night through the moon. Every language group in the world (speech/words) hears the message (by seeing it) (19:2-3).

"Their line" is translated in some versions of the LXX as speech. Paul uses the same word in Romans 10:18 (φθόονγγος *phthonggos*). This fits the context better, though there are no Hebrew manuscripts supporting it (19:4).[101]

In the heavens, he has placed a tent (so to speak) for the sun to dwell in. Every day the sun "gets up, stretches, and feels as good as a bridegroom coming from his honeymoon suite." He loves to run. (This reminds me or Eric Liddell in Chariots of fire: he delighted in running.) Furthermore, he goes the full circuit of the heavens, so that nothing can avoid him (19:5-6).[102]

2. Special Revelation (19:7-10)

By this is meant that God has revealed himself through the written word. In the natural revelation section (19:1-6) the name for God is אֵל *El*, suitable for non-Israelites. In this special revelation unit (19:7-10), the revealed name of God (*Yahweh*) is used six times.[103] This is the Yahweh who appeared to Moses (Exodus 3), and revealed this name. It is this Yahweh who gives his word to mankind in the Torah, the testimonies, the precepts and the commandments.

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[101]Dahood, "Psalms 1-50," p. 121, suggests that קום *qwm* "their line" should be קלם *qlm* "their voice, sound" with a dropped ל *l*.

[102]See Craige, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 181. He discusses the difference with Babylonian and Egyptian hymns to the sun.

[103]See Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, p. 99.

The psalmist uses, in this unit, six nouns for God's revelation (including a different word for fear—perhaps אִמְרַת, *'imrath* as in Psalm 119:38).[104]

These compose six different parallel lines. In each line there is a noun (referring to God's special revelation), an adjective (describing the Word), and a purpose (showing the intent of the word in the believer's life).[105]

תּוֹרָה *Torah* law is the primary word used of God's teaching. Sometimes it refers to the Pentateuch, but here it is greater than that. It is perfect, and its function is to restore the soul. What a wonderful promise. Careful attention to God's word throughout the Old Testament brings the believer back to a right relationship with God.

עֵדוּת *'eduth* testimony. Exodus 25:16 says that Moses is to place the testimonies in the ark as a reminder of God's commitment to the people of Israel. These testimonies are steadfast—they do not change. Their purpose is to make the "simple" wise. Proverbs speaks often of this simple person. This does not mean simple-minded, but a willingness to subject oneself to God as a little child (Matthew 18:3), thereby, they shall be made wise (19:8).

פִּקּוּדֵי *piqudei* precepts. This word has multiple meanings: "to check on," "to muster," even "to punish." Here we are dealing with the particulars or details of God's revelation. Thus "precepts" are right. They will not waver from what is straight or upright. Their purpose is to make the heart rejoice. Careful attention to the word of God warms the heart with rejoicing.

מִצְוַת *miṣvath* commandment. The commandments were originally tied in with the ten "words" on the stone tablets. God has ordered this teaching and requires obedience to it. The commandment is pure, without adulteration. The purpose is to enlighten the eyes so that one can see where he or she is going. In this confused age, the commandment stands as pure, true, and light-giving (19:9).

יִרְאַת *yirath* fear. "Fear" does not parallel the other five nouns very well. Consequently, the editors of BHS suggest אִמְרַת *'imrath* as in Psalm 119:18,

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[104]*Imrath* means "word," which makes more sense than "fear."

[105]See p. 270 for a comparison with Psalm 119.

"Establish your word (אִמְרָתֶךָ *'imratheka*) to your servant, as that which produces reverence (יִרְאָתֶךָ *yir'atheka*) for you." This word is pure and eternal. There is no textual evidence for this reading, but it still fits the context better.

מִשְׁפָּטֶי *mišp^{e}tei* judgments. Judgment is in the root of this word, so it no doubt refers to judicial decisions. So perhaps "case law" is what is being referred to. The word of God gets explicit regarding situational needs of mankind. These judicial statements are true and together righteous. God's word is incomparable. Nevertheless, the psalmist tries to compare it to gold, even the best gold and to honey—so sweet (19:10).[106] These words all appear extensively in Psalm 119. The only word missing is חֹק *ḥoq* "statute."

These six statements indicate the practicality of the word of God in all its facets. (These six are synonyms, but with a special nuance in each). They serve to give humanity all the guidance needed for a successful life before him. If only we would apply the word to our daily existence. The last unit of the Psalm addresses this.

3. The intended result of the word (19:11-14).

The word serves as a warning to the believer. When someone warns us on a dark night that the road ahead is out, we are grateful. So, with the word—when we take heed to it, the benefits are manifold. I write these words at the age of 86, and I can attest to their validity by experience.

Unintentional sins. There are so many ways to err from God's rectitude, that often we are not aware we are doing so. The psalmist pleads with God to acquit him from hidden (unintentional) faults. These distinctions are elaborated upon in Numbers 15:27-36 where the sins of ignorance are set beside arrogant sins. Both are abhorrent to God but the former are comparatively less so, even though they still need forgiveness. So, he asks Yahweh to acquit him of hidden faults.

Arrogant sins. For these sins, the psalmist asks God to keep him back from them. In this day, there are some sins that seem to dominate the human soul

[106]See C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, NY: Harvest Books, pp. 54-65, for a marvelous essay on this verse.

and mind. May God keep us blameless and acquit us of a great transgression (פֶּשַׁע *pesh'a* rebellion) (19:11-13).

Finally, the psalmist prays that the word of God will have an impact on both his words and thoughts. He prays that they will be acceptable in the presence of God. "acceptable" (רָצוֹן *raṣon*) is the word often used of acceptance of sacrifices.[107] The believer approaches God, not as an enemy, but as one who has come to know God as his rock and redeemer (19:14).

Category #2: God's glory

Psalm 8

This Psalm exalts God, but also elevates man. There is no complaining here, just praise and thanksgiving. It begins and ends with the same line: "Oh, Yahweh, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth." C. S. Lewis says, "In its literal sense this short, exquisite lyric is simplicity itself—and expression of wonder at man and man's place in Nature . . . and therefore at God who appointed it."[108]

1. God's infinite majesty (8:1-4).

   The second line of v. 2 is problematic. Literally, it says, "Who give (imperative) your name above the heavens." Dahood, as usual, provides an interesting reading of the text. No changes are made except to combine the two words and refer to the new word as an energic form, "I will adore your majesty above the heavens."[109]

   He then turns to the lowliest of humanity—the little ones and the sucklings (nursing babies). From these, says the psalmist, you have founded strength. Kirkpatrick says, "Instead or *founded strength,* we might render, *founded a*

[107]Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, p. 100.

[108]C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms,* New York: A Harvest Book, 1958, p. 152.

[109]Dahood, "Psalms 1-50*,"* p. 49. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50,* p. 105, agrees.

stronghold, establish a defense: but the general sense is preferable."[110] Jesus refers to this sentence on Palm Sunday (Matt. 21:16), but he follows the Greek rendering, "You have prepared praise." Even little children bear witness to the greatness of God. All that may be perceived of inarticulate children: their growth, intellectual and physical development, is an overwhelming testimony to the great creator (3a).

When the psalmist contemplates the skies, which are the work of God's fingers and the night sky (the moon and stars) which he has established, he comes to a wondering conclusion. Small wonder that the ancients worshipped *Shams* (the sun) and *Sin* (the moon). Tragically, they did not penetrate the created so as to perceive the creator (4).

2. Man's elevated position (8:5-9).

But for the monotheistic psalmist, this magnificent display caused him to recognize the human condition. He wonders why God would stoop to take note of human beings (5). However, God has not only taken note of mankind, he has placed him at the head of his creation. This verse and its treatment by the translators open a window on the ancient Hebrew approach to God. The Hebrew says, "You made him a little less than God." The ancient scribes felt that this bordered on blasphemy, since it put man too close to God. Consequently, the Greek translators substitute angels for God, thus putting some space between man and God. It is the Greek translation that is followed in Hebrews 2:6-8. Speaking of which, it should be pointed out that the writer to the Hebrews is not saying that this Psalm is messianic and, therefore, pointing to Jesus. Rather, he says, it is obvious that not everything is submitted to man, but we do see the one who identified with mankind in the incarnation by becoming a little less than the angels and becoming the second Adam. Furthermore, he was glorified through suffering (8:5).

Not only has he ordered man's position close to God, he committed to him rule of God's creation. With hyperbole he says that God has put everything under his feet. However, with Christ, it is not hyperbole (8:7).

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[110] A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982 (Reprint of 1902 edition), p. 38.

He then explicates the creation to which he is referring: domesticated animals (sheep and oxen), wild animals (beasts of the field), the birds of the sky, fish of the sea, and whatever sea creatures move through the paths of the sea. There is much theology of ecology here. God from the beginning (Gen. 1:28) has made it clear that "nature" is here for the benefit of humanity. Contrary to much of the theology of ecologists today, animals are not equal to human beings (8:8).

Having reached the apex of his praise of man as God's highest creature, he reverts to his opening paeon of God's majesty, "Oh, Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth."

Category #3: Thanksgiving Psalms

9, **32**

Psalm 32

The heading. This Psalm is attributed to David.[111] It is called a *maskil* from שָׂכַל (*śakal*) to teach, act wisely (see 32:8).

1. The joy of forgiveness (32:1-4) Selah #1

David was always tender toward Yahweh. So were Hezekiah and Josiah, but David exceeds them all (cf. Psalm 51, 139). He was deeply conscious of his sin, and therefore, doubly happy when it was forgiven. His sins have been forgiven (נָשָׂא *naśa*), taken away. They are also covered so that Yahweh's eyes can no longer see them. Kidner says,

> Leaving figures of speech aside, we now learn of being reckoned righteous and of practicing the truth. Romans 4:6-8 quotes this to show that the important word *imputes* (or 'reckons') implies that, when God treats us as righteous, it is His gift to us apart from our deserts; and the

[111]Paul, in Romans 4:6-8, uses Psalm 32:1-2a in his argument that salvation is by faith, not works.

rest of that chapter uses the context of this same word in Genesis 15:6 to teach the gift is received by faith alone.[112] (32:1-2).

"And there is no deceit in his spirit" indicates that even though sin is not imputed to us by God's grace, it is not a license to sin. Our divine forgiveness should always lead us to desire to avoid deceit or guile in our lives.

In retrospect, David discusses his lack of confession and God's chastening. "His bones wasted away when he was groaning all day." Indeed, day and night Yahweh's hand was heavy on him. "My strength[113] was turned to the drought of summer. Selah." Kidner says, "Any idea, however, that we are free to 'continue in sin that grace may abound' is firmly excluded by the emphasis on sincerity at the close of our verse."[114]

2. The confession of a sinner (32:5) Selah #2.

David, as he did in the case of Bathsheba and Uriah, confessed his sin to Yahweh and did not try to cover his iniquity (see Psalm 51). He says that he would confess (about)[115] his rebellion against Yahweh. The word, rebellion, (פֶּשַׁע *peša'*) is often used of petty kings who rebel against their overlord. The word for sin in the first line (חַטָּאָה *ḥata'ah*) means to miss the mark.[116] "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Ah, but what a conclusion, "But you have forgiven the iniquity of my sin, Selah" (32:5b). For the New Testament believer, this truth is expressed in

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[112]Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, p. 133.

[113]Hebrew לְשַׁד (*lešad*) a juicy or dainty bit, hence, "my juices."

[114]Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, p. 133.

[115]Hebrew עֲלֵי (*ʿaley*) following other Hebrew MSS עָלַי (*ʿalay*). Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 264, translates, "against myself" which has merit. Most translators ignore it.

[116]In Judges 20:16 we are told that 700 Benjamites were left-handed and could sling a stone within a hair's breadth and not *miss* חַטָּאָה (*ḥata'ah*). For a fuller discussion of these words for sin, see Waltke, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, p. 468.

Romans 5:1-8. Anyone who has had a court case hanging over his or her head can testify to the joyous freedom when they are exonerated. Even more so when our sins are forgiven.

3. Public exaltation over the deliverance (32:6-7) Selah #3.

   David says, "Because of this let every saint pray[117] to you, indeed, at the time of finding." This is a literal translation of the last phrase, consisting of three words in the Hebrew. Some emend the text to מָצוֹק (*maṣoq*) "distress" (see the New Jerusalem Bible, Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 264.) But most work with the text as it is (Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, p. 134, Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 163, and Delitzsch, *The Psalms*, p. 397). The question still stands, "What does the 'finding' refer to." The traditional approach leads to Yahweh, "in a time when you may be found." Yahweh makes himself available to his children, so they should pray to him. Even when there is an overflowing of much water, they will not reach to them" (32:6).[118]

   With great assurance, David says, "You, yourself, are a secret hiding place for me." The emphasis, as in my translation, is the use of "You." The pronoun is not necessary here, so when it appears, we know that it is emphasizing what is being discussed. It is nothing less than Yahweh himself who provides this sanctuary. The parallel line is that "you will deliver me from adversity." David certainly knew adversity—from his youth to his old age—from Saul to Absalom. Yet, he will say, "From adversity you will deliver me." Not only so, but "the shouts of deliverance will surround me. Selah" (32:7).

4. Gentle but firm admonition from Yahweh (32:8-11).

   God lets David know that beyond delivering him from adversity, he has a

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[117]Wenham, *The Psalter Reclaimed*, Wheaton: Crossway, 2010, p. 173, argues that Psalm 33 flows from this admonition to praise.

[118]Waltke, *The Psalms in Christian Worship*, p. 479, says, "The Psalter's public praises of answered petitions (i.e., testimony) typically consist of a preparatory resolve to praise, followed by reflection on past need and a report of deliverance and verbal praise. . ."

particular way in which he wants him to walk. The word "way" is a *wisdom* word. Conduct is a major component of wisdom literature. Here Yahweh says that he will use instruction/wisdom to let David know the path he is to follow. Our Psalm heading says this Psalm is designed to impart wisdom (from שָׂכַל *śakal* to act wisely).[119] Here is what he means, "I will instruct you and teach you this particular (זוּ *zu*) way in which you are to walk.[120] As Yahweh instructs and teaches his children, he will give counsel, and his eye will be on him. What a wonderful combination of words. Counsel, advice, direction will be given to God's saints, and all the while, he will not take his eye from him. As a loving parent teaches his child to walk, but never takes his eye off him, so our loving heavenly father instructs, teaches, and advises us without removing his eye.

Yet, sadly, we tend to ignore this wonderful instruction. So, God exhorts us to avoid being like an untrained horse or mule (without understanding). Such animals have for their equipment (literally "ornaments") to control them a bridle or halter, otherwise, they will not come to you. A trained horse (one with understanding) will come when called without any equipment to force him to come. Yahweh admonishes David to come when called and not force him to "put a heavy hand on him" as in v. 4 (32:9).

David draws a contrast between the wicked and the one who has put his trust in Yahweh. Obviously (as Job and Qoheleth teach us), not all wicked have many sorrows. This is a wisdom statement: it is a principle (not a promise) that the wicked will suffer for his wickedness. My observation of life from the perspective of 86 years bears out this statement. The same discussion fits the one who trusts in Yahweh. I have seen godly people suffer greatly through the loss of children, health, or finances. Still, it is to be expected that as a principle, one who trusts in Yahweh will have God's *ḥesed* (grace) surrounding him. This word *ḥesed* appears some 250 times in the Old Testament. It means "goodness, kindness, grace, even beauty (Isaiah

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[119]See H. Heater, "Young David and the Practice of Wisdom," in *Integrity of Heart; Skillfulness of Hands*, Eds. Dyer and Zuck, Grand Rapids, Baker, 1994, pp. 50-61.

[120]See my discussion of this word at Psalm 9:16 and 10:2 (p. 118).

40:6).[121] The Septuagint translates with the word "mercy." It is an act of grace that flows from God's character—and it surrounds the one who has put his trust in him. I love the translation of the New Jerusalem Bible: "but one who trusts in Yahweh is enfolded in his faithful love" (32:10).

The concluding verse wraps up all he has been saying, "Rejoice in Yahweh and be glad, O righteous ones; raise a cry of joy all those who are upright in heart." As Paul says to the Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). "A glad heart makes a cheerful countenance" (Prov. 15:13). And so, we end our study of this wonderful Psalm of forgiveness, deliverance, and happiness.

Category #4: Imprecatory Psalms

5, 10, 17, 35, 58, 59, 69, 70, 79, 83, 109, 129, 137, and 140

"An imprecation is a curse that invokes misfortune upon someone. Imprecatory psalms are those in which the author imprecates; that is, he calls down calamity, destruction, and God's anger and judgment on his enemies. This type of Psalm is found throughout the book. The following are a few examples of the imprecatory language gleaned from these psalms:

"Declare them guilty, O God! Let their intrigues be their downfall. Banish them for their many sins, for they have rebelled against you" (Psalm 5:10).

"Rise up, LORD, confront them, bring them down; with your sword rescue me from the wicked" (Psalm 17:13).

"Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you, on the kingdoms that do not call on your name; for they have devoured Jacob and devastated his homeland" (Psalm 79:6–7).

"Happy is the one who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks"

[121]Nelson Glueck has devoted an entire book to this word: *Hesed in the Bible*, Wipf and Stock Eugene OR, 2011. But there is disagreement with his conclusions that the word means primarily covenant loyalty.

(Psalm 137:9).[122]

Two of the most difficult questions in the Old Testament revolve around the *ḥerem* warfare, or total annihilation of populations, such as at Jericho (Joshua 6:17), and against the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:1-3); and imprecatory Psalms where the Old Testament believers breathe out the most awful curses against their enemies. This always stands in stark contrast to Jesus' teaching that believers should love their enemies (Matt. 5:43-44).

In any attempt to tackle the problem of imprecations, I would encourage the reading of C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms.* His thoughtful, honest, and very literary discussion is without peer, in my thinking.[123]

At the outset, I believe we can compare these imprecations with the oath formulas. To add intensity and validity to the statement one makes either for or against an issue, a string of curses is added. For example, "May God cause me to lose the strength in my right hand, and may my children beg bread, and may my wife be put in prison, IF I STOLE FROM THAT MAN [meaning I did not steal] or IF I HAVE NOT BEEN FAITHFUL TO MY MASTER." Job 31 is a marvelous example of this kind of oath taking: "If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or I have lurked at my neighbor's doorway, MAY MY WIFE GRIND FOR ANOTHER, AND LET OTHERS KNEEL DOWN OVER HER." These exaggerated self-cursings become conventionalized to the point that that the details of the self-cursings are omitted with, "May the Lord do so to me [all the self-cursings unspoken] and more also, if I do not do so and so." Eli said to Samuel, "What is the word that He spoke to you? Please do not hide it from me. MAY GOD DO SO TO YOU, AND MORE ALSO, if you hide anything from me of all the words that He spoke to you" (1 Sam. 3:17). Even God follows this convention: "So I swore in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest [MAY SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPEN TO ME, ETC.]. The versions have given us the intent of the oath formula which is, "They shall not enter into my rest." This is repeated in Greek in Hebrews 3:11. This may be what is meant by, "Then he [Peter] began to curse and swear, 'I do not know the man'" (Matt. 26:74).[124]

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[122]https://www.gotquestions.org/imprecatory-psalms.html, accessed May 21, 2020.

[123]C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms,* "The Cursings," pp. 20-33.

[124]See also 1 Sam 25:22; 2 Sam 3:9, 35; 19:13; 1 Kings 2:23; 2 Kings 6:31 (all are

My point is that the same culture that allows a person to call down maledictions on himself or on one he loves (Eli/Samuel), allows a person to do the same with one who is an enemy, who shows by his wickedness against the Psalmist that he is also rebelling against God and therefore is worthy of these curses. Furthermore, by conventionalizing the details to oblivion, they are showing that they are basically hyperbole, including Ps. 137:9 "How blessed will be the one who seizes and dashes your little ones against the rock." No wonder Jesus banned such oath taking (Matt. 5:34-37; 23:16-22).

The standard approach to imprecatory Psalms is as follows:

> The key to understanding the imprecations is to realize that David's enemies are God's enemies. David desires that God's righteousness be vindicated, and that the enemies be punished. As God's anointed one, David's enemies were enemies of the Lord and His people. Perhaps today we do not have as great an appreciation for the spiritual warfare that is continually going on, and the seriousness of sin in God's eyes. This makes it hard for us to understand these psalms.[125]

The following discussion is taken from "Got Questions."[126]

"When studying the imprecatory psalms, it is important to note that these psalms were not written out of vindictiveness or a need for personal vengeance. Instead, they are prayers that keep God's justice, sovereignty, and protection in mind. God's people had suffered much at the hands of those who opposed them, including the Hittites, Amorites, Philistines, and Babylonians (the subject of Psalm 137). These groups were not only enemies of Israel, but they were also enemies of God; they were degenerate and ruthless conquerors who had repeatedly tried and failed to destroy the Lord's chosen people. In writing the imprecatory psalms, the authors sought vindication on God's behalf as much as they sought their own.

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self-imprecation; none are other-imprecation).

[125]Beall, *Unpublished Class Notes.* He is leaning on Chalmers Martin, "The Imprecations in the Psalms," *Princeton Theological Review* 1 (1903) 537-53.

[126] https://www.gotquestions.org/imprecatory-psalms.html, accessed May 21, 2020.

"While Jesus Himself quoted some imprecatory psalms (John 2:17; 15:25), He also instructed us to love our enemies and pray for them (Matthew 5:44–48; Luke 6:27–38). The New Testament makes it clear that our enemy is spiritual, not physical (Ephesians 6:12). It is not sinful to pray the imprecatory psalms against our spiritual enemies, but we should also pray with compassion and love and even thanksgiving for people who are under the devil's influence (1 Timothy 2:1) We should desire their salvation. After all, God 'is patient… not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance' (2 Peter 3:9). Above all things, we should seek the will of God in everything we do and, when we are wronged, leave the ultimate outcome to the Lord (Romans 12:19).

"The bottom line is that the imprecatory psalms communicate a deep yearning for justice, written from the point of view of those who had been mightily oppressed. God's people have the promise of divine vengeance: 'Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly' (Luke 18:7–8; cf. Revelation 19:2)."

Still, I [Heater] would argue, it is inappropriate and perhaps impossible to impose New Testament teaching on the Old Testament imprecatory Psalms. It is a cultural matter, and hyperbolic as well. The practice of using "so and so" rather than the details indicates that the self-cursing is fairly meaningless except to emphasize the point. The same may be said of "other-cursing" or imprecatory Psalms.

Category #5: Testimony of Yahweh's goodness

Psalms 11, **16**, 22.

Psalm 16

1. Confession of the Psalmist (16:1-4)

   The psalmist acknowledges that Yahweh is the one in whom he has trusted, therefore, he asks him to keep him. Dahood has an interesting approach, "this profession of faith was composed by a Canaanite convert to Yahwism. Verse 2 contains the professio fidei, vss. 3-4 are the abjuration of the false

Canaanite gods he once served, while vv. 5-11 enumerate the joys and blessings which issue from this newly found faith In Yahweh."[127]

These early verses (1-4) are fraught with difficulty. The second line in Hebrew is literally, "My goodness not to/on you." Kidner maintains a more traditional approach with, "My good (or welfare) is not beyond (or additional to) thee."[128]

Verse 3 is equally difficult. Several attempts have been made to emend the text. I believe Dahood is correct in identifying the "holy ones" as Canaanite deities and the psalmist's delight was previously in them.[129]

We are still in the textual woods in v. 4. The Hebrew says literally, "They multiply their pains (cf. Gen. 3:16) after [them] they hasten." This is usually taken to mean that those who pursue other gods will suffer for it. The psalmist goes on to say that he refuses to pour out their libations of blood nor take up their names on his lips. This line would mean that he refuses to partake in religious ritual involving libations (pourings) of blood.

2. Testimony of the Psalmist (16:5-8).

The psalmist turns now to his relationship with Yahweh, using the metaphor of inheritance of land (some relate this to 1 Sam. 26:19). His inheritance is more than land possession. Yahweh is his inheritance and cup. Perhaps the cup refers to the drinking trough as in Psalm 23:5. The psalmist does not look to mere earthly inheritance: Yahweh is his inheritance. Furthermore, he says, "You (emphatic: you, yourself) are the one who firms up my border.

The metaphor continues in verse 6. The measuring lines have fallen to him in pleasant places. When my spiritual property was sub-divided by Yahweh, says the Psalmist, it was in pleasant places. He goes on to say, "Yes, I have

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[127]Dahood, "Psalms 1-50," p. 87. See my earlier caution regarding Ugaritic and Dahood's use of it to interpret the Psalms.

[128]Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, p. 83.

[129]Dahood, "Psalms 1-50," p. 87.

a beautiful inheritance." This comes close to Paul, "For me to live is Christ . . ." (Phil. 1:21).

The psalmist's testimony moves to the spoken word, "I will bless Yahweh who has given me counsel." His life is guided by the advice Yahweh gives him. Indeed, in the depth of the night (plural), my conscience instructs me. The word conscience in the Hebrew is, "My kidneys" as the seat of emotion (16:7).[130]

The psalmist wants us to understand that his testimony includes putting Yahweh in a prominent position. "I have set . . ." The Hebrew means to be smooth even, like. So, he has put Yahweh in a place before him, so as not to miss what Yahweh advises him. Furthermore, he does it continually. Because of this prominent place of Yahweh, he can say, with assurance, "I will not be moved." This is a wonderful testimony (16:8).

3. The Psalmist's joy as a result of his relationship with Yahweh (16:9-11).

The use of this Psalm in the New Testament referring to Jesus and his resurrection will be taken up later in the messianic section (p. 198). For now, the last of the Psalm must continue the same context of the psalmist's testimony.

The conclusion to be drawn from the preceding verses is that the psalmist is happy. His heart rejoices and his glorious (member—tongue?) exults. Indeed, his body dwells confidently (Hebrew: trustingly).

He then gives the reason: "You will not abandon my soul to Sheol, nor will you permit your saint to see the Pit." This verse echoes the Old Testament hope that the believer would be kept alive by Yahweh until old age has taken its toll. Kirkpatrick says, "Fellowship with Jehovah guarantees outward security as well as inward joy."[131]

"You will make me to know the way of life." Wisdom often speaks of the

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[130]See Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms,* p. 76.

[131]*Ibid.,* p. 77.

"way." Here the psalmist says that part of Yahweh's counsel and the psalmist's conscience teaching him in the night is that he learns the way (right conduct) that produces life. Satisfaction of happiness ensues when one is in the presence of God. The Greek says, "You have filled me . . ." and a later version of the Greek has read "satisfaction (*śoba*ʿ) as *šeba*ʿ or seven fold. The psalmist is a happy person!

Interestingly enough, Dahood argues that the psalmist is referring to immortality (not resurrection).[132] Craigie summarizes the passage well,

> With respect to the initial meaning of the psalm, it is probable that this concluding section should not be interpreted either messianically or in terms of individual eschatology, on the later Christian interpretation along these lines, see the Explanation (below). The acute concern of the psalmist was an immediate crisis and an immediate deliverance. His body had been endangered and his life threatened with untimely termination in Sheol: on Sheol see the discussion at Ps 6:5 (Comment). The word Pit is poetically synonymous to Sheol. But emerging confidently from the crisis of immortality, the psalmist acknowledges that God makes him know, or experience, the "path of life," not the afterlife, but the fulness of life here and now which is enriched by the rejoicing which emerges from an awareness of the divine presence.[133]

We will take up the use of this Psalm in the New Testament later (p. 198).

[132]Dahood, "Psalms 1-50," p. 91.

[133]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50,* p. 158.

Category #6: Character of the Godly

Psalms **15**, 26

Psalm 15

I have identified only two Psalms in this category. Psalm 15, in particular, sounds like wisdom teaching. David asks the question, "who can dwell in your tent." He does not say, "in your temple (הֵיכָל *heykal*)" nor "in your house (בַּיִת *bayith*), both of which would refer to the Solomonic temple, but "in your tent." The parallel line asks the same question with the verb (יִשְׁכֹּן *yiškoṇ*) "to dwell." The root of this verb makes up the word "tabernacle" (מִשְׁכָּן *miškan*). During David's time, we know that there was a tent pitched to contain the ark of the covenant (2 Sam. 6:17). Isa. 33:13-16 has a number of parallels to this Psalm. This may indicate that the Psalm was written before Isaiah's time.

Holy mountain is, of course, Mount Zion, or Davidic Jerusalem. So, the question is posed as to who is worthy to occupy the area Yahweh occupies. The answer is in verses 2-5a. It consists of ten items, creating a similarity to the ten commandments and, therefore, ten items for teaching wisdom to those who want to be what God wants them to be.[134]

Craigie sets out the ten-fold wisdom requirements thusly:

A. *Positive Conditions* (v 2)
- (i) walking blamelessly
- (ii) doing right
- (iii) speaking truth

B. *Negative Conditions* (v 3)
- (iv) no falsity
- (v) no evil
- (vi) no reproach

C. *Positive Conditions* (v 4)

D. *Negative Conditions* (v 5)

[134]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50,* p. 150, follows Gunkel in arguing that this Psalm is a ritual in which a priest is asked by the pilgrim what is required to enter the temple, and the pilgrim recites the "ten commandments." This is followed by a blessing of the priest in v. 5. It seems far more likely to me that David is giving a general statement on wisdom conduct for those who want to dwell where God does. Wenham, *The Psalter Reclaimed*, p. 64, says they are "entrance liturgies setting out the moral requirements for those who would worship in the temple…"

(vii) despise reprobates	(ix) no usury
(viii) swear to do good	(x) no bribery[135]

1. The one who walks in integrity and does the right thing (15:1).

   Integrity is the word תָּמִים (*tamim*), a plural form of תָּם (*tam*) that appears frequently in the Scripture. The first occurrence of the adjective תָּם (*tam*) is attributed to Jacob. Translators have struggled with the meaning in the context. KJV has "plain"; NASB has "peaceful"; NIV has "content to stay at home"; NJB has "quiet." Whatever the precise meaning, a favorable disposition of Jacob should be assumed.

   Conduct. Integrity means that one is what he/she purports to be and means what he/she says. He does righteous acts, that is, he always does the right thing.

2. He is careful in his speech (15:2b–3a).

   Speech. "He speaks truth in his heart." What does it mean to speak truth in his heart? Craigie may have it right when he says, "… The primary truth is the inner truth of the heart (viz. the mind), which in turn results in the outward speaking of the truth…thus, the psalmist is concerned primarily with inner truth… (15:2).

   The parallel line in 15:3a says, "he does not take up slander on his tongue." The word "slander" is רָגַל (*ragal*) "to walk about," or, as we would say in English, "be a busybody," meaning, "to gossip," "to slander."

3. He treats his neighbors well (15:3b).

   He does not do harm to his friend nor take up a reproach against his neighbor. The first phrase is self-evident: "he does nothing bad to his friend." The second line is more difficult. A reproach is usually a complaint or criticism. Here it should be understood as a false complaint. This wisdom statement prefigures our Lord's instruction regarding enemies and Paul's teaching in

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[135]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 150

Romans 12.

4. He is careful of the company he keeps (15:4 a).

Verse 4 is difficult and variously translated. Does the psalmist refer to himself (he puts himself down) or to someone else? Working backwards from the next line, "he honors those who fear the Lord," the second option makes more sense. He is careful of the company he keeps, rejecting those who are despised in his judgment.

The next two lines are equally difficult. Literally: "he swears to do harm, and does not change."

KJV: "*he that* sweareth it to *his own* hurt."
NASB: "he swears to his own hurt."
NIV: "who keeps an oath even when it hurts."
NJB: "who stands by an oath at any cost."

All four of these translations assume the meaning to be that the man of integrity will keep the oath he has made even when it presents difficulty to him. Dahood, followed by Craigie, treats the "l" ל in the "to do harm" as a separation particle as in Ugaritic. As result, the translation is "he swears to do no harm."[136] This is attractive, but it is too novel to accept readily. So, we should retain the traditional understanding of "he does not change an oath made, even if it is painful."

5. He is honest and generous with his money (15:5a).

God is always looking after the poor in his legislation. The Israelite was not prohibited lending with interest, only the person to whom it is loaned. Here, the context calls for a poor person. If a fellow Israelite comes for help, he is in dire straits. Money by a person with integrity will be loaned without interest.

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[99]Dahood, "Psalms 1-50*,"* p. 84; Craigie, "Psalms 1-50," p. 150.

Likewise, if he becomes a judge.[137] He will have the reputation of not receiving bribes against the innocent (Exodus 23:8; Deuteronomy 16:19).

6. The concluding promise (15:5b).

The person who incorporates these five positives and five negative characteristics into his life will be supported by God in such a way that he will never stumble in his life, and he will be well-equipped to enter into God's presence.

Category #7: Acrostic Psalms

Psalms **9-10**; 25; 34; 37.

There are four acrostic Psalms in Book I. The alphabet is used as a literary device (which is what I consider it to be)[138] in which the words of the Psalm are wrapped around the letters of the alphabet. The quintessential acrostic Psalm is 119 which has 176 stanzas of eight lines. Each stanza is made up of one letter of the alphabet. That Psalm is rather prosaic, and not very creative, extoling the law of Yahweh.

In Book I, Psalms 25, 34, and 37 are rather easy to read. Both 25 and 34 are missing one letter ו (waw) and conclude with an extra line beginning with פ (peh). Psalm 25 is missing a ק (qoph), and 37 is missing an ע ('ayin). Both can be restored with slight emendations.

But what can be said about Psalms 9-10? The Greek and the Vulgate versions along with some Hebrew manuscripts treat them as one Psalm. Consequently, these versions will have a different numbering system after Psalm 10. Furthermore, the Psalms are or were an acrostic. Psalm 9 has nine letters of the alphabet of the eleven that go from Aleph to Lamed. This accounts for one half

[137]See Delitzsch, *Psalms*, I:216.

[138]See Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 117

of the alphabet.[139] The other half is reflected in Psalm 10 with possibly six letters of the alphabet. It also has ע (‘ayin) and פ (peh) reversed as in Lamentations.[140] In addition, there is no heading for Psalm 10. So, it is probable that Psalms 9-10 were originally one Psalm. But, if that is true, what happened to the other five letters?

Craigie dates the Psalms to the time of the monarchy and perhaps as early as the united monarchy,[141] in other words, to the time of David. My conclusion is that in their pre-canonical form, these two Psalms were only one, but as they were adapted for different purposes, the format was changed. Added to that is the problem of textual transmission, and perhaps an explanation for the differences can be given. While acrostics 25, 34, and 37, are easy to read, Psalms 9-10 have many difficulties.

Psalm 9

“A Song to the Righteous Judge” (Aleph to Kaph)

1. The title.

   Following Thirtle’s proposition, the phrase “to the chief musician, to the tune of *‘al muth laben*” belongs to Psalm 8. This leaves “a Psalm of David” as the heading for both 9 and 10. There is an ongoing debate about whether “l^{e} David” means “for David,” “about David” or “belonging to David,” that is, authored by him.[142] Delitzsch argues in lyric fashion for Davidic authorship of this Psalm,[143]

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[139]See H. Heater, “Structure and meaning in Lamentations,” in *Vital Old Testament Issues*, ed. R. B. Zuck, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996, p. 151, for a discussion of the split alphabet.

[140]See *Ibid.*, pp. 157-59, for a discussion of the reversal of ע (‘ayin) and פ (peh).

[141]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 117.

[142]See p. 28 for further discussion.

[143]Delitzsch, *The Psalms*, pp. 160-61. See also Waltke, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, p. 89.

2. Thanksgiving to God (9:1-2).

   David is so happy he uses four alephs to express his thoughts. He confesses; he recounts; he is happy; and he exults. He begins with Yahweh and concludes with the Highest. He has focused his attention on the Lord whom he loves.

3. The victory God granted him (9:3-6).

   The enemies of David have been turned back, made to stumble, and destroyed. This scenario could fit in 2 Samuel 8 which is a recapitulation of several enemies that David has routed: Philistines, Moab, the Arameans of Zoba and Damascus; "So Yahweh delivered David everywhere he went" (2 Sam. 8:6). David goes home rejoicing in all that Yahweh the most high has done in his behalf (9:3).[144]

   The reason, says David, is that Yahweh has carried out judgment and justice. These two words are similar, but the first is more general (*mišpat*) and the second more specifically tied to the court (*din*). The human king was assigned by God the responsibility of carrying out judgment and justice as he sat upon the human throne. Kings are evaluated by this standard throughout the Old Testament (cf. Jeremiah 22:1-5). Now, says David, Yahweh who sits upon his heavenly throne constantly (present participle) judges righteously (9:4).

   How has Yahweh performed this judgment? He has rebuked nations and destroyed the wicked. He has blotted out their name forever. "The enemy" is singular while the verb "to come to an end" (*tammu*) is plural. Delitzsch shows that this grammatical construction occurs elsewhere (Isa. 16:4; Judges 20:37) (9:5).[145]

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[144]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 118, treats these verbs as prophetic futures, but I prefer the past tense. On the other hand, Dahood treats them as precative perfects, that is, wish forms. "May such and such happen."

[145]Delitzsch, *Psalms*, p. 164. Delitzsch is generally ignored by modern scholars as irrelevant. Admittedly, he did not have the advantage of the materials that have come to light since his time, but he is no doubt one of the greatest Hebrew scholars and controls the textual material as few others. Dahood, "Psalms 1-50," p. 55, makes the same

The last word in v. 6 (הֵמָּה *hemah*) is unusual. Delitzsch treats it as an emphasis on "their memory." Dahood argues that, as in Ugaritic, it means "behold," but Craigie shows that he is wrong. Still, Craigie emends the text to הִנֵּה (*hineh*) "behold."[146] This provides the letter ה (*he*) for the acrostic.

4. Praise to Yahweh who makes all things right (9:7-10).

   Yahweh sits forever (on his throne). David declares his tenet as to the equity and justice of God's activity. His very throne is established for justice. How reassuring is the statement of faith. In spite of the injustice found around the world, we know that God is still on his throne and some day will make all things right. The time will come when he will judge the entire world in justice and enter into a court case with the people in rectitude (9:7-8).

   Furthermore, Yahweh is a refuge to the oppressed. A refuge in the time of adversity. The next line gives wonderful, warm assurance. Let those who know your name trust in you—why, "Because you, Oh Yahweh, do not abandon those who trust in you." This concludes the unit that expresses confidence in Yahweh (9:9-10).

5. A call for praise (9:11-12).

   These wonderful truths cause David to call for praise to break out. The word "sing" in this form often means to play a musical instrument. It is also the root of the word "Psalm." Yahweh sits in Zion (upon his throne). His works are also to be declared among the people.

   The next line sounds strange to modern ears. Literally, David says, "The one seeking blood, them he remembers." The word for blood is plural. As such, it always refers to violence. In the Old Testament, God requires the death penalty for murder (Gen. 9:5). As a result, when a family member was murdered, it was incumbent on another family member to kill the murderer. Here we see that Yahweh is the ultimate avenger of blood. When someone

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argument as Delitzsch, although the verb in Isaiah is singular in 1QIs[a], Greek, Syriac, and the Vulgate.

[146]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 115.

hurts his people, God will remember them. Likewise, he will not forget the cry of the afflicted (9:12).

6. David's personal plea (9:13-14)

   Then David cries out to Yahweh: "Be gracious to me, and look upon my affliction caused by those who hate me. You are the one who lifts me up from the gates of death." In other words, "You keep me from dying at the hand of my enemies" (9:13).

   There is a reason for this prayer. When Yahweh delivers his saint, it will allow the saint to declare all Yahweh's praises in the gates of the daughter of Zion where he will exult in Yahweh's deliverance. He has moved from the gates of death to the gates of the daughter of Zion (9:14).

7. Ironic judgment of the nations (9:15-20).[147]

   Again, the tense of these verbs is difficult. They are perfect (completed) tenses, but subject to different interpretations. Dahood considers them precatives: "Be mired; be known."[148] Another possibility is that they are prophetic perfects, "they will be mired, will be known." Craigie treats them as past tenses as do I: "They have sunk,"[149] as do most of the versions.

   The irony is that the nations have dug a pit to catch God's people, but they themselves have fallen into it. Further (parallel line), the net they spread to catch God's people has ensnared their feet. These metaphors, of course, are taken from the practice of hunting and fowling (9:15).

   The next line indicates that this comes from Yahweh. He is known by the judgment he has carried out by seeing to it that the wicked are ensnared by the work of their own hands (9:16). In the middle of v. 16 appear the words *higgaion* and *Selah*. The word *higgaion* basically means to meditate (see

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[147]C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, pp. 9-19, deals with the topic of judgment in the Psalms.

[148]Dahood, "Psalms 1-50*,"* p. 58.

[149]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50,* p. 114.

Psalm 19:14 where it is "meditations" or "thoughts"). Only in 92:4 is it associated with musical instruments. Here I am taking it to mean, "Pause and think about that."

David picks up on the wicked theme in v. 17 again, only here it is plural. He says, "Let the wicked *return* to Sheol." Sheol is a dim, dark place where people go when they die. It is more than the grave, but the latter is the way to it. The word "return" is noteworthy. How can they return to Sheol if they have never been there? Dahood cites Psalm 139:15 where the psalmist says he was created in the lowest part of the earth, and so now, says David, the wicked will return to the place they were created.[150] He references Gen. 3:19 ("From dust you are and to dust you shall return"). Kidner says, "Death is their natural element."[151] David then explains who the wicked are: "All the nations who forget God" (Lit. "forgetters of God") (9:17).

What are the implications of this truth? He answers that question in v. 18. "Because," he says, "the poor will not forever be forgotten, nor will the hope of the oppressed perish forever." "Do not give up," he says, "God will someday vindicate you" (9:18).

David then cries out to Yahweh, asking him to rise to the task of not letting man become strong. The word for man here and in v. 20 could be translated "mortal," that is, man in his weakness. He is subject to death. Rather than allow man to arrogate himself against God, let him he judged in God's presence (9:19).[152]

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[150]Dahood, "Psalms 1-50*,"* p. 58. See also Craigie, *Psalms 1-50,* p. 116.

[151]Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, p. 70.

[152]Cf. Psalm 52:7.

Psalm 10 (Lamed to Tau)

"A Lament about the Prosperity of the Wicked And a Call to Yahweh to Provide Justice"

We are working under three assumptions: (1) Psalms 9-10 were originally an acrostic with a split alphabet (Aleph to Kaph; Lamed to Tau), (2) In the process of revising an old Psalm for Book I, there has been a disruption of the acrostic (Psalm 9 has 10 of the 11 letters and Psalm 10 has 7 of the 11), and (3) there has been considerable textual disruption during its transmission. This is especially true of Psalm 10.

Chapter 9 exhibits a robust confidence in the implementation of God's justice. Much of it is in the past tense, indicating, I surmise, David's victories over his surrounding enemies. He concludes with "Let them know that they are mere mortals—Selah" (9:20).

Chapter 10, on the other hand, is more pessimistic. The hearty, triple Aleph praise to Yahweh of Psalm 9, does not occur in Psalm 10. It is obviated with a lament that Yahweh has disengaged from the human arena (à la the eighteenth-century deists!) The wicked are triumphant and doing so by turning their back on Yahweh.

There are certain connectors linking the two Psalms. (1) the poetic pronoun זוּ (zu)[153] (9:15//10:2). "In this net . . ." "In these devises . . ." (2) "Arise Oh Yahweh . . . (9:19//10:12); (3) the hunting/fowling motif (9:15//10:2). These tie the Psalms together and strengthen the argument for an original combination of the two Psalms.

1. Yahweh's absence in the arena of suffering (10:1-2).

   The *lamed* stanza, as the second half of the acrostic, is in the word, "why." Craigie has an extensive discussion of atheism in this Psalm.[154] This is true

[153]Joüon, *Grammaire de l'Hebreu Biblique*, Rome: Institut Biblique Pontifical, 1923, p. 448.

[154]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, pp. 126-27.

of the wicked, but David shows his own susceptibility to the malady. When he looks around at all the adversity undergone by those who have put their trust in Yahweh, he can only, with plaintive cry, ask, "Why, oh Yahweh, do you stand far off;[155] why do you hide yourself in times of adversity" (10:1).

The wicked are in hot pursuit of the poor, but not just "pursue," they do it out of their arrogance. They believe they can cause the poor to suffer with impunity. Yet, David pleads, "Let them be caught in the very devises they have dreamed up for others." The presence of the demonstrative זוּ (zu) emphasizes the devices, "Those *very* devises" (10:2).

2. The state of the atheistic (practically speaking) wicked (10:3-11).

Atheism, as understood today, did not exist in the Ancient Near East. However, the wicked by his deeds, is an atheist, practically speaking. He boasts about whatever his soul desires (v. 3). The second half of the line is difficult. It says, literally, "The plunderer has blessed; he has despised Yahweh." The NASB treats the word "blessed" as "cursed." In Job 1:5 and 2:9 this same word is used with Yahweh. It is usually considered a correction of the scribes, who will not allow Yahweh to be cursed. So, they changed the word to "bless Yahweh." The same practice may be at work here, even though the Masoretes have not counted it as such. This would mean that the "plunderer" has cursed and despised Yahweh," a bold statement indeed. No wonder David asks why Yahweh has not dealt with such a blasphemous person (10:3).

The text of v. 4 is very difficult, leading to many different translations. The Hebrew, literally, is, "The wicked, according to the height of his face, does not inquire, there is no God, all his devices." There is ample evidence in the Hebrew manuscripts of a "b" before height, so "In the height (haughtiness) of his face" is clear enough. The wicked are arrogant, and they act accordingly.

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[155]The Hebrew here בְּרָחוֹק (*bᵉraḥoq*) would normally be translated "in a distance," but Dahood ("Psalms 1-50," p. 61) shows that the "b" in Hebrew can at times be equivalent to "m" "from," as in Ugaritic. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50,* p. 121, agrees.

The second line, "He does not seek or inquire," is understood by most versions to refer to the wicked, and they supply an object: "He does not seek *God*." "There is no God" is the substance of the wicked one's attitude.

Finally, "All his devices (or perhaps, thoughts)" modifies the statement, "There is no God." As a result, we have as a translation, "The wicked in his arrogance, does not seek or inquire of God. All his thoughts (or devices) are, 'there is no God.'" (10:4).

Verse 5 has also yielded different translations. KJV says, "His ways are always grievous," reading the Hebrew חוּל (*ḥul*) as "twist" or "writhe." Most translate it "prosperous" from the idea of "strength" in this word. The next phrase is literally, "On high your judgments from before him." The versions tend to agree that this means "God's judgments are on high, out of his sight" (NASB). Finally, the wicked puffs at or snorts at all his adversaries. In other words, he is not bothered by them "He fears neither God nor man"[156] (10:5).

The first line in verse 6 is clear enough. "He says to himself, 'I will never slip.'" But the next line is difficult. I believe Craigie's treatment is commendable, "Happiness without misfortune—so he has sworn." By changing the vowel pointing of אַשֵּׁר (*'ašer*) to אָשֵׁר (*'ašer*), he derives "happiness." He then brings in אָלָה (*'alah*) from verse 7 to verse 6 to be translated "He has sworn."[157] This yields the following, "He says to himself, 'I will never slip—happiness without trouble,' so he swears."

David, having spoken of the arrogant mind of the wicked, now turns to his speech.[158] His mouth is full of deceit of all kinds and oppression. There is a ו (*waw*) meaning "and" before "deceit," but there is adequate textual evidence to drop it[159] (10:7).

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[156]Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 52.

[157]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, pp. 121-22.

[158]C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, p. 75, discusses the use of the tongue in connivance.

[159]Eleven to twenty MSS according to BHS.

David next uses the metaphor of wild beasts to describe the actions of the wicked. "He lurks (sits) in ambush by the villages (as a lion would)." The parallel line is "In secret places he kills the innocent." This is probably not to be taken literally, but it continues the metaphor of what wild beasts do. The wicked "kill" the poor by cheating and stealing from them. Furthermore, his eyes are watching the downtrodden.[160]

The lion motif continues in v. 9. The wicked person lies in covert places like a lion in a thicket. His purpose is to catch the poor. Now the metaphor shifts to hunting. The wicked catches the poor when he draws in his net (used for catching birds). The word "poor" in this form עָנִי (*'ani*) occurs 51 times, all in the Psalms. It appears most frequently in this Psalm (4 times). Because poverty leaves its victims destitute, the only hope they have is in Yahweh. Poor people are not any more spiritual than the rich, but the tendency is for the rich to look to his riches for deliverance, while the poor can only look to God. The New Testament presents this in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16) and in James' excoriation of the wealthy (James 5) (10:9).

BHS (Hebrew critical text) suggests inserting צַדִּיק (*ṣadiq)* in v. 10. This would accomplish two things (1) it provides a subject for the line: "The *righteous* is beaten up[161] and sinks down," and (2) it provides a *ṣadeh* for the acrostic. This is attractive, but there is no textual evidence for it. The other option is to apply it to the wicked, "He crouches; he sinks down." I believe the subject, in spite of no textual evidence, is the "righteous."[162] It is they who are beaten down and sink down. The next strophe is very difficult with

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[160]This word, חֵלְכָה (*ḥel^{e}kah*) is obscure. Barr in *Comparative Philology of the Text of the Old* Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp 228-29, has an excellent discussion of this word (and a similar one in 10:10). "Now the Qumran hymns show four examples of this word (1QH 3.25, 26; 4.25, 35). For the most part scholars seem to take the sense to be something near the 'unfortunate' of BDB, but make it perhaps a little stronger."

[161]A large number of Hebrew manuscripts and the Qere read the passive (*niphal*), "He is bowed down."

[162]See Craigie, *Psalms 1-50,* p. 122.

many different treatments.[163] NASB has "The unfortunate fall by his mighty ones." Delitzsch and Craigie read "mighty ones" as "claws," so continuing the metaphor of the lion[164] (10:10).

In his arrogance, the wicked one, in spite of his awful practices, declares that he will get off scot-free. This verse is quite clear: "He says (perfect of continuous action) in his heart, 'God forgets—he hides his face and never sees.'" (10:11).

3. A cry for Yahweh to vindicate his saints (10:12-18)

As in 9:20, David cries out for Yahweh to intervene in the affairs of men in behalf of the poor. "Arise, oh, Yahweh, oh, God,[165] lift your hand." The hand is a symbol of power. The "mighty hand and outstretched arm" is a common expression. David then pleads with Yahweh not to forget the poor. The wicked one assumes that God has forgotten the poor, but David pleads with God not to forget them (10:12).

He asks the age-old question in v. 13: "Why does the wicked despise God (perhaps with the idea "and get away with it"). "The wicked says in his heart (see v. 11) 'You will not hold accountable'" (10:13).

"Indeed," the psalmist says, "you, yourself, have seen trouble and vexation. You look to render retribution[166] by your hand." Just as Yahweh has seen trouble and vexation, David now says that Yahweh looks to vindicate the poor. Furthermore, "the distressed[167] have abandoned themselves to Yahweh." "As for the orphan, you, yourself, are the helper" (10:14).

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[163]See Barr, *Comparative Philology* for the discussion.

[164]Delitzsch, *Psalms*, I:181; Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 122-23.

[165]Some ancient versions have "My God."

[166]See Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 123.

[167]See v. 10 and the discussion of this word.

David then resorts to violent language. "Break the arm of the wicked and the evil doer. Call his wickedness to account. *Surely* you can find it"[168] (10:15).

David then makes a ringing affirmation. "Yahweh is king forever and ever. All the nations will perish from the earth." After lamenting about Yahweh standing far off, he now asserts that he is an eternal king, and the nations cannot stand before him (10:16).

Finally, in spite of all David has said about the "absentee landlord," he now asserts that Yahweh hears the desires (or requests) of the afflicted. "You will establish their hearts; you will 'pay attention with your ear'" (10:17).

He closes the acrostic poem with the last letter *tau*. Once again,[169] you will continually vindicate the orphan and the afflicted, and (likewise) you will terrify mere mortals of the earth (4:18).[170]

Category #8: The King

Psalms 20, **21**

Psalm 21

Psalm 20 and 21 are related. Kirkpatrick says, "In both the king, the representtative of Jehovah, and the representative of the people, is the prominent figure; and the salvation or victory which Jehovah bestows upon him, is the leading thought."[171] These Psalms refer to the king going forth to war in Psalm 20, and

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[168]This translation comes from Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 123. The Hebrew poetic negative, בַּל (*bal*), occurs four times in this Psalm. Its usual meaning is "no" or "not." Koehler and Baumgartner say it can be used for emphasis. I have adopted that meaning here and in 10:18 because of the context.

[169]See the previous discussion on the affirmative use of בַּל (*bal*).

[170]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 123.

[171] Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 106.

then the thanksgiving for the victory won in Psalm 21. This could refer to one of David's battles (2 Samuel 8), although, there is no way of knowing. Kirkpatrick says, "the personal importance of the king as the leader of the Army, and the spirit of simple trust in Yahweh, not in material forces, point to an early rather than a late date."[172]

1. Yahweh's work in behalf of his king (21:1-6).

   The king rejoices in two things: Yahweh's strength and Yahweh's deliverance of the king. This verse indicates that the prayer of Psalm 20 has been answered in Psalm 21. Yahweh has delivered the king, and so the king greatly rejoices (21:1).[173]

   Yahweh's generosity to the king is indicated by, "the desire of his heart, you have given him, and the expectation (אֲרֻשָּׁת *ʾᵃrešeth* occurs only here) of his lips, you have not refused." In this context, the reference is to the king's victory over his adversaries.[174] In 20:4, the people pray that Yahweh will give to the king "according to all his heart, and fulfill all his counsel."[175]

   The psalmist elaborates on his statement in verse 3. "You have met him with blessings of good; you have put a crown of gold on his head."[176] David enjoyed unusual blessings from Yahweh. His lustful interlude in 2 Samuel 11 marred those blessings. Though he repented fully (as few kings did), his life was forever marred and scarred by his dastardly deeds (21:3).

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[172]*Ibid.*, p. 107.

[173]The Targum paraphrases this as the King Messiah (Wenham, *the Psalter Reclaimed*, p. 83) indicating a Jewish understanding of the Psalm as predicting the Messiah.

[174] Dahood, "Psalms 1-50," p. 131 even translates as "in your triumph." He cites 1 Sam. 2:10; Psalm 29:11; 68:29; and 89:18 to support his translation.

[175]See Delitzsch, *Psalms*, I:297.

[176]Some relate this to 2 Sam. 12:30 where David took the crown of gold from the king of the Ammonites, but the reference is too general to be definitive.

Even a casual reading of the Psalms shows the longing for long life. Sheol was a dim dark place that no Old Testament saint wanted to enter. The question here is whether this language applies to David. Some have argued that it must apply to the Messiah, but it is probably (1) hyperbole, to make a point, or (2) fulfilled in David's seed through the Davidic covenant. Jesus, as David's seed, is the ultimate fulfillment.[177] Hebrews 2:14-15 says that Jesus took part in flesh that he might, "deliver those who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (21:4).

When Yahweh gave David victory in battle, he thereby bestowed on him great glory. Yahweh also gave him glory and majesty (21:5).[178] The reason (כִּי *ki*) he can say this is because Yahweh has given him blessings forever. Moreover, "You will give[179] to him joy in your presence." The life and rule of David are a demonstration of Yahweh's blessing on David (21:6).

2. The king's confidence in Yahweh (21:7-12).

The first part of the Psalm is now said to be predicated on the fact of David's trust in Yahweh. His testimony to Saul in 1 Samuel 17 about his victory over the bear and the lion is here manifested in his triumph over his enemies. These are God's enemies, but David is his representative.

"He will not be moved (because) of the kindness (*ḥesed*) of the highest." Yahweh's *ḥesed* reflects covenant language (2 Samuel 7, especially 7:15) (21:7).

There is a question as to the referent of all the "You's" in verses 8 through 12. Is it Yahweh or David? Perhaps the best answer is both because the enemies of David are Yahweh's enemies and *vice versa*. David, the king, is Yahweh's representative upon the earth, although the reference to Yahweh

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[177]See Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms,* p. 110.

[178]The word translated here "gave" is the same as Psalm 16:8: "I have set Yahweh before me" (שִׁוִּיתִי, *šivvah*).

[179]This is the meaning #2 of חָדַד (*ḥadad*) which normally means "to sharpen."

in verse 9 shows a preponderance of Yahweh.

The phrase in verse 8 is reminiscent of Isaiah 10:14 which is speaking of Assyria. Arrogant Assyria says, "My hand reached to the wealth of the people like a nest (literally: 'my hand found' as here), and as one gathers abandoned eggs, I gathered all the earth. There was none fluttering a wing, opening its beak, or chirping." To this arrogance, Yahweh of hosts promises abject destruction to Assyria (Isaiah 14:15-16). Centuries earlier, the psalmist says that Yahweh or David will find their enemies as Assyria found her victims, and his right hand will find those who hate them (21:8).

Their fate will be horrible. "You will make them as a fiery furnace when you are angry,[180] Oh, Yahweh." Verse 9c shifts suddenly to third person. BHS treats this as a gloss, but Dahood defends it as impassioned language.[181] Another approach is to take it as a reference to their destruction with the statement, "Yahweh/the king will swallow them up in his anger and a fire will devour them" (21:9.

Destroying one's offspring destroys his memory. These are viewed as devastating actions. Here their fruit (children) will be destroyed, and their seed (descendants) from among mankind. The time will come when no one will have heard of them (21:10).

The reason for this horrible devastation is that, "they intend evil against them" (literally: "they turn against you evil.") This should be compared to Psalm 2:2-3. Furthermore, "they make plans against them, but they will not be able to execute them" (21:11).

He continues with "you will make them turn the shoulder." Dahood may be correct in explaining this as putting their feet on the shoulder (in other contexts, "the neck"). As a symbol of conquering the enemy completely.[182]

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[180]Dahood references Ps. 34:17 in defense of this translation of what is normally "your face," "Psalms 1-50*,"* p. 133.

[181]*Ibid.*, p. 134.

[182]Ibid.

This will happen when you "notch your [arrows] on your bowstring in their faces" (21:12).

3. Call for celebration at Yahweh's victory (21:13).

"Be high, oh, Yahweh, in your strength/triumph." The phrase "in your triumph" בְּעֻזֶּךָ (*b^{e}'uzeka*) is an *inclusio* with 21:1, "Let the king rejoice in your triumph, oh, Yahweh," concludes the Psalm as it began, a marvelous celebration of Yahweh manifesting himself through his representative the king.

Category #9: Psalms of Deliverance

Psalms 22, **34**

Psalm 34

This Psalm, like many psalms, is a mixture of genres. It is, first of all, an acrostic. Secondly, it has a number of wisdom elements (34:11, 12, 13), and finally, it speaks often of being delivered by Yahweh.

The heading says that the occasion of the Psalm was David's flight to Achish king of Gath for asylum from Saul. The problem is that the Psalm identifies David's benefactor or adversary not as Achish but Abimelech. Craigie argues that it may be an official title,[183] while Dahood believes it may be Achish's Semitic name,[184] rather than being an error in historical data, as some suppose.

Some argue that the contents of the Psalm do not match the heading. But listen to 34:4, "I sought Yahweh, and he answered me, and from all my fears he delivered me." Certainly, David was afraid when he interacted with Achish. At any wrong turn, he faced death (1 Sam. 21:12-13). His pitiful attempt to appear insane illustrates that fact. Kidner says, "this glowing song has all the marks of relief and gratitude for a miraculous escape."[185]

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[183]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 278.

[184]Dahood, "Psalms 1-50*,"* p. 205.

[185]Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, p. 138.

1. Call to exalt Yahweh (34:1-3 *aleph, beth, and gimel*)

   David joyously confesses that he will exult in Yahweh at all times, and, in parallel, "his praise shall continually be in my mouth." These are the words of a happy man who has just escaped a dangerous situation (34:1 *aleph*).

   In his efforts to evade death at the hands of Achish, David acted crazily (יִתְהַלֵּל *yithhallel*). After escaping, he says, "My soul boasts (תִּתְהַלֵּל *tithhallel*) in Yahweh. It is a bit of a stretch to connect these verbs (they are different stems) and the meetings are opposite. Yet, the Samuel account says that David changed his appearance (טַעַם *ta'am*) and 34:8 says, "taste (טְעֲמוּ *ta'amu*) and see that the Lord is good." The meanings are quite different, but is there a reminiscence of these two words in Samuel showing up in Psalm 34? He goes on to say, "let the afflicted hear and rejoice" (34:2 *beth*).

   David then calls on his fellow afflicted to magnify Yahweh with him and to join him in elevating the name of Yahweh together (34:3 *gimel*).

2. Crying out to Yahweh (34:4-6 *daleth, he, [waw], zayin*).

   When David despaired after his humiliating behavior with Achish (Abimelech), he sought out Yahweh. Yahweh answered his searching prayer.[186] Furthermore, he delivered David from all his fears. David must have been loaded down with fear, but the one who admonished Joshua to "not tremble or be dismayed" (Josh. 1:9) now assuaged David's fears[187] (34:4 *daleth*).

   The next two verbs shift to the plural as do those in verse 3. There he used the imperative (גַּדְּלוּ *gadd^{e}lu*) and the cohortative (נְרוֹמְמָה *n^{e}rom^{e}mah*). Here we have the indicative, "they looked," "their faces shone." Some manuscripts have the imperative here also. This would then have a parallel

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[186]The verb. *darash* (דָּרַשׁ) is often used of inquiry of God. The noun *midrash* is the study and comment on Scripture, cf. Delitzsch, *Psalms* I:409.

[187]This is not the word fear that can often be translated as "reverence." It is a strong word as in Jer. 20:10, "Terror on every side" (מָגוֹר מִסָּבִיב *magor missabib*).

with verse 3. As he called on those around him to magnify Yahweh, he now calls on them to look to him, so that they would shine, and their faces would not reflect shame or disappointment (34:5 *he*).

It is interesting that both here and in Psalm 27, the *waw* line is missing, and a final *peh* line occurs. In both places the *peh* is in the word redeem (פְּדֵה, פָּדֶה *p^{e}deh, podeh*). The absent *waw* might be sought textually in the second line of verse 5, but that would leave 5a without a parallel. For whatever reason, the *waw* is missing and not recoverable, if it was ever there.

David now gives his personal testimony in a self-deprecating manner. "This poor man called out, and Yahweh heard, and from all his adversities delivered him." In verse 4 it was from his fears that Yahweh delivered him (הִצִּילָנוּ *hitsilanu*), but here it is from his troubles that he delivers him (הוֹשִׁיעוֹ *hoši'o*) (34:6 *zayin*).

3. The promise of Yahweh's protection and provision (34:7-10 *heth, tet, yod, and kaph*).

The imagery of the Angel of Yahweh encamped around those who fear him is vivid and powerful. The phrase "Angel of Yahweh" appears some 50 times, usually dealing with a crisis of some kind, and is speaking of a manifestation of God. In this verse there is a martial tone. The Angel of Yahweh (with his army) has pitched the tents of his army around those who fear him. His power is able to deliver them. This is the third word for "deliver" in this Psalm (חָלַץ *ḥalats*). It has a military connotation. Yahweh **will** deliver his saints with his army (34:7 *ḥeth*).

David then exhorts all to savor (taste) and to see that Yahweh is good. Only by experiencing Yahweh as David did can believers know his goodness. Then he adds emphasis by saying, "Blessed is the man who trusts in him." Here he uses the word גֶּבֶר (*gever*), speaking of man in his strength (Jer. 17:7; Ps. 40:4) (34:8 *teth*).

Yahweh's provision for his people follows trust. Those who fear him have no lack. This, of course, is a wisdom principle, not a promise. It is generally true that the one who trusts in Yahweh will "lack no good thing." "Lions

may lack and grow hungry, but those who seek Yahweh will lack no good thing" (34:9-10 *yod, kaph*).

4. Wisdom instructions à la Proverbs (34:11-16 *lamedh, mem, nun, samekh, 'ayin, peh).*

   It is not unusual to break an acrostic between *kaph* and *lamedh*. Here he breaks from trusting in Yahweh for his protection and provision to general wisdom instructions. Wisdom is not found in Israel only, but throughout the ancient Near East. However, Israel's wisdom is distinctive in that it is always predicated on the fear of the Lord (cf. Prov. 1:7; 9:10). The form wisdom takes is that of the master instructing the student (children, or son, as in Prov. 1:8, 10, 15). If the student will listen, the master will teach him about the fear of Yahweh (34:11 *lamedh*).

   Long life is always the aspiration of the Old Testament saint. Here he says that to have a happy life (good health, offspring, respect of people, etc.) and a long life, during which he sees "good things," he must practice wisdom teaching. This includes "keeping his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile." Integrity of speech is essential to a good life. One who slanders and deceives cannot expect to have it. Proverbs speaks of "keeping from" six times. James 3:4-6 riffs on this theme extensively (34:12-13 *mem, nun*).

   Speech turns to action in verse 14. The faithful one is "to turn from evil and do good,"[188] to seek peace and pursue it." Peace has numerous connotations. It is more than the absence of war (though that is good!). It is wholeness of life. There is so much war and strife in the human condition. How blessed it is when peace prevails. This peace requires both seeking and pursuing. In other words, much effort is required (34:14 *samech*).

5. Yahweh's response to his saints (34:15-18 *'ayin, peh, ṣadeh*).

   "His eye is on the sparrow, and I know he cares for me," says the songwriter. This is predicated on Jesus words about the father's care for his children.

[188]Cf. Job 1:1, 9; 2:3.

His eyes are open to the righteous ones, and his ear is attentive to their cry. In the style of wisdom teaching, he contrasts the position of the wicked and the righteous.[189] Yahweh's face[190] is against the workers of iniquity to cut off their memory from the earth." They will have no posterity to perpetuate their memory (34:15-16 *'ayin, peh*).

"The righteous[191] cry out (perfect of continuous action), and Yahweh hears them, and delivers them from all their troubles." This is another wisdom comment. It parallels verse 15 (34:17 *'ayin*).

The righteous are next referred to as "brokenhearted" and "crushed in spirit." David uses similar terminology in his great confession in Ps. 51:19. Likewise in Isaiah 43, the servant will not break the crushed reed nor quench the smoking flax. This is applied to Jesus' gentle and retiring ministry in Matt. 12:20 (34:18 *qoph*).

6. The deliverance of the righteous from trouble (34:19-21 *resh, šin, tau*).

The righteous will see many troubles, but Yahweh will deliver him from all of them. This again must be interpreted in the light of wisdom teaching. We know, as Job and Ecclesiastes teach, that righteous people will not always be delivered from their troubles, though as a principle, Yahweh looks after his children (34:19 *resh*).

David expands on this principle with the statement that Yahweh keeps all the righteous one's bones, saying that none of them will be broken. John cites this in connection with our Lord's crucifixion (19:36) (34:20 *šin*).

The contrast between the righteous and the wicked is taken up again in verse 22. Yahweh always cares for his own, and 34:20 is balanced by the treatment of the wicked. "Evil will kill the wicked." This must be understood as if it were passive: "the wicked will be killed by the wickedness." Kirkpatrick

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[189]See Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 281.

[190] Dahood ("Psalms 1-50") cites Ugaritic usage of this word for anger, p. 207

[191]The Greek and daughter versions supplies the subject (οἱ δίκαιοι *the righteous*).

says, "his evil ways work out his own punishment, and divine retribution overtakes him.[192] Those who hate the righteous will be ashamed or disappointed.[193]

A final, summarizing line is given outside the alphabet. "Yahweh redeems his servants." Ps. 25:21 follows the same pattern of the verse outside the alphabet, saying that "God redeems Israel from its adversities." Here it is Yahweh's servants who are redeemed (ransomed), and those who trust in Yahweh will not be disappointed. A blessed promise indeed.

Category #10: Praise to Yahweh

Psalms 23, **24**, 25, 29 (Yahweh 18 x's), 33, 36

Psalm 24

In 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 13, 15, 16, we have the story of David bringing the ark of the covenant of Yahweh God to his newly conquered city of Jerusalem. The Chronicler expands on the story considerably in his typical fashion, showing the priestly and Levitical procedure in all things divine.[194] With many commentators, I believe this is the background of Psalm 24. The Psalm is attributed to David. Seow says, "Psalms 24, 47 and 68 should probably be dated to the early monarchy, and may have been used in ritual processions of the ark."[195]

It is difficult to find a common theme in the Psalm, for there are three parts, and

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[192]Kirkpatrick, *The Psalms,* p. 175.

[193]Dahood, "Psalms 1-50*,"* p. 207, argues for the meaning of condemned for this word.

[194]See Heater, *God Rules among Men*, Easley, SC: Hesed Publications, 2019, pp. 46-50, for the integration of the two texts.

[195]C. L. Seow, "Ark of the Covenant," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary,* New York: Doubleday, 1992, p. 390.

they have little relation to one another.

1. The Lord of all creation (24:1-2).

   The opening verses tell us who God is. The earth and its fullness belong to him as do the inhabited world and all who live in it. Why is this? Because he founded (the earth) upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. This reflects Genesis 1:9-10 where "God said, 'Let the waters be gathered together from under the heavens to one place, and let the dry land appear." Those who are carrying the ark and are worshipping before the ark recognize who this God is.

2. Requirements to enter God's presence (24:3-6).

   If the ark represents this holy God (he sits upon the cherubim), then who can enter his presence? Who can go up to the mountain of God? This refers to Mount Zion, and from here on there will be a theology of Zion. The parallel line asks who can stand in his holy place. The awe-inspiring event of the death of Uzza who touched the ark provokes these questions. The answer is in these verses. To have clean hands is comparable to our metaphor in English. Hands that have not shed innocent blood, robbed people, and neglected the care of the widow, orphan, and stranger. The second line adds two further conditions: he has not lifted up his[196] soul or life to falsehood. This word, falsehood, probably refers to idols, the ultimate falsehood. Finally, he says that the man who can enter into Yahweh's presence must not have sworn deceitfully. Thus, as the procession carrying the ark moves toward its dwelling place in the sacred tent, all are reminded of the kind of people who can worship there.

   This kind of person will take up or receive a blessing from Yahweh and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of those who seek him, those who are searching for your face oh, Jacob. This line is difficult. Dahood believes that the text should be modified to say, the Presence of Jacob," as a name for God.[197] The Greek text reads "the face of

[196]The Hebrew Text (MT) has "my soul/life." There is sufficient textual evidence to read "his."

[197]Dahood, "Psalms 1-50*,"* p. 152.

the God of Jacob," followed by most modern versions. I am assuming the same reading.

3. Preparing for the entry of the ark (Yahweh) (24:7-10).

   These verses probably represent an antiphonal song as they approach Zion. One side chants: "Lift up your heads, oh, gates, and lift yourselves,[198] oh, eternal entrance ways, and the king of glory will come in." The other side responds, "Who is this king of glory? Yahweh,[199] strong and mighty, Yahweh mighty in battle." (24:7-8)[200] The process is then repeated with selah (24:9-10).

Category #11: Psalms of Confession

Psalms **32**, 38, 39

See **Category #3 Thanksgiving** for an exposition of Psalm 32 (p. 135).

Category #12: Wisdom Psalms

Psalms **1**, 34, 37?

See **Introduction to the Psalter** for an exposition of Psalm 1 (p. 125).

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[198]Most versions read הִנָּשְׂאוּ *hinnaśe'u* as passive. It can be passive, reflexive or active as in Psalm 94:1. I am treating it as reflective and parallel to v. 9b.

[199]Seow, "Ark of the Covenant," says, "Thus, the reference to YHWH dwelling in a tent (2 Sam 7:6) is clearly to be equated with the ark being in the tent (2 Sam 7:2), p. 387.

[200]Note that in 1 Samuel 4, the ark was carried into battle against the Philistines.

Category #13: Messianic Psalms[201]

Kidner says,

> The special quality of the Psalter's Messianic prophecy, then, is that it is lived out, as well as spoken out. There are one or two purely prophetic oracles, *e.g.* 2:7; 110:1, and much use is made of them in the New Testament; but still more is made of the prayers and praises that arose straight out of life, from situations such a Christ Himself would experience, though in a bigger context and at a deeper level as the embodiment and completion of Israel, of kingship, of man and of sacrifice, and as the incarnation of God.[202]

Because of the large role Psalms plays in the life of Jesus and the post-resurrected instruction he must have given to his disciples; I am including a lengthy lecture of mine on Messianism in the Old Testament.

Messianism: "From Adumbration to Incarnation"

1. Introduction: Israel's puzzle.

> So, he started out, and on his way, he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So, he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth." The eunuch asked

[201]See Wenham, *Reclaiming the Psalter*, pp. 81-101 for a historical view of messianic Psalms.

[202]Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, p. 25.

Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus (Acts 8:27-35).

The Ethiopian's question emphatically states the Messianic dilemma, "Is Isaiah talking about himself or someone else?" The issue of Messiah, then and now, stirs up considerable discussion and heat relative to the person of Jesus and the teaching of the Old Testament on a coming Messiah. We will attempt in this lecture to take a cursory look at this question and thereby indicate the great variety of interpretations of Messiah and Israel.

Luke 24:13-35 is one of the most poignant passages in the New Testament. It represents the crisis of belief facing the nascent community of followers of Jesus. "We hoped," they said, "that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place." Their conception of redemption surely did not include the idea of vicarious sacrifice for sins. It had more to do with redemption in a religio-political sense. The greater David would wield his fierce sword, and Rome would be vanquished. God's covenant with Israel would be fulfilled as He made all things right and established His kingdom in fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. But three days have passed—three days that bring to a conclusion any hope that the spirit would somehow be revived and death would not be final.[203]

Their faith struggles against their unbelief as they report to Jesus that "some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive" (Luke 24:22-23).

This conversation reveals much about what the first century believers held concerning the "coming one." This Jesus of Nazareth (his very human

[203]Bereshith Rabba fol. 114. col. 3 "Ben Kophra says, 'In the first three days after the passing, the soul of the deceased floats around the grave, still hoping that it will again enter the body. It (the soul) now recognizing that the appearance of the face itself changes, abandons the corpse forever.'" Cited by F. Nork, *Rabbinische Quellen und Parallelen zu neutestamentlichen Schriftstellen*, Leipzig: Verlag von Ludwig Schumann, 1839, p. 181.

origin) was also a prophet (his divine commission). He was mighty in deed (his miracles) and word (his messages), and all this took place before God and all the people (his openness). It was not done in a corner. There is nothing in this confession about Jesus' deity, nor about his vicarious suffering. Jesus will fill in the latter gap by saying, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself" (Luke 24:25-27).

2. Old Testament perspective

   a. The use of the word "Messiah" in as a noun and a verb:

      1) *Saul:* 1 Sam 12:3, 5; 24:6, 7, 10; 26:9,11, 16, 23; 2 Sam 1:14, 16. = 11
      2) *Saul's shield:* 2 Sam 1:21
      3) *David:* 2 Sam 19:21; 22:51; 23:1; Ps 18:51 = 4
      4) *King (general):* 1 Sam 2:10, 35; 16:6; 1 Chron 16:22; Ps 2:2; 20:7; 27:8; 84:9, 39, 52; 105:15; 132:10, 17; Lam 4:6; Hab 3:13 = 15
      5) *Anointed Prince:* Dan 9:25,26 = 2
      6) *Solomon:* 2 Chron 6:42
      7) *Cyrus:* Isa 45:1

   b. Other observations:

      18 occur in 1-2 Samuel and usually refer to David or Saul
      10 occur in the Psalms
      4 occur in Leviticus and are the only ones referring to the priests
      The other seven occur in 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Isaiah, Daniel (2), Lamentations, Habakkuk,

      The normal meaning for this word in a technical sense refers to a priest or a king. The reference to a messiah, in the theological sense, occurs only in Psalm 2 (typologically) and Daniel 9 where the reference is cryptic. Thus, the concept of Messiah is ironically not built around the word Messiah. Generally, the Old Testament prophets refer to a messianic age.

True, the prophets do speak of a millennium—a period of happiness and prosperity when there will be no more wars between nations, and people will live in peace with one another. But this is not an expectation of a personal messiah. We must differentiate between a millennium and a messiah. "The Prophet Isaiah, who according to tradition was of the family of David, voiced a longing for a period when a descendant of Jesse, that is, of the family of David, imbued with the spirit of Yahweh, would rule."[204]

The verb מָשַׁח (*mašaḥ*) in the Pentateuch usually refers to priests and priestly items (tabernacle, altar, etc.). It refers to a king the first time in Judges 9:8 (Abimelech). In the historical books it usually refers to kings (including foreign ones—1 Kings 19:16—the latter passage includes a prophet).

Talmon deserves an extensive quote on the issue of the Messiah in the Old Testament.

> Nathan's prophecy (2 Sam 7) which echoes in related traditions (1 Kgs 8:22-26; 1 Chr 28:4-7; 2 Chr 6:16-17; 13:5 *et al.*) assured the House of David of everlasting divine support. Out of it grew the image of the ideal anointed king blessed with infinite understanding and wisdom, inspired and righteous, a savior who would reunite Judah and Ephraim and regain for Israel its national splendor as in the days of the united monarchy under David and Solomon. Innumerable passages in the Hebrew Bible extol this vision of the perfect future age which Jeremiah portrays as follows: [Jer 23:1-6][205]
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> From these variously accentuated emphases on the utopian or the restorative outlooks which mark unequally distinct strata in the biblical literature appear to derive the differentiated manifestations of messianism in the post-biblical era. Messianic visions which bear

[204]Solomon Zeitlin, "The Origin of the Idea of the Messiah." (pp. 99-111 [pp. 447-459 in "The Origin of the Idea of the Messiah," *In Time of Harvest*, NY, 1963]).

[205]Talmon, op. cit., p. 86.

> upon them the imprint of utopianisms will gravitate toward a reliance on 'prooftexts' culled from the Psalms and the prophetic books. They will accordingly foreshadow an idyllic picture of the future, the likes of which humanity and Israel had never experienced.[206]
>
> It could be said that the structurally not directly connected but nevertheless consecutive three Isaiah oracles reflect on their juxtaposition the posited three stages in the development of the biblical *masiah* theme: historicity (Isa 7:14-16); ideation (Isa 9:5-6); idealization (Isa 11:1-10). That progressive dehistorization and the *masiah* notion appears in the oracles of the postexilic prophets Haggai and Zechariah concerning Zerubbabel, the last anointed of the Davidic line in the biblical era.[207]

c. Messiah in the post-exilic prophets

Hosea 11:1; Zechariah 6:12-13; Malachi 4:5

d. Messiah in the pre-exilic prophets

Isaiah has the most to say about an individual. In the first part he deals with the issue of deliverance through divine means (chapters 7-12). 7:14 (with chapter 8); 9:5-6; 11:1-16 all speak of an extraordinary individual. Critical writers will argue that these are only hyperbolic statements about a human king in the line of David, but they seem to indicate more than that. The second half of Isaiah has the wonderful theme of the servant of the Lord. This servant is at times the nation, at times a remnant of the nation, and at times an individual.

Jeremiah 23:1-5 speaks of a righteous branch (much on the order of Isaiah 11:1-5) who will be called "Yahweh Our Righteousness" (Jeremiah 33:14-18 applies this phrase to Jerusalem). Micah 5:1-4 speaks of a ruler to be born in Bethlehem. Ezekiel 34:11-31 speaks of a shepherd named David whom Yahweh will raise up.

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[206]*Ibid.,* pp. 86-87.

[207]*Ibid.,* p. 97.

e. Messiah in the Psalms

Most of the Psalms passages are today interpreted typologically, but in some cases, there is a direct reference to the Messiah. Psalms 2, 8, 16, 22, 45; 72[208]; 110.

f. Messiah in the Historical books

There are no direct prophecies of Messiah in the historical books. Joshua 5 and Judges 13 have divine elements in the appearances to Joshua, and to Manoah and his wife.

g. Messiah in the Pentateuch

Four major passages: Gen 3:15, 18; 49:10; Num 24: Deut 18.

3. The Gospel's perspective

The Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word Messiah occurs only twice in the New Testament. Andrew tells his brother Simon that he has found the Messiah (being interpreted Christ). This indicates two things: people in Israel were looking for an individual (though it says nothing about his characteristics), and that the Greek word *Christos*, henceforth used of Jesus, is equivalent to the Hebrew word Messiah (John 1:41). The second occurrence is also in John where the Samaritan woman is speaking. She says, "I know that Messiah (the one called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us" (John 4:25). Her words tell us two things also: the Samaritans were looking for a Messiah and they expected him to be a kind of prophet who will "explain everything to us." Charlesworth says, the Samaritans "longed for the coming of Taheb, apparently their term for 'the Messiah'; but it means 'restorer' and was perceived not as a new David but as a new Moses."[209]

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[208]See Craig C. Broyles, "The Redeeming King: Psalm 72's Contribution to the Messianic Ideal," pp. 23-40 in Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint, eds. *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

[209]James H. Charlesworth, ed. *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*. Augsburg: Fortress, 2002, p. 14.

Luke's account of the circumcision ritual in the temple introduces us to two people. Simeon was "waiting for the consolation of Israel," and it had been revealed to him that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. He goes on to speak of the work of this messiah: "For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." Salvation, in the Old Testament sense, refers to national deliverance of Israel. Isaiah's references in the servant songs is no doubt referred to in the light to the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:6). Simeon's following cryptic statements indicate that Messiah's work will be controversial and will bring sorrow to the mother's breast (Luke 2:25-35).

The confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:6)" is a powerful statement. Not only is Jesus the Messiah, he is the Son of the living God. Martha also testifies in the same words: "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world" (John 11:27). The religious leaders probe the issue of Jesus' identity on several occasions. To John the Baptist they address the question, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" During the ministry of Jesus, they demand, "If you are the Christ, tell us" (Luke 22:67). And, the Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly" (John 10:24). Finally, at his trial: The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God" (Matt 26:63).

All these quotes from the Gospels seem to me to indicate that the Jews of the first century were looking for a Messiah. He was to deliver the people of Israel and restore her to her former glory. I am puzzled by Charlesworth's statement that "Hence we have no evidence for the assertion that the Jews during Jesus' time were looking for the coming of 'the' or 'a' Messiah, and there was no paradigm, or checklist, by which to discern if a man was the Messiah. In such an ideological and social setting, it was not possible for a group to point to objective proofs for its own idiosyncratic belief."[210] He can conclude this by looking for the word Messiah or Christ in the ancient texts,

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[210]*Ibid.,* p. 14.

which seems to be begging the question. He is predicating this conclusion on the pre-New Testament writings.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that the Gospels do not present the followers of Jesus, or even the religious leaders, as looking for a Messiah who would suffer vicariously and provide spiritual redemption. Note the striking passage in Matthew:

> From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men" (Matt 16:21-23).

Talmon says,

> In view of these circumstances, the student of the Hebrew Bible can only attempt to achieve some measure of comprehensive appreciation of ancient Israelite messianism by collating and integrating partial descriptions and fragmentary formulations found in a great variety of texts stemming from widely separated periods, differing from and at times contradicting each other. There emerges, at best, a kaleidoscopic picture which lacks consistency. This state of affairs should cause no surprise. We are after all dealing with a corpus of writings which grew over an extended period and which necessarily reflects the heterogeneous attitudes of authors who may have entertained diverging appreciations of the *messiah* concept and its actual crystallizations in history."[211]

The word Χριστός (*Christos*) should probably never be construed as a personal name. Blomberg says, "In the midst of all this diversity we must

[211]S. Talmon, "The Concepts of *MASIAH* and Messianism in Early Judaism," in James H. Charlesworth, ed. *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, Augsburg: Fortress, 2002, p. 85.

not lose sight of a fundamental unity of thought. David Wenham best sums up the unifying features of NT theology more generally under the headings 'context, center, community and climax.' With respect to Christology in particular, he includes, under the 'center' of NT thought, the claim that 'Jesus was the Spirit-filled messiah of Israel and the Son of God.' This summary comports well with my findings about the consistent use of 'Christ' throughout the NT documents. There is no unambiguous evidence to demonstrate the 'Christ' in any of its 5321 NT uses ever 'degenerated' into a mere second name for Jesus."[212]

My approach to this study is sort of a reverse diachronic reading. We should view the study of Messiah as a pyramid with the base representing the extensive thinking about Messiah that becomes amplified and specific in the person of Christ. As we move to the peak of the pyramid (Genesis 3:15), the statements grow more cryptic and elusive as to meaning. It is interesting that the approach to the concept of Messiah by almost all groups is proof texting, and the proof texts are very similar in all the groups. So says Roberts:

> The passages selected as these messianic proof texts remain remarkably consistent for both Jewish and Christian interpreters, however, and this suggests that one might approach our task by analyzing the different types of material included in this fairly consistent body of messianic texts. [fn 2: The basic consistency in the choice of texts can be seen by a simple comparison of the work of the Jewish scholar J. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel* (NY, 1955), to any of the countless works by Christian scholars on the same subject. Nor is this consistency a modern phenomenon. Early Christians, rabbinic sources, and the sectarians at Qumran cite the same biblical texts in their portrayals of the royal messiah.]"[213]

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[212]Craig Blomberg, "The Messiah in the New Testament," (pp. 140-41) in Richard S. Hess, and M. Daniel Carroll R., eds. *Israel's Messiah in the Bible and the DSS*, Baker: Academic, 2003.

[213]J. J. M. Roberts, "The Old Testament's Contribution to Messianic Expectations" p. 41 in James H. Charlesworth, ed. *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, Augsburg: Fortress, 2002.

4. Intertestamental perspective (non-Qumran**)**

By non-Qumran I am referring to the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. The following notes serve as an introduction to the Apocrypha.

The Apocrypha

The importance of the apocrypha in the history of the church is evidenced by the fact that it was contained in the LXX, was used by many of the church fathers, some of the books were declared canonical by the Council of Trent, and they are highly revered in the Anglican confession.

Though the Church fathers used the Apocrypha, some voices were raised in objection. Jerome questioned the legitimacy of the disputed books as Scripture. He separated these books from the canon when he prepared his translation. The Protestants rejected the authority of the Apocrypha during the Reformation, and the Council of Trent, in reaction, declared them canonical (except for 1, 2 Esdras; Prayer of Manasseh).[214] The Church of England took a mild view of the Apocrypha, but the Puritans rejected it totally.[215]

The Roman Catholic Bible contains 72 books, 45 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New. (* represents the books considered deuterocanonical by the Roman Catholics.)

1 Esdras (3 Esdras in Vulgate; 1 Esdras = Ezra; 2 Esdras = Nehemiah) is a compilation of portions of Chronicles added to the Books of Ezra-Nehemiah (it is virtually identical to these books with the exception of 3:1—5:6 which tells the story of the royal banquet and the contest for a prize of the three young men). It is in Greek and dated to the second century B.C. It is an appendix

[214]Referring to them as deutero-canonical.

[215]Bruce M. Metzger, ed., *The Oxford Annotated Apocrypha: The Apocrypha of the Old Testament*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.

after the NT in Catholic versions. There is an ongoing debate about the relationship between this text and that of the Masoretic Text.

2 Esdras (4 Esdras in Vulgate) is an apocalypse comprised of an earlier Semitic portion (first century A.D.) with later Greek additions and a Christian section at the end.

*Tobit was composed in Hebrew or Aramaic in the second century B.C. "A fascinating amalgam of *Arabian Nights* romance, kindly Jewish piety, and sound moral teaching. . ."[216]

*Judith was probably originally composed in Hebrew in the second century, B.C., though transmitted to us in Greek. A heroic story set in Babylonian times.

*Additions to Esther consists of another 107 verses inserted at appropriate points in the narrative. They are in Greek and come from the second century B.C. They make up for the lack of a religious element in the original Esther. (They appear in the Catholic *New American Bible* as part of canonical Esther.)

*Wisdom of Solomon was composed in Greek by a Hellenistic Jew in the latter part of the first century B.C.

*Ecclesiasticus (Ben Sira) was written in Hebrew c. 180 B.C. and translated into Greek by his grandson (c. 132 B.C.). It is the distillation of the wisdom teaching of a Jewish teacher. See P. Skehan in the *Anchor Bible.* Sirach contains important canonical notes in the introduction by Ben Sira his grandson.

*Baruch is purported to have been written by Jeremiah's secretary from Babylon to the people in Jerusalem urging them to pray and confess their sins. Probably originally in Hebrew but handed on in Greek.

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[216]R.C. Denton, "Tobit" in *The Apocrypha of the Old Testament, Revised Standard Version*, B. M. Metzger, ed., p. 63. See J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1: xxvii for a discussion and a list.

*Letter of Jeremiah is a diatribe against idolatry purported to be from Jeremiah to the exiles after 597 B.C. It is attached in *New American Bible* to Baruch.

*Additions to Daniel: The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men, Bel and the Dragon, and Susanna. The date of these additions is usually given as second or first centuries B.C. The original language is debated. In the Catholic Bible, they are inserted at appropriate points.

Prayer of Manasseh was composed to make up for its lack in the canonical account (2 Chron. 33:11-13). When composed and in what language is debated. It is usually placed in the two centuries B.C. Not in the New American Bible.

*1 Maccabees is an important source for the history of the Maccabean period. It was composed in Hebrew (now lost) and survives in Greek. It is usually dated after the death of John Hyrcanus in 104 B.C.

*2 Maccabees is an abridgement of a five-volume history, now lost, written by a certain Jason of Cyrene.[217] It parallels 1 Macc. 1:10—7:50. It was originally in Greek, and its historicity is not considered as valid as 1 Maccabees. It has a theological orientation. This book contains the idea of earthly saints praying for the dead.

Ten of these works have appeared in the *Anchor Bible* series: Ben Sira, 1 & 2 Maccabees, 1 & 2 Esdras, Wisdom of Solomon, Tobit, Judith, and Baruch, Additions to Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah.

Klausner says,

> Attention has already been called to the fact that the Biblical and post-Biblical Messianic passages differ fundamentally at one point. In the Biblical Messianic idea, the point of emphasis is the redemption of Israel and the propagation of the idea of monotheism and divine righteousness. The Messiah himself is sometimes not even mentioned among the promises of redemption, and even if he is mentioned here and there, he does not occupy the dominant place that he assumed later. The word

[217]*Ibid*, p. 263.

> *Messiah* ("anointed one") itself, in the sense in which it was used from the second century B.C.E. onward, does not occur in the Old Testament.[218] [Generally, Dan. 9:25 is assumed to be messianic, certainly by conservative commentators.]

The Apocrypha, according to Klausner, are more identified with the hagiography than the prophets. The personality of the Messiah is not mentioned in any book of the Apocrypha, but Messianic ideas occur in seven books of the Apocrypha.[219] Charlesworth says, "Old Testament Apocrypha: Messiah or Christ does not appear in the 13 books. This would mean that the Maccabean revolt was not a messianic movement. The expansion to the Hebrew Scriptures (e.g., the Epistle of Jeremiah, additions to Daniel, and the Additions to Esther) were not produced by some messianic interpretation.[220]

The Pseudepigrapha

The following notes provide some background on the Pseudepigrapha.

These materials are called pseudepigrapha because they are attributed to ancient worthies who obviously did not write them. As can be seen from the Apocrypha listing, such works as the prayer of Manasseh could be categorized in this fashion, but were not. Roman Catholics call the Apocrypha, Deuterocanon, and the Pseudepigrapha, Apocrypha.

McNamara categorizes his listings of the various pseudepigrapha, and we will follow his categories.[221]

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[218]Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*: *from Its Beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1956, p. 458. (This book is the product of several editions beginning with his dissertation in 1902).

[219]*Ibid.*, p. 16.

[220]J. H. Charlesworth, "From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects" (pp. 3-35) in Charlesworth, James H., ed. *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*. Augsburg: Fortress, 2002, p. 16.

[221]Martin McNamara, "Intertestamental Literature," vol. 23 in *Old Testament*

Apocalyptic Literature

The genre of apocalyptic has undergone extensive study in recent times. The assumption was made in the past that Daniel (dated 165 B.C. by the critical school) was the precursor of all other apocalyptic literature. Collins, who has become known as an expert in apocalyptic literature, says, "In short, Daniel cannot be adequately interpreted within the context of the canon alone. In the past, commentators have tried to avoid this conclusion by dismissing the non-canonical apocalypses as Daniel's 'second-rate imitators.' We now know that several parts of *1 Enoch* are likely to be older than the revelations of Daniel, and there is surely no reason to regard a book like 4 Ezra as 'second-rate."[222]

If the conservative date were accepted (sixth century B.C.), then of course, the assumption would still stand that the other apocalypses are imitations of Daniel.

The definition of apocalyptic has been greatly refined in recent years with the result that Collins argues that Daniel contains the only clear case of apocalypse in the Hebrew Bible.[223] The largest difficulty in the classification of Daniel as late apocalyptic is that "the recipient of the revelation in the Jewish apocalypses is invariably a venerable ancient figure: Enoch, Daniel, Moses, Ezra, Baruch, Abraham."[224] The reason for this is that there is no ancient

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Message, Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1983.

[222]John J. Collins, *Daniel with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature* in *Forms of the Old Testament Literature*, Knierin and Tucker, eds., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984, 20:34

[223]*Ibid.*, see his work for an introduction to the genre.

[224]Collins, *Daniel*, p. 5. Collins quotes with favor the definition of Apocalypse in *Semeia 14*, (p. 9): "'Apocalypse' is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world."

"Daniel." Efforts to connect to the Danel in Ugaritic literature have come to naught.[225]

1 Enoch. This work was originally probably either Hebrew or Aramaic or both. It was composed over a period of time and is usually placed within the first two centuries B.C. The "Similitudes" are usually placed in the first century A.D., but still Jewish. Isaac argues that the work was composed in Judea and was in use at Qumran in the first century B.C.[226] McNamara treats the book according to the five independent components of which it is the composite.[227] First he discusses the Book of Watchers, chs. 1-36, which he dates to the third century B.C. This is followed by The Astronomical Book of Enoch (chs. 72-82) dated before 200 B.C. The next unit is Enoch's Book of Dream-Visions (chs. 83-90) dated about 165 B.C. The admonitions of Enoch (chs. 91-107) dated about 100-75 B.C. Finally, the parables of Enoch (chs. 37-71) are dated probably in the first century of the Christian era. In addition to these materials, "J. T. Milik has identified fragments of this work [The Enochic Book of Giants—about 125-100 B.C.] among the Enoch material from Qumran. Among its many interesting features is the fact that it contains the name of Gilgamesh, the hero of the well-known Babylonian epic."[228]

2 Enoch or the Slavonic Book of Enoch—1st century A.D. Discusses Enoch's travels through the celestial where he meets the Lord and records secrets revealed to him there.

4 Ezra (2 Esdras). (See Charlesworth, p. 516 for a chart comparing the various terms for Esdras.) This is a Jewish Apocalypse coming from the first century

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[225]Qumran has yielded a fragment of Daniel. This is dated at 65 B.C., which would make it only 100 years from the autograph, according to critical dating. Highly unusual.

[226]E. Isaac, "1 Enoch" in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:8-9.

[227]M. McNamara, *Intertestamental Literature*, p. 55ff.

[228]*Ibid*, p. 68. See chapter 48 of 1 Enoch for a discussion of the heavenly messiah.

A.D. (linked cryptically to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.) with Christian additions. This work was written in Palestine in either Hebrew or Aramaic but is preserved only in Latin and other versions. Ezra has seven visions. One of the visions interprets Daniel 7 messianically.[229]

2 Baruch (The Apocalypse of Baruch)—c. A.D. 100. "This work is very closely related to 2 (4) Esdras and like it can be presumed to have been written by one trained in the rabbinic schools."[230]

The Apocalypse of Abraham—c. A.D. 80-100. This work is extant only in a Slavonic version. Chapters 1-8 describe Abraham's rejection of idolatry. Chapters 9-32 are the apocalypse. It describes the consummation of the world with the revelation of the Messiah (the chosen one—32:1).

Testament Literature

Testament literature or "farewell discourses" are already familiar to us in the Old Testament (e.g., Genesis 49).

Testament of the Twelve. As with many of these works, the date and provenance of the Testament of the Twelve is debated. McNamara dates it in "possibly" the first century A.D.[231] Kee dates it in the second century B.C.[232] It may have been originally Greek, but this also is much debated. It is also debated whether it is a Jewish work with Christian interpolations or a Christian work based on Jewish material. Levi ch. 18 is a section on the Messiah.

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[229]*Ibid*, pp. 72ff.

[230]*Ibid.*, p. 79.

[231]*Ibid.*, p. 91.

[232]H. C. Kee, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs" in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, J. H. Charlesworth, ed. NY: Doubleday, 1983, 1:775-828. (See also his discussion on the theological significance of the work.)

Testament of Levi—3rd or 4th century B.C. This work differs from the Testament of Levi found in the above material and shows up in Qumran (Aramaic), the Cairo Genizah (Aramaic) and in Greek on Mount Athos.

The Testament (Assumption) of Moses. This work was originally in Hebrew or Aramaic, but it has survived in Latin. It should be dated close to the death of Herod (4 B.C.) because of the mention of members of his family, but some argue that this is an interpolation. Because it contains a story of Joshua and Moses, the assumption (no pun intended) is made that Jude is citing the last (lost) portion of the book when he speaks of Michael the Archangel disputing about the body of Moses. However, the extant portion of the work does not contain the incident, but Beckwith concedes the possibility since Clement and Origen claim that Jude is citing this work.[233]

Beckwith submits two responses to the use of the Pseudepigrapha by the Apostles: (1) the historic position of the church that the material is historical regardless of its source. This he argues was the position of many of the fathers, particularly in Alexandria. However, it created the dilemma that they either had to reject Jude who cited the works or accept the pseudepigraphical works as historical. (2) To recognize the interest and sometimes respect accorded to the *haggadic* material as homiletical embellishments utilized by Jude either as *ad hominem* or illustrative without necessarily supporting the source as canonical.[234]

Other works

Letter of Aristeas. This is an embellished legend containing a kernel of fact. There is little dispute that the Hebrew Scriptures began to be translated into Greek in Alexandria in the middle of the third century B.C. There may indeed have been official efforts to bring a copy of the translation into the library at Alexandria. Most scholars repudiate the rest of the letter, especially that the translation was made by Palestinian Jews. The letter is dated by most in the

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[233]Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1985, p. 396. J. Priest, "Testament of Moses" in *The Old Testament Pseud-epigrapha*, 2:924 is very cautious in arguing for a possible relationship between Jude and Testament of Moses.

[234]See McNamara and Charlesworth for other "testamentary" writings.

second century B.C. Josephus makes use of it in book 12 of the Jewish Antiquities.

The Book of Jubilees. "The Book of Jubilees is so entitled because it divides the course of the world into 'Jubilees,' the Jubilee periods of Lev. xxv (49 years), which in their turn are subdivided each into seven weeks of years consisting each of seven solar years of 364 days. It is also named 'Little Genesis' because it runs parallel to Genesis, though falling much below it in value."[235] The similar concerns with jubilees and a similar calendar, in addition to the discovery of nine fragments of Hebrew Jubilees, leads Eissfeldt to argue for a provenance of Qumran for the material around 100 B.C.

The Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah. This work is in three parts, two complete and one fragmentary, transmitted in Ethiopic. The first work, probably in Hebrew, is linked with 2 Kings 21:1-18 in connection with Manasseh's idolatry. Isaiah was sawn in two by Manasseh (Heb. 11:37?). Eissfeldt links it with the martyrdom stories during the Maccabean period.[236] Others link it with the Qumran sect. The fragmentary part is Christian in origin and dated about 100 A.D. Isaiah predicts the coming of Christ, the establishment of the Church and the final judgment. The Ascension or Vision of Isaiah depicts Isaiah ascending through the seven heavens where he hears commands about Christ coming to earth to be crucified. This should probably be dated to the second century. One must wonder how much mutual "contamination" has taken place? In other words, has Hebrews affected "Martyrdom" or vice versa?

The Psalms of Solomon. A collection of eighteen psalms similar to canonical psalms. The original was undoubtedly Hebrew, but the extant copies are Greek. They are dated internally though some of the psalms refer to Pompey's capture of Jerusalem and the fall of the Hasmoneans, hence, the first century B.C. They express a strong messianic hope. None of the psalms claims Solomonic authorship, only the collection as a whole.

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[235]Eissfeldt, O, *The Old Testament, An Introduction,* New York: Harper and Row, 1965.

[236]*Ibid*, p. 609.

3 Maccabees. This title is a misnomer, since the story is built around martyrdoms that took place fifty years prior to the Maccabees and in which they did not participate. It is dated in the first century B.C. or perhaps into the New Testament era prior to the fall of the temple. It is written to encourage Jews to endure persecution.

4 Maccabees. This title is also a misnomer, since it does not continue the narrative of the Maccabean period. Rather, it is a treatise or diatribe on the control of passion by reason. It was originally probably in Greek and is dated anywhere from the first century B.C. to the first century A.D.[237]

Sibylline Oracles. In Greek culture there was an old woman (perhaps the original name was Sibyl) who told Greek history in prophetic form. The Jews adopted this genre, and some of these oracles go back to the second century. The "Sibyl" is a daughter-in-law of Noah. Christians added and expanded these oracles, and some of the material takes us into the second century A.D. Collins dates the oracles from the mid-second century B.C. to the seventh century A.D.[238]

There are many other works found in volume 2 of Charlesworth's *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.* I have limited the list to those that at least have their roots in the pre-Christian era. You will need to pursue this further in Charlesworth.

> The Pseudepigrapha, on the other hand, move away from the conservatism of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha. They are full of apocalyptic imagery and begin to present details of the personality of the Messiah. 3d Enoch, a fifth-sixth century A.D. apocalypse, purports to be an account by R. Ishmael of how he journeyed into heaven."[239] The concept of a Messiah ben David and a Messiah ben Joseph is found in 3

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[237]*Ibid*., p. 615.

[238]J. J. Collins, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:322

[239]Charlesworth, James H. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* Vols 1-2: Vol.1. *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* Vol.2. *Expansions of the ´Old Testament´ and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic*, 2 vol. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1983-1985. I:223.

> Enoch 45:5, an idea also in Qumran. ". . . the dualism mentioned above had to create, under certain historical circumstances, a twofold Messiah: *Messiah ben Joseph,* an earthly Messiah, who fights against Gog and Magog and falls in battle; and *Messiah ben David,* a spiritual Messiah, who prepares the world for the Kingdom of God.[240]
>
> The pseudepigraphical books are especially rich in *Messianic portrayals*. The vicissitudes and victories of the Hasmonean period produced much of the Pseudepigrapha. The split between the Hasmonean dynasty and the Pharisees produced the strong distinctions between Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes (p. 275). The Essenes "steeped themselves in a multiplicity of dreams and visions, and thus were created the Pseudepigraphical books, with their multiplicity of visions and 'revelations' (apocalypses). The best of these books—the Book of Enoch, the Book of Jubilees, the Psalms of Solomon, the Testaments of the Twelve Tribes [Patriarchs], and even the Sibylline Oracles—are from the Hasmonean period.[241]
> With the coming of the Romans and the destruction of the temple, the people found consolation and hope in the Messianic expectations and in descriptions of the life after death as found in the later Pseudepigrapha: The Assumption of Moses is from the time of the Herodian dynasty; the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch and the Book of IV Ezra—the choicest among the books of the Pseudepigrapha—are from the first years after the Second Destruction.[242]

The internecine struggle of the Hasmoneans leading up to control by the Romans in 64 BC, according to Neusner, led to a longing "for complete redemption and for a redeemer-Messiah."[243] The section of 1 Enoch called the *Book of Similitudes (or Parables)* is strongly messianic. Here we learn that the *name* of Messiah existed before creation: "At that hour, that Son of

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[240]Klausner, op. cit., p. 11.

[241]*Ibid.,* pp. 274-276.

[242]*Ibid.*

[243]*Ibid.,* p. 19.

Man was given a name, in the presence of the Lord of the Spirits, the Before-Time; even before the creation of the sun and moon, before the creation of the stars, he was given a name in the presence of the Lord of the Spirits" 48:2-3. There seems to be at least a quasi-deity attribution to the Messiah in the time before Christ.

Hengel says,

> It is therefore clear that the Christianity of the first century—like contemporary Judaism—was reluctant to transfer the term "God" directly to a heavenly mediator figure, although it did not rule it out completely. It was expressed as a kind of 'upper limit' statement, similar to those of Philo, who—in contrast to the definite *ho theos*, which was reserved for God alone—could describe the Logos with the indefinite *theos,* indeed even *deuteros theos*. [*QuaestGen* 2, 62; *leg. all*. 3, 207; *som*. 1, 229f., 238f.] Later Rabbis charged the Christians unjustly with "ditheism." Yet even rabbinic mysticism knew godlike mediators such as Metatron, who was named "the little Yahweh," and the Essenes of Qumran dared to refer a passage such as Isa 52:7, "*Your* God has become King," to the heavenly redeemer of the Sons of Light, Michael-Melchizedek. [3 En 12:5].[244]

Orlov says that the etymology of name Metatron is unknown. He gives nine different suggestions. This is a high-level angel that takes on semi-divine status. The Targum Pseudo-Jonathan identifies him with Enoch.[245] Such a description would not fit into the whole picture of the new celestial profile of Metatron, who now assumes such spectacular roles as the second deity and the lesser manifestation of the divine name.[246] In *Sefer Hekhalot*, however, when Enoch is elevated above the angelic world and brought into the immediate presence of the Deity, the traditional divinatory techniques

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[244]M. Hengel, "Christological Titles in Early Christianity," p. 431 in Charlesworth, James H., ed., *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*. Augsburg: Fortress, 2002.

[245]Andrei A. Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition* in Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism, 107, Mohr Siebeck, 2005, p. 97.

[246]*Ibid.,* p. 101.

have become unnecessary since the hero himself is now situated not outside but inside the divine realm and becomes a kind of a second, junior deity, the lesser manifestation of God's name. As noted in the previous discussion, the significance of Metatron's figure among the angelic hosts can be briefly and accurately summed up in his title יהוה הקטן [*Yahweh haqaton*], the lesser YHWH . . .[247]

5. Qumran perspective

Hess says:

> This collection of prophetic references [4Q491c, frag. 1, lines 7-11] includes allusions to the unique text of Isa. 53, the passage of the suffering servant. The psalmist of this Qumran text therefore identified with the suffering of that servant and, in the same breath, with the exaltation to the highest places of heaven, in the presence of God. This integration of both themes is a key text. Whether or not the composer was a messiah such as Wise and Knohl describe, the text, as it appears among the Dead SS, demonstrates an awareness of the importance of the suffering servant passage and its close tie to an exalted, perhaps divine, figure. This connection was present before the coming of Jesus and thus served as one source for the Gospel writers' understanding of his mission.[248]

4Q491c from Martinez and Tigchelaar, *The DSS Study Edition*, Vol 2. Leiden: Brill, 2000) has "… I am counted among the gods and my dwelling is in the holy congregation; my desire is not according to the flesh, but all that is precious to me is in (the) glory (of) 8 … the holy dwelling. Who has been considered despicable on my account? **מיא לבוז נחשב ביא** (*my' lbwz nḥšv by'*) Who bears all sorrows like me? **מיא ישא כול צערים כמוני** (*my' yś' kwl ṣ'rym kmony*) And who suffers evil like me? **ומיא יסבול רע הדמה ביא** (*wmy' ysbwl r' hdmh by'*)."

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[247] *Ibid.*, p. 137.

[248]Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel R. Carroll R., eds. *Israel's Messiah in the Bible and the DSS* Baker Academic, 2003, p. 108.

J. C. O'Neill makes a bold statement about this manuscript:

"However diligently they search for Jewish antecedents, none of these historians is ready to take account of the evidence that Jews before Jesus already thought of God as three-in-one and of the Messiah as the eternal son of God who was to be born a man."[249]

Evans sets out four conclusions to his study:

1. Qumran is not preoccupied with messianism; the community presupposes it and utilizes it as part of the community's eschatology and hopes of restoration.[250]
2. In comparison to Jewish messianism of late antiquity, Q's messianism is not distinctive in any significant way."

3. If Qumranian messianism is not distinctive, that does not mean that it was not important. The restoration of Israel, and the vindication of the Community of the Renewed Covenant that is a vital part of this restoration, will not and cannot take place until the "anointed of Israel" appears, whom God will raise up, or in the words of Ps. 2:7 echoed in 1QSa, whom God will beget "among his faithful remnant, the 'poor.'"

4. Q's messianism sheds important light on the context of Jesus' ministry and how his contemporaries may have perceived him and his proclamation of the kingdom. The coherence between 4Q521's messianic expectation and Jesus' reply to the imprisoned and questioning John the Baptist (Matt. 11:5=Luke 7:22) is a significant

[249]J. C. O'Neill, "Who is Comparable to Me in My Glory, 4Q491 Fragment 11 (4Q491C) and the New Testament," Novum Testamentum, XLII 1, Jan 2000, p. 1.

[250]But see Michael A. Knibb, "Eschatology and Messianism in the Dead Sea Scrolls" in The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years, eds Flint, Peter W. and James C. Vanderkam, 2 vols., Leiden: Brill, 1998, II:379-402 ". . . there can be no question but that eschatological and messianic beliefs were of considerable significance in the theological outlook of this group at all stages of its existence," p. 379

example.[251]

Knibb says,

> The starting point for the discussion of messianism at Qumran ought to be the statement in 1QS 9:11, "until the coming of a prophet and the messiahs of Aaron and Israel," and the list of messianic proof texts in 4QTestimonia. These manuscripts were both copied by the same person and can be firmly dated to the beginning of the first century BCE. Thus, leaving on one side for the moment the expectation of a prophet, these two texts clearly attest the existence from about 100 B.C.E. of the typical Qumran expectation of two messiahs, one a priest, the other a royal figure. The roots of this belief in exilic and post-exilic texts are well known, but we do not know just how far back the actual belief in two messiahs goes, nor do we know whether a version of the Rule of the Community ever existed without the reference to two messiahs.[252]

> Not only does the New Testament collapse the diarchic messianism into one Messiah, but Christianity's messianic idea also includes the idea of suffering. The Qumran Scrolls describe a period of struggle (a forty-year war, according to the *War Scroll*) and persecution (of the Teacher of Righteousness and of the community as a whole), but the Scrolls expect the advent of the Messiah to precipitate a great victory over wicked Rome and the wicked of Israel. The suffering and death of Jesus led early Christians to sift through the prophetic Scriptures. The Song of the Suffering Servant (Isa 52:13—53:12) and Zechariah's pierced one (Zech 12:10), along with several of the psalms of lament (e.g., Psalms 22 and 69), clarified for the early Church the meaning of Jesus' death. Early Christians understood God's purposes to be realized through the work of one Messiah, whose death and resurrection brought an end to the old order and the beginning of the new. The idea of a suffering Messiah is almost certainly absent from the Dead Sea Scrolls, although

[251]Craig A. Evans, "The Messiah in the DSS," pp. 100-01 in Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel R. Carroll R., eds. *Israel's Messiah in the Bible and the DSS* Baker Academic, 2003.

[252]Knibb, "Eschatology and Messianism in the Dead Sea Scrolls" II:385.

from time to time some scholars have tried to find it.[253]

The sect at Qumran held to two Messiahs: one royal and one priestly.

6. Conclusion

   a. The Old Testament speaks more of a messianic era than a Messiah. The *word* Messiah is usually applied to a king or a priest. In the prophets an individual rises to the fore, but still in conjunction with the establishment of the Davidic kingdom in righteousness and justice.

   b. The Apocrypha follows the same pattern with little emphasis on the personal Messiah.

   c. The Pseudepigrapha, particularly in the period from the Hasmonean internecine struggles, places much more emphasis on a personal Messiah.

   d. Qumran deals with a Messianic topic through the "prophet" and a Messiah of Israel and a Messiah of Joseph. Because so much of Qumran is fragmentary, there are different interpretations of brief pieces. The authorities seem to agree that there is no substitutionary atonement in the scrolls.

   e. Rabbinic Judaism plays down the apocalyptic element found in the Pseudepigrapha and at Qumran in reaction to the disasters that had befallen Judaism in 70 and 132 AD. However, it continues to emphasize a coming Messiah(s).

[253]Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint, eds. *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, pp. 8-9.

Messianic Psalms

Psalm 2

See the discussion of Psalm 2 in the introduction to the Psalter for its Old Testament context (p. 125)

1. As the theocratic king (see 2 Sam. 7) David was God's representative on earth (see Kline, "Divine Kingship and Gen. 6:1-4," *WTJ* 24 [1962] 187-204). The language of Psalm 2, however, cannot be strictly applied to any historical situation involving either David or Solomon (see Hengstenberg's arguments). The language is so universal that it must have a millennial fulfillment (see Oehler, *Theology of the OT,* §165 and §230, for a discussion of David's theocratic position and the Messianic ideal).

2. The ultimate fulfillment goes beyond David to his offspring according to the flesh as indicated by the New Testament references and to the wording of the Psalm.

3. The first part of the Psalm is tied in with the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus (Acts 4:25-26). It is part of the prayer of the believers asking God to nullify the opposition of the leaders.

4. The second part refers to the person of Christ.

    a. Paul relates γεγέννηκα (*gegenneka*) to the resurrection of Christ in Acts 13:33 (cf. Rom. 1:4). The "eternal begetting" of Christ is a fiction of theologians. In the New Testament, as here, γεγέννηκα refers to the declarative act of God in the resurrection (הַיּוֹם *hayom*, σήμερον *semeron*) whereby Christ is designated "son." Μονογενῆ (*monogene*) refers to his unique relationship with the father.
    b. Hebrews 1:5 emphasizes his unique position.
    c. Hebrews 5:5 emphasizes God's choice of him as opposed to self-appointment.

5. The third part refers to his future judgment (Rev. 12:5; 19:5). The shepherd's staff is of iron rather than wood, indicating harsh treatment.

6. The Psalm is surely the background for John 1:18, *et al*. "The only begotten son/God who is in the bosom of the father, he has declared him." John 1:41 "Thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel" (John 1:49), and the high priest's adjuration, "If thou be the *Christ*, the *son* of God (See Hengstenberg) (Matt. 26:63).

7. The New Testament quotes almost verbatim the Septuagint which in turn is a good translation of the Masoretic Text. The MT reads in 2:9 תְּרֹעֵם (*t^{e}roem to smash*), but the Septuagint, followed by the New Testament, reads תִּרְעֵם (*tir'em to shepherd*).

Psalm 16

Craigie takes this Psalm as a Psalm of confidence, either of deliverance from a crisis or praise after having been delivered from a crisis. There is a dialog between him and a "syncretist" in vv. 3-4. Thus, the mighty ones and the holy ones are false gods.[254] Dahood goes so far as to say that the Psalm is a "profession of faith… composed by a Canaanite convert to Yahwism."[255] This Psalm is so important, we are devoting more attention to the linguistic and technical details.

1. Peter and Paul's citation of Psalm 16

    a. Peter quotes Ps 16:8-11 from the LXX in his speech at Pentecost in Acts 2:25-28. He introduces the quote by saying that Δαυὶδ γὰρ λέγει εἰς αὐτόν "For David says of him"—i.e., there is no question in Peter's mind that Christ is the fulfillment of these words. Peter goes on to say (2:29-33) that David is dead, and still in the grave, so that these words did not apply to him; rather, David foresaw (προϊδὼν) and spoke of the resurrection of Christ.

    b. Paul cites Ps 16:10 in Acts 13:35, again stating that David saw corruption, but God raised Jesus, and thus He is the fulfillment of the psalm.

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[254]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, pp. 155-56.

[255]Dahood, "Psalms 1-50," p. 87.

2. Commentaries on the Messianic aspect of Psalm 16.

> (A. Cohen Soncino): 10-11 have been interpreted traditionally as an intimation of the immortality of the righteous, and are usually quoted as conveying that message . . .: It is questionable, however, whether that is the plain meaning of the passage, which rather defines the phrase *my flesh also dwelleth in safety*.[256]
>
> J. A. Alexander: There is a dispute as to whether שַׁחַת [*šaḥath*] comes from שׁוּחַ [*šuaḥ*] or שָׁחַת [*šaḥath*]. Probably both, and the ambiguity allows it to be applicable to both David and Christ. "both the words contain a promise of deliverance from death, but in the case of Christ with a specific reference to his actual escape from corruption which is otherwise inseparable from dissolution. Believers in general are saved from the perpetual dominion of death, but Christ was saved even from the first approach of putrefaction. In this peculiar and most pregnant sense the words are applied to Christ exclusively by the two Apostles [Acts 2 and 13], and in that sense declared to be inapplicable to David."[257]
>
> Derek Kidner: "At its full value, and both Peter and Paul insisted this language is too strong even for David's hope of his own corruption. Only 'he whom God raised up saw no corruption.' The LXX reinterprets שַׁחַת (*šaḥath*) non spatial terms by a play on the word 'pit' whose consonants are those of 'to corrupt.'"[258]

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[256]A. Cohen, "The Five Megilloth: Hebrew Text, English Translation with Introduction and Commentary" in Soncino Books of the Bible, Surry: Soncino Press, 1946, *loc. cit.*

[257]J. A. Alexander, *The Psalms, translated and explained*, Miami: Hard Press, 2017 (Reprint), *loc. cit.*

[258]D. Kidner, *Psalms 1-72, loc. cit.*

Leupold: The writer does not merely expect to escape death, but that death will not have dominion over him. It is David's faith not to die, but he did die as Peter says, and the Psalm is prophetically applied to Christ.[259]

Briggs: The psalmist's expectation is that, though he will see the pit (=Sheol, not place of wicked but of righteous), God will be with him there, and there will be eternal happiness.[260]

3. Summary of the Discussion

   a. David (God's *hasid* and covenant recipient) seeks deliverance from a threat of death. Is David speaking of a promise of life or a resurrection of some kind? תַּעֲזֹב ל *ta^{a}zob l* "to leave to Sheol, permit to enter." שַׁחַת *šaḥath* should mean "pit" or "grave" rather than corruption. (Probably derived from the verb שׁוּחַ *šuaḥ* "to sink down" rather than from שָׁחַת *šaḥath* "to be corrupt." David, therefore, says, "God will not permit his saint to enter (לִרְאוֹת *lir'oṯ*) the grave."

      Conclusion: David expresses the OT hope—to escape death (Heb. 2:14).

   b. Did David or any other OT saint expect to "live forever" physically? No. He is trusting God to avoid pre-mature death. "At thy right hand there are pleasures forever" indicates that there are pleasures in God's presence regardless of what happens. God's protection is there even in death.

   c. The disciples did not grasp the idea of a dying and rising Messiah, even though Jesus told them it would be true of Him (Matt. 16:21; 17:9,12, 23; 20:18, 19), and the prophets spoke of the Messiah's suffering and glory (Luke 24:25-27).

   d. The primary focus of Jewish expectation was on the ruling Messiah. The suffering and death (Isaiah 53) were of an unidentified servant, and Zech.

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[259]H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Psalms*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1959, *loc. cit*

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[260]C. A. Briggs, *Psalms: Vol. 1-50,* International Critical Commentary, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1951, *loc. cit.*

12:10 (“they will look on him whom they have pierced”) is rather obscure.

e. Jesus explained the OT Psalms to his disciples:

Luke 24:45,46 Opened their minds = Death/Res.	Acts 2:29-31 Peter preached death/res.
Luke 24:47 Proclaim repentance/forgiveness	Acts 2:38 Repent and be baptized
Luke 24:48 Ye are witness to these things.	Acts 2:32 We are all witnesses
Luke 24:49 promise (Holy Spirit)	Acts 2:33 Received promise of the HS

Thus, Jesus, no doubt, gave instruction to His disciples about his death/ resurrection in the OT and told them which Psalms to use.

f. Peter does not say that Psalm 16 does not refer at all to David; he only says that he died physically (thus the Psalm could not be exhausted in him). Paul in Acts 13:36 says that David served the purpose of God and fell asleep and decayed.

g. Peter ties in Psalm 16 with the Davidic covenant “being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne,” (Act 2:30 ESV) as does Paul in Acts 13:34 “and as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, ‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David’” (Act 13:34 ESV).

h. Three things make it possible for Peter to apply this Psalm to Christ's resurrection:

(1) חָסִיד (*ḥasid*) can apply to David and to the subsequent members of his covenant (2 Sam. 7:15 "I will not remove my חֶסֶד (*ḥesed*) from your seed").
(2) The general idea David was expressing was about protection from death (David, even if he were speaking of the resurrection, suffered

putrefaction).

(3) The ambiguity of שַׁחַת (*šaḥath*)–can refer to both pit and corruption. David in the instance of his prayer escaped both death and decay, Christ escaped decay.

i. In what sense was David aware of what he was saying about the Messiah?

(1) David was a prophet (2:30).

(2) David had received a covenant for an everlasting seed (2:30).

(3) He looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of Christ (2:31). Cf. 1 Cor 15:3-4 where Paul takes the general Old Testament statements and makes them specific (unless Jonah's three days are used here in a prophetic sense). Peter himself comments that the prophets could not comprehend all that they prophesied so that even though David "saw ahead" (προϊδὼν *proïdon*), it was a *dim* προϊδὼν and latent. It was brought to light only by the Holy Spirit or perhaps by Christ himself (Luke 24:45-46). "Thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise the third day."

(4) David, as God's *ḥasid* and representative of all his descendants under the *hesed* covenant, spoke of preservation of God's *ḥasid* from death. In the most pregnant sense, this can thus also refer to David's seed, the Messiah. It is in the *pregnant, covenantal* sense that Peter says David spoke of the Messiah's resurrection. That pregnant sense was explicated by Christ in Luke 24.

Some Principles

1. We must recognize that David himself became a type of the Messiah and increasingly so as time progressed in the Old Testament (cf. Ezek. 34:23, 24).

2. Because David became a type of the Messiah, there are deeper significances to some of the passages than might first meet the eye. This is what Raymond Brown calls the *sensus plenior*—the full sense of the Scripture. We must assume that God originally intended this fuller sense and later brought it to light through the Holy Spirit or by Christ Himself. Luke 24:44ff indicates that Jesus gave the sense of the Psalms to His disciples.

3. The authority for this interpretation is the Holy Spirit as He has revealed it in the New Testament. We should not subjectively go beyond Him in our interpretation of the Old Testament.

Psalm 22

Observations

1. Only on the parting of the garments (John 19) and singing his praises among the brethren (Hebrews) is it treated as a direct quotation. (In John it is word for word LXX; in the synoptics it is paraphrased.)

2. The synoptics, in particular, seem to relate the events of the crucifixion to the backdrop provided by the Psalm without discussing direct quotations.
3. It is quite probable that the entire Psalm, though an accurate reflection of David's anguish in the midst of a bad situation, is taken to be entirely messianic by the New Testament writers. David would then be a type of the Messiah.

4. The phrase, "They pierced (better dug through) my hands and my feet" does not appear in the New Testament. The Hebrew is a problem. As pointed out, it means "as a lion—my hands and feet!" The ellipsis is difficult, but not impossible. The Septuagint must be reading a form related to כָּרָה (*karah*) "to bore through." The form is still difficult. The presence of the aleph might be explained as a construct plural of the participle formed as in Aramaic, but that would be somewhat unusual. If the Greek translation is correct, we must postulate a form of כָּרָה (*karah*) with a middle aleph and point it as a masculine plural: כָּאֲרוּ (*ka^{a}ru*).

5. Strictly speaking, I don't see the Psalm as directly messianic. At the same time, it forms such a drapery for the crucifixion that the New Testament writers saw David's experience magnified in the suffering Messiah. Consequently, allusions and adumbrations are everywhere. David's sufferings, however small in comparison with Jesus,' are a type of the greater sufferings of Jesus. Much of the language is that of exaggerated lament in the case of David, but are literal in the case of Jesus.

Book I concludes with a benediction, "Blessed be Yahweh the God of Israel

from everlasting to everlasting, amen and amen.”

Book II Psalms 42-72

Some characteristics of Book II.

Attribution of authorship (27):

1. David: 51-65; 68-70: (18)
2. Sons of Korah: 42 (43)-49: (7)
3. Asaph: 50: (1)
4. Solomon: 72: (1)
5. No attribution: 43 (part of 42); 66-67; 71: (4)

Historical notes (7):

> 51: Bath Sheba; 52: Doeg the Edomite; 54: Ziphites to Saul; 56: Philistines in Gath; 57: When David fled Saul; 59: Saul watched David's house; 60: Defeat of Arameans; 63: David in Wilderness of Judea. 7 Psalms with references to David's life.

Genre (36 references):

1. *Maśkil* (contemplative): 42; 44-45; 52-55: (7)
2. *Mizmor* (Psalm): 47-51; 62-68: (12)
3. *Shir* (song): 45-46; 48; 65-68: (7)
4. *Miktam* (meaning not clear): 56-60: (5)
5. *L^{e}lammed* (to teach); 60: (1)
6. *L^{e}hazkir* (to remind): 70: (1)
7. *Acrostic:* 34, 37 (2)
8. *A Song of Love:* 45 (1)

Instruments/tunes (14):

1. *'Al Shoshannim* (on lilies): 45; 69 (2)
2. *'Al 'alamoth* (on female voices): 46 (1)

3. *ʻAl maḥlath* (uncertain): 53 (1)
4. *Nᵉginoth* (song 54-55; 61; 67 (4)
5. *ʻAl yonath ʼelem rᵉḥoqim* (silent dove of those afar off): 56 (1)
6. ʼ*Al tashḥeth* (do not destroy): 57-59 (3)
7. *ʻAl shushan ʻeduth* (on the lily of testimony): 60 (1)
8. *ʻAl yeduthun* (proper name; choir): 62 (1)

Category #1: The Korahite Psalms (42-49)

Korah is first mentioned in Exodus 6:21-24 as the great-great grandson of Levi. His downfall is recounted in Numbers 16:1-50. A crisis of leadership arose. Moses and Aaron had been the undisputed leaders of Israel, but a rebellion of Levites occurred, challenging, their authority. Korah is the leader, along with Dathan and Abiram. Two-hundred and fifty others joined with them. The final result was the miraculous death of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who were swallowed up whole by the earth. The Two-hundred and fifty who rebelled were destroyed by fire. Only Korah, of his family, was destroyed. His family was apparently not involved in the rebellion, and so his line continued after his him (Numbers 26:11).[261]

During Jehoshaphat's rule, the Korahites, arose to sing, showing their intimate acquaintance with Temple worship (2 Chronicles 20:19). They were also over the work of the service (1 Chronicles 9:19).

The love of the Korahites for the temple ritual in 42-43 is indicated by 1) appearing before God (42:2), 2) going in procession to the house of God, and keeping festival (42:4), 3) coming to God's holy Hill and to his dwelling places (43:3), to the altar of God (43:4a), and 4) his ability and love for worship music (43:4b).

The Korahites produced Psalms 42-49 (assuming 42-43 were originally one

[261]See Rodney R. Hutton, "Korah," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, NY: Doubleday, 1992. pp. 100-01 for a discussion. See also Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, pp. 223-225.

Psalm).[262] It is noteworthy that in Book I the divine name Yahweh predominates, while book II favors Elohim (see the introduction p. 125). The Korahites also produced Psalms 84-85; 87-89. There is a variety of genres in the Korahites' work. Psalms 42-43 celebrates the psalmist's desire to be close to God, and encouragement to trust in God. Psalm 44 is a prayer for deliverance from trouble and assurance to God of his faithfulness. It is probably set in the exile. Psalm 45 celebrates the king and his new bride. Psalms 46-47, are a celebration of the greatness of God. Psalm 48 shows the Korahites' love of Zion. Psalm 49, has echoes of wisdom—showing the futility of riches to bring man into God's holiness.

I will deal with Psalms 84-85, 87-89 in Book III.

Psalms 42-43 Psalms of the sons of Korah

The witness of many Hebrew manuscripts, the lack of a heading in Psalm 43, the repetition of the phrase, "Why are you cast down, Oh, my soul…" (42:5, 11; 43:5); "Why am I going about mourning…" (42:9; 43:2); and the desire to come to the temple (42:4, 43:4) all point to an originally unified Psalm.

Craigie gives the following structure for the two Psalms:

1)	42:2-6	(a) Lament (42:2-5) (b) *Refrain* (42:6)
2)	42:7-12	(a) Lament (42:7-11) (b) *Refrain* (42:12)
3)	43:1-5	(a) Prayer (43:1-4) (b) *Refrain* (43:5)[263]

1. The exile's longing to know God and to worship him in his temple (42:1-5).[264]

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[262]So Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 224; Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, p. 165.

[263]Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 325.

[264]See Kidner, *Psalms 1-71*, p. 165.

The Korahites depict the lonely Jewish exile weeping for what he used to do in leading pilgrims to Jerusalem for the three annual feasts (Exod. 23:17).[265]

As he speaks of his thirst for God, the only thing that will slack it is to visit the presence of God (in the temple) (42:2-3).

The wound leading to weeping for God's presence is exacerbated by people rubbing in salt when they say, [266] "Where is your God?" Nothing is worse when a believer is in straits than to have people ask this sneering question and to do so repetitiously (all day) (42:4).

The psalmist counters with a reminder to himself and heaps those memories of the former days upon himself when he led pilgrim processions to Jerusalem and the temple. The pilgrims marched along with the voice of rejoicing and thanksgiving, a multitude keeping the festivals. These memories help him keep his sanity and faith in the midst of denial. The last phrase of the Hebrew is, literally, "the deliverances of his face." With a minimum of emendation, it can be read, "the deliverances of my God's presence (bringing the first word of v. 7 to v. 6)[267] (42:5).

2. The exile's despair tempered with hope (42:6-11).

Having reminded himself of his glorious past in the temple, he now faces the fact that he is still in exile. He told himself to wait on God because the time will come when he will praise him, but now his soul is still struggling. Because of that, he reminds himself of the past.[268]

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[265]*Ibid.,* p. 228.

[266]This phrase is repeated in v. 10 where the Hebrew is better (בְּאָמְרָם *b^{e}'amram*) and to be preferred here (over בֶּאֱמֹר), although the meaning is the same, with some manuscripts.

[267]See Craigie, *Psalms 1-50,* p. 324.

[268]Some versions have "Oh, Yahweh;" and one Hebrew manuscript has "Oh, my God."

The geographical references in v. 6 are not clear. "From the land of the Jordan,"[269] is clear, but the plural form of Hermon is not. Nor is "Mt. Mizer" or "the little mountain.," Kirkpatrick says,

> He describes the place from which he speaks as **the land of Jordan and the Hermons,** probably the neighborhood of Dan (*Tell-el-Kadi)* or Caesarea Philippi (*Banias*), where the Jordan rises from the roots of Hermon. The plural *Hermons* either denotes the Hermon range in general or refers to the three peaks in which Mount Hermon culminates. *The hill Mizar* or **mount Mizar** was probably some hill in the immediate neighourhood of which he was; perhaps some point whence he could command a view of the hills beyond the Jordan, over which he would fain be travelling to Jerusalem. Its name—*the little mountain*—may perhaps be meant to contrast its insignificance with the fame and splendour of God's holy mountain where he desires to be (xliii. 3; xlviii. 1, 2).[270]

He now shifts the metaphor to the impact of the ocean. "The deep" usually refers to the ocean (beginning in Genesis 1:2). The noise of the ocean, its roar, is also referred to in Habakkuk 3:10. The roaring ocean terrifies. "At the sound of your waterfall" yields the second use of the word צִנּוֹר (*ṣinor*). The other is found in 2 Samuel 5:8 as a place where Joab climbed up to capture the city of Jerusalem. "All your breakers and waves pass over me." The anguish of the psalmist is expressed in the violent action of the ocean. The streams of water in v. 2 were sweet, but the violent waves of v. 7 are bitter. Kirkpatrick is probably correct in taking the next verbs as past, "He used to command his loving kindness to me."[271] This provides a good connection between vv. 6-7 and 8. "In the night he would have a song and a prayer" (42:6-8).

He now assumes a querulous tone. "I would say to God, my Rock, 'Why have you forgotten me?'" The nexus between God my Rock and God

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[269]Dahood, "Psalms 1-50*,"* argues that this means "the land of descents" or Sheol.

[270]Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 230.

[271]*Ibid.,* p. 231.

forgetting brings out the contrast. God is supposed to provide him with stability, but instead like a forgetful child, he has abandoned his responsibility. The second question is "Why do I go about[272] mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" The second cause of his mourning is "the shattering of my bones." This is a metaphor of the effects of cruel words on the soul of the psalmist "when his enemies reproach him." How do they reproach him? "When they say 'where is your God.'" Ah, that bitter lament that is met first in 42:3. The salt in the wounds. If God really exists, where is he when you need him? (42:9-11).

Though his heart is heavy, he sings his refrain the second time. "Why are you cast down, Oh, my soul. Why are you in an uproar? Wait on God for I will yet praise him, the deliverances of the face of my God" (42:12).

Psalm 43

3. The exile's prayer for God's vindication (43:1-5).

The psalmist now mounts a vigorous defense: "Vindicate me, oh, God, and judge my case." He says "I know I am right, so declare me so." From whom does he want to be vindicated? "From a nation that contains no saint." This is paraphrased to mean, "an ungodly nation" (NASB), that is, a nation where mercy is not practiced. Is this Babylon? There is no way of knowing for sure. The deceitful and sinful man from whom he prays for deliverance may refer to the leader of the godless country or a generalized description of the psalmist's opposition (43:1).

Why does he make this plea? "Because you (emphatic) are the God of my fortress." This is the same as "Oh, God, you are my fortress."[273] This is a faith statement. God is the one who protects me. Yet, the reality of the situation has overtaken him. He has still been cast out of his temple and his country. He is still walking about wearing black because of the oppression

[272]The same phrase occurs in 43:2 but in a reflexive form. I take this to be the writer's choice rather than a textual variant.

[273]BHS brings the "m" from מָעוּזִּי (*ma'uzi*) to the word for "God of." This results in אֱלֹהִים עֻזִּי (*'elohim 'uzi*) "But You, oh, God, are my strength."

of the enemy. His vigorous defense has devolved into a complaint (43:2).

He then proposes a remedy. "Send your light (the illumination of God) and your truth (the verity of God)."[274] These two will lead me.[275] Where will they lead him? To God's holy mountain (Zion and your dwelling places)." "Dwelling places" are "tabernacles," and so the whole passage is redolent of the Exodus and the tabernacle.[276] This may be a literal prayer, asking God to bring him to Jerusalem, or it may be a mental exercise in the midst of his depression (43:3).

If God would lead him with light and truth, his desire would be to go to the altar of God. This would be the God of much rejoicing. The Hebrew is a bit difficult, and some emend the text to אָגִילָה (*'agilah*): "Then I would rejoice." This is based on the Greek text, and while attractive, has too little support to change it. The Korah ethos is reflected in his love for temple music. He would praise God with the harp, "Oh, God, my God." This is equivalent to "Oh, Yahweh, my God" in Book I (43:4).

For the third time he sounds the refrain, urging himself to trust in God, since he expects to praise him. He identifies the one he worships as Deliverances, Presence,[277] and God.

Psalm 44

This Psalm is a plea for deliverance in light of God's past work on behalf of his people. The psalmist recounts the dismal place at which God's people have arrived in exile. The last stanza sets forth the psalmist's (and the people's) uprightness. This is a bit strange as a defense (compare Lamentations where he

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[274]These words resonate in the "I am's" of John's Gospel.

[275]A few manuscripts have יְנַחֲמוּנִי (*yᵉnaḥᵃmuni*). "They will comfort me," but the reading in the text is stronger: "As I walk about mourning, these two will guide me."

[276]Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, "Is the psalmist thinking of the wonders of the Exodus?" p. 233.

[277]Dahood, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 261, treats "My Presence" as a divine name.

admits his and he people' guilt). In light of their righteousness, he pleads for God "to rise up and be our help; and redeem us for the sake or thy lovingkindness."

Psalm 45

This is a paean to the king upon a marriage to a foreign princess. Kirkpatrick, after rejecting all other options, chooses Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter.[278] The first part of the Psalm exalts the king in beautiful language. The second part turns to the foreign bride, urging her to forget her homeland and concentrate on the sons she will bear.

Verses 6 and 7 are the most challenging in the Psalm. "Your throne, Oh God is forever and ever. A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God has anointed you with the oil of joy above your fellows." This statement was taken by both Jews and Christians as messianic. Hebrews 1:8-9 cites it to show the superior position of the incarnate Christ. Kidner says it well:

> But these are incidentals beside the astonishing words addressed to the king in verses 6 and 7. The RSV, NEB and RP (but not JB nor Gelineau) have sidestepped the plain sense of verse 6 (which is confirmed by the ancient versions and by the New Testament) by reducing the words "Thy throne, O God," to something less startling. But the Hebrew resists any softening here, and it is the New Testament, not the new versions, which does it justice when it uses it to prove the superiority of God's son to the very angels (Heb.1:8f). Added to this, verse 7 distinguishes between *God, your God*, and the king who has been addressed as "God" in verse 6. This paradox is consistent with the incarnation, but mystifying in any other context. It is an example of Old Testament language bursting its banks, to demand a more than human fulfillment (as did Ps.110:1, according to our Lord). The faithfulness of the pre-Christian LXX in translating these verses unaltered is very striking.[279]

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[278]Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 244.

[279]Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, p. 172.

Psalm 46

This is a beautiful Psalm expressing confidence in God the creator and controller. The first line sets the tone: It is made up of three parts, each ending in a selah. The second two parts also end with the confession, "Yahweh of Hosts is with us; our fortress is the God of Jacob." Some would argue (see BHS) that this confession should also appear before the selah in v. 4. That makes good sense, but there is no manuscript evidence for it. The first stanza sets out a chaotic situation, followed by a wonderful peaceful condition. The violent seas are replaced by quiet flowing streams. They make God's city glad. He is a shelter and strength and "a help very much to be found in the time of troubles." The word "found" is a passive form in the other places. The time is coming when God will terminate wars and military equipment, therefore, he tells the nations, "Cease and know that I am God; I am high among the nations, I am high in the earth."

Psalm 47

This Psalm continues the theme of Psalm 46: "God is in control; we can trust in him." It adds the extra emphasis of singing and praising him because of who he is. The heading indicates that it is a Psalm. Something for singing. Thus, the heading gives us no hint as to the setting. Kirkpatrick wants to link it with Sennacherib's invasion (2 Kings),[280] but the overall tone of these Korahite Psalms sounds exilic or post-exilic. The note of triumph fits neither era, but it may just be a prophetic word of Israel's future.

There is one continuous theme throughout the Psalm: the greatness of God. Thus, it is difficult to divide into stanzas. My attempt is as follows:

1. God is worthy of praise (47:1-5).

   People should clap their hands and praise him because of all he has done. Yahweh is most high and awesome; he is the great king over all the earth. He subdues people under the saints, and nations under their feet. Most importantly, he has chosen an inheritance for them.[281] The pride of Jacob is

[280]Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 259.

[281]The Greek and Syriac have "as *his* inheritance." This is attractive, but there is no evidence in the Hebrew MSS to support it.

parallel to "us": Israel, and "he loves" is parallel to "he chose." This stanza closes with *selah.*

2. God's triumph should elicit a happy response (47:6-8).

   God has risen with a shout, Yahweh with the sound of the shofar.[282] Three times the hearers are admonished to sing. God is again referred to as king (cf. vv. 3, 8). This king is ruling over all the earth, so, sing with understanding. This last word is מַשְׂכִּיל *maśkil*, with understanding, a word often used of a Psalm and so ESV NASB, and RSV translate it here, but I believe the KJV is correct.

3. God indeed rules absolutely and extensively (47:9-10).

   God rules over all the nations and sits upon his holy throne. The princes of the earth are gathered together along with the people of the God of Abraham. All the shields (i.e., powers) belong to him for he is highly exalted!

Psalm 48

One should not be surprised that the sons of Korah would celebrate Jerusalem. Psalm 137:5 says, "If I forget Jerusalem, let my right hand forget how to function." An even more graphic and literal praise of Zion is found in a Qumran, extra canonical Psalm, dubbed, *An Apostrophe to Zion.*[283]

1. The God who manifests himself in Mt. Zion (48:1-3).

   He begins by extoling God. He is great and much to be praised in the city of our God (48:1-2). His holy mountain is beautiful in elevation and the rejoicing of all the earth. Except as hyperbole, this cannot describe Jerusalem at any time. But there is a universalism beginning to surface here.[284] The reason for the exalted position of Jerusalem is that it is the city of the great

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[282]Does this phraseology indicate a temple ritual celebrating the ascension of God?

[283]J. S. Sanders, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan,* Vol. IV, p. 85.

[284]Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, p. 179.

king, and Mt. Zion in the distant Zaphon.[285] It is God's presence that sanctifies Jerusalem. The few remaining stones of Herod's temple mount retaining wall are a poor representation of what God wants to do in and through Jerusalem.

2. God is the protector of Jerusalem (48:4-9).

It is God who is in her towers, not the armies of David, Hezekiah, Josiah or any other king. Kirkpatrick believes this Psalm is celebrating the escape from the blasphemous Sennacherib and his arrogant Rab Shakeh. This is possible, but there is no way to know. "God makes himself known as a refuge" (48:4).

How do we know? Because Kings who assembled together (cf. Ps 2) and have marched by, are amazed at what they see. They tremble and are terrified. An east wind will shatter the ships of Tarshish. If this is not figurative, it represents a time to come when God destroys his enemies.

The testimony of the Psalmists is that "we have heard and seen in the city of Yahweh of hosts in the city of our God." What have we heard and seen? "That God establishes her forever, Selah" (48:8-9).

3. Meditating on God's work (48:10-15).

"We have thought about your kindness within your temple" (48:10). The word "thought" is usually translated "to be like," but that does not fit well here. Thus, most versions translate it "to think about." God's kindness or *ḥesed* is a favorite expression of God's interaction with humanity. Here, the psalmist experiences it within the temple. One

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[285] יַרְכְּתֵי צָפוֹן, *yark^{e}the ṣapōn* is an interesting phrase. The first word means "back area, remote." The second word is the name of a mountain in eastern Turkey which was considered the home of the gods (cf. Mt. Olympus for the Greeks). Ugaritic literature speaks of *Ba'al ṣapon* or Baal of Mount Zaphon. Because of its location, Zaphon became the Hebrew word for the north. How does this fit as a description of Mt. Zion? Most versions translate it as "far north." In Isa. 14:13, it refers to the king of Babylon exalting himself to the "far north" or *yark^{e}the ṣapon,* the place where God lives. Perhaps this is an apologetic use, showing that the real place of the one true God is not Zaphon but Jerusalem. See further, Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 353.

thinks of Anna (Hannah) who had never left the temple for 77 years, "serving night and day with fastings and prayers" (Luke 2:36-37) (48:10).

God's praise is likened to his name. "Name" is equivalent to reputation. "His praise goes to the ends of the earth, and God's right hand is full of righteousness" (48:11).

Because God's work incudes setting things right, Mt. Zion will rejoice, the daughters of Judah (meaning the Judahites themselves) will exult because of God's judgments. Now the psalmist urges the saints to go around Jerusalem and encircle her. This sounds like a procession of some kind. They are to count her towers (48:15).

The inspection of the city continues when the psalmist tells them to examine carefully ("set your heart on") her[286] bulwarks. "Pass through[287] her citadels." Why take the walk or procession? It is to allow them the information they need to recount to succeeding generations, "This God (of Mt. Zion) is our God forever and ever; he will lead us unto death"[288]

Psalm 49

A Psalm of Wisdom concerning the Emptiness of Wealth without God

1. Announcement of Wisdom (49:1-4).

The language of this section is a pronounced usage of wisdom language. Though there are references to wisdom in the Psalter, this extended presentation is unusual. We generally think of Proverbs as wisdom, and indeed it is.

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[286]לְחֵילָהּ, *l^{e}ḥelah*. The ה, *h*, should have the *mapik* or dot to be *her*, and several manuscripts have it.

[287]This is the only occurrence of this word (פַּסְּגוּ *pass^{e}gu*), and so scholars want to change it, but it is not the first occurrence of a *hapax legomena* in the Hebrew Bible!

[288]עַל מוּת *'al muth* is unusual. Some translators join the words to mean, "He will lead us forever" (LXX, RSV, ESV).

Proverbs is more typical of the ancient middle east wisdom as a group of aphorisms on how one should conduct his or her life. However, Job and Ecclesiastes are reactions to that type of wisdom. Since there are exceptions to wisdom concepts, humanity must be prepared to accept them equally with the aphoristic wisdom. This does not diminish the necessity of following the instructions given, but it balances the instruction of what one should do or not do for certain outcomes with the reality of life, where the outcomes are not always as predicted. Generally, wisdom teaches that proper conduct will produce wealth, and so wealth became a symbol of God's blessing.[289] This Psalm (like Job and Ecclesiastes) responds to that concept.

The opening remarks establish his role as a wise man (cf. Jer. 18:18). His mouth speaks wisdom ideas; his heart meditates with understanding; he listens for a proverb and he speaks; he speaks of difficult things (accompanied with a harp; cf. Elisha in 2 Kings 3:15). Thus, he purports to be speaking from God.

2. The enigma of wicked people being rich (49:5-12).

   If obeying God brings blessing (old age, children, and riches), how can those who disobey God become rich? There is a three-fold repetition of the refrain: "for the redemption of his soul is costly (יֶקֶר *yeqar*)" (49:8). "But man in his pomp (בִּיקָר *biqar*) will not endure; he is like the beasts that perish" (49:12). "Man in his pomp, yet without understanding, is like the beasts that perish" (49:20). Only the latter two use the word יקר *yaqar* with the same sense, but the Hebrew consonants are the same. It usually means something of value, precious, and hence scarce.

3. The destruction of the man who trusts in his wealth and the exaltation of the one who trusts in God (49:13-20).

   This Psalm deserves full treatment, but I will make only a few observations. Death brings to an end the hope of a rich man in his riches. He is referring to the casuistic law in Exod. 21:30 where one might redeem his life from

[289]Note the disciples' astonishment at Jesus' statement about rich people, "Who then can be saved?" (Matt. 19:25).

execution by paying a price. In the case of God, however, no price is sufficient (49:7-9). However, the Psalmist believes that God will redeem him from the power of Sheol (49:15). Does this mean that the psalmist will live forever, or does it mean only that he will live a long time? The latter is the usually meaning.

But there are two other statements that bear on the subject. 49:15 says "He will receive me." This is the same word used in Genesis 5:24: "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." Dahood relates the two passages and boldly says, "What the psalmist is professing is his firm conviction that God will take him to himself, just as he took Enoch and Elijah; in other words, he is stating his belief in 'assumption.'"[290]

49:19 has another important expression: "They (the wicked/rich) will never see the light." What is the light? The large Isaiah scroll (1QIsa[a]) adds to this discussion by supplying the word אוֹר *'or* (light): "Because of the travail of his soul he will see light." Here "light" refers to the resurrection. Indeed, the Old Testament saint had a very limited view of the afterlife. It is dim and shadowy, but glimmers of hope begin to appear, developing through the intertestamental era, and consummating in Jesus, "who came to deliver those who were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

Category #2: A Psalm of Asaph

Psalm 50

Only one Psalm in Book II is attributed to Asaph. Eleven more (73-83) are found in Book III. We will discuss Asaph and these Psalms at that point (p. 235).

[290]Dahood, *Psalms 1-50,* I:301.

Category #3: A Psalm of Confession

Psalm 51

Psalm 23 is the best known of all the Psalms, but, in my opinion Psalm 51 is the most beautiful and contains some of the best sentiments of the Old Testament. I believe the historical reference is accurate in spite of 51:18, "Build the walls of Jerusalem." This can refer either metaphorically to God's work in Jerusalem, or more likely to the repairs of the wall under David.[291] This beautiful Psalm has been commented upon well by others. See the standard commentaries.

Category #4: Judgment on the Wicked (Imprecatory)

52, 53, 58, 59, 69, 70, 71

Psalm 52

Heading: This is one of seven Psalms in Book II designated as a *maskil* or a didactic Psalm. The historical reference is that awful incident when Doeg the Edomite told Saul that Ahimelech had abetted David (however unwittingly) in his escape (1 Sam. 21—23) and the resultant slaughter of the priestly family that left a terrible stain on Saul's name. Doeg truthfully reported on David's activity, but he did it knowing the disaster that would take place, and his own hand killed 85 priests.

1. The lostness of the wicked (52:1-4).

   "Why does the mighty man boast?" The word "mighty man" (הַגִּבּוֹר *haggibbor*) usually means "hero." Here, I believe the psalmist is being sarcastic. The "hero" in this case is the wicked man who boasts in evil. This is a bit like Paul who, referring to the false teachers at Corinth, said, "Actually, I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody" (2 Cor. 12:11 NAS). The "eminent apostles" here are comparable to the "hero" of

[291]See Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, p. 194, who believes subsequent generations made David's confession their own and applied it to the work of Jerusalem.

Psalm 52:1.

This may explain the second half line, which makes no sense as it stands: "The grace (חֶסֶד *ḥesed*) of God all day long." Much effort has been expended to emend the text or otherwise to make sense of it. I suggest that the "hero" who boasts in evil also argues that God multiplies his goodness while the "hero" is boasting in evil.[292]

The wicked man wreaks destruction by the use of his tongue (one is reminded of James here). "He thinks of destruction, his tongue is like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. He loves evil more than good; falsehood more than righteousness. He loves all kinds of devouring words and has a deceitful tongue" (52:4).

2. God's promise of judgment (52:5-7).

God's judgment on the wicked is stated in violent terms: "He will break him down forever; he will tear him away; he will take him away from any residence; he will uproot him from the land of the living. Selah!"

3. The saint's confidence (52:6-9).

The saint who has stood by puzzling at the arrogance of the wicked will look at this calamity that comes on the wicked and fear (a few Hebrew MSS have "rejoice"). He will laugh at him saying, "This is the man (הַגֶּבֶר *haggever*), now a mere man, not a hero, who refuses to make God his strength; he trusts in his great riches; he grows strong by his perverse acts" (52:6-7).

The righteous man, in contrast, is a like a green olive tree in the house of God; he will trust in the grace of God (חֶסֶד *ḥesed*) forever and ever. This is the same word the "hero" bandies about in 52:1. The saint will praise God forever, because he has done it; I will wait for your name before the saints because it is good.

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[292]Dahood, *Psalms 51-100*, p. 13, treats it as sarcasm, but differently from what I have done.

Category #5: Complaint/Confidence

54, **55**, 56, 69

Psalm 55

Where do we turn when relatives and friends turn against us? Psalm 52 speaks of Doeg the Edomite as David's enemy, but Psalm 54 speaks of David's relatives, the Ziphites, who have treated him as a traitor and betrayed him to Saul. This Psalm deals with the bitterness of a friend's betrayal.

1. Cry for God to hear (55:1-3).

   A painful experience of the believer is to pray without receiving an answer. David begs God not to hide himself from his supplication.

   The psalmist begs God to pay attention because he is brought down in his meditation and groans. The reason is the sound of his enemy's voice, and the pressure of the wicked. In anger they hate him. The structure of the first line is difficult. Literally: "They move iniquity upon me." The JB translates it, "They bring misery crashing down on me."

2. Desire to flee the present circumstances (55:4-8).

   David describes his fearful state. His heart is writhing[293] within him. The terrors of death have fallen on him, and as a result, fear and trembling have come to him, and terrors have covered him.

   It is understandable that with this kind of intense stress, he desires to escape. He wishes that he could assume the wings of a dove and fly away where he could dwell (quietly). He would love to wonder far off and lodge in the wilderness. He would hasten to find escape from the violent winds.

[293]Dahood, *Psalms 51-100*, "My heart's fluttering in my breast," p. 28.

3. David's bitter reaction to his enemies (55:9-15).

   The hostility to David is represented by his cry for the Lord[294] to swallow up the enemies as he swallowed up Korah.[295] He has seen violence and contention[296] in the city (55:9).

   The whole city is rife with danger. They (perhaps watchmen) surround the city, walking on the ramparts of Jerusalem. Oppression and deceit do not move from her streets (55:10-12).

   The conflict turns now to the person who is not just an enemy, but a former friend who has become an enemy. If that were true he could hide from him, however, he uses three words to describe the close relationship they have had: אֱנוֹשׁ כְּעֶרְכִּי *ᵉnosh kᵉ'erki* "a man of my equal"; אַלּוּפִי *'alluphi* "tame, docile, intimate"; and מְיֻדָּעִי *mᵉyudda'i* "a close acquaintance."

   There is no way to determine the identity of this intimate of David who has betrayed him. He responds with both grief and anger. Grief when he remembers their intimate relationship when they walked in God's house and took sweet counsel together (55:13-14).

   The psalmist then lashes out with vitriol: "Let death seize them." The Hebrew is difficult and usually divided into two words: death and seize, but certainty is not to be had. "Let them go down to Sheol alive" (as in the Korah rebellion). The reason is that evil permeates their soul and their dwelling (55:15).

4. David's wonderful testimony (55:16-23).

   David goes from vitriol to victory. The Hebrew emphasizes the "I" (אֲנִי *'ᵃni*). "As for me, I will call upon God." In contrast to all the negative actions around him, he will call on the one who can hear and act. The mention of

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[294]Some MSS have *Yahweh*.

[295]Kirkpatrick, *The Psalms,* p. 310.

[296]רִיב *riv* is usually a court case.

Yahweh (unusual in this Psalm) emphasizes the covenant keeping God of Israel. He, says the psalmist, will deliver me.[297] This is one friend who will never betray David (55:16).

A consistent pattern of prayer is followed by the psalmist. Three times daily he will meditate and groan.[298] And God will hear his voice. "He will redeem[299] my soul in peace." The Hebrew is difficult here, but it makes sense as it is. "God will redeem his soul from the war against him because many are those against him." "God will hear and answer him; the one who sits of old, selah." "These wicked enemies do not change their mind or ways; they do not fear God" (55:17-19).

He now returns to the unfaithful friend. "He reaches out against those who are at peace with him. He has polluted his covenant." This friend has a mouth smoother than butter, but there was war in his heart. His words are softer than oil, but they are drawn swords (55:20-21).

Now he refers again to Yahweh. "Cast upon Yahweh your gift in life." What has happened to David is viewed as Yahweh's gift. This is a sentiment preceding the New Testament where Paul accepts his "thorn in the side" as a gift from God (2 Cor. 12:7). When we take the step of faith, Yahweh will sustain us. Furthermore, he will not permit his saint ever to be moved (55:22).
One final thrust is made at the enemies of David, "You, oh God, will bring them down (or the use of an imperfect as an imperative: "bring them down") to the sunken pit. These violent and deceitful men will live out only half their days (55:23a).

The Psalm closes with an inclusio. It begins at 55:17: "I (myself) will call upon God, and Yahweh will save me," and closes with 23b: "As for me, I (אֲנִי *ʾᵃni*) will trust in you."

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[297]Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 312.

[298]Note Daniel's pattern in Daniel 6:11.

[299]פָּדָה *padah* prophetic perfect

Category #6: A Psalm of Thanksgiving

Psalm 57

Heading: to the tune of "do not destroy." To David, a *miktam*. "When he fled from Saul in the cave."

1. David's prayer (57:1-3).

   From the depth of the cave (whichever one it is), David cries out for God to be gracious to him. He repeats the cry, and then gives the reason: He (his soul) has taken refuge in him.

   He amplifies the statement regarding the refuge by saying that he has taken refuge in the shadow of God's wings. Hovering under the wings of a fowl is an ongoing picture of protection (Exod 19:4; Deut 32:11; Ruth 2:12; Pss 17:8; 36:7; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4). He will remain in that protected position until the storm of destruction has passed by (57:1).

   He will continue to call on the highest God; the God who will accomplish things for the psalmist. This is the God to whom he gives thanks and looks for provision. God will send from heaven his grace and faithfulness. This is David's confidence in God's care for his saint under duress, "he will deliver him from the reproach of the one who pursues him" (57:2-3).[300]

2. David's confidence in the midst of peril (57:4-6).

   David's peril is expressed in animal imagery: "he lies down in the midst of lions; even the sons of men who belch forth fire. Their teeth are spear and arrows; their tongue is sharper than a sword." Only God can deliver from these (57:4).

   In the midst of this peril, David cries out "Oh God, be high above the heavens, and let your glory be over all the earth." The only logical connection between 57:4 and 5 is the fear of what could happen assuaged by

[300]Some modern versions have made a verb out of the noun reproach, but see Dahood, *Psalms 51-100*, p. 49, "from the taunts of those who hound me."

what he encourages God to do. This chorus is repeated in 57:11 (57:5).[301]

He then returns to his peril: "They have prepared a net for his steps; his soul is bowed down (toward the net). They have dug a pit for him, but they have fallen in it" or perhaps better, "May they fall into it" (57:6).

3. David breaks out in song as he trusts God to deliver him (57:7-11).

Psalm 108:1-6 repeats most of 57:8-11. David repeats for emphasis 57:7. His heart is firmly established. As a result, he will sing and make music. He calls to his glorious member, (perhaps his tongue, since he will be singing). "Arouse harp and lyre; I will arouse the dawn." He will stir up the dawn through his singing. His praise and singing will take place among the people and those non-peoples (nations). The reason is that "God's grace reaches to the heights of the heavens, and his faithfulness to the clouds." How can such a God fail? As far as one can see, the grace and faithfulness of God are there (57:7-10).

David, finally, returns to his inclusio first found in 57:5: "Be high above the heavens, oh, God, let your glory be over all the earth" (57:11).

Category #7: Imprecatory Psalms

58, 59, 69, **70**, 71

We have previously discussed the significance of imprecatory psalms in Book I, Category #4: Imprecatory Psalms (p. 139).

Psalm 70

Heading: To David, to cause to remember. This latter phrase לְהַזְכִּיר *l^{e}hazkir* "to remind" only appears in this form four times. Only two are found in the Psalm titles: 38:1 and 70:1. In Psalm 38, the psalmist bemoans his terrible physical state. He begs God not to forsake him. In Psalm 70, he calls down God's judgment on those who bitterly oppose him. The reason for this usage is not

[301]See Dahood, *Psalms 101-50,* p. 53 for the importance of height in kings and gods in pagan literature.

clear. The Septuagint has "to remember the sabbath" and Psalm 38 is read on the day of atonement.[302]

1. Call for God's help (70:1-3).

   David calls for God to deliver him. He uses as parallel Yahweh, the covenant name to beg for swift help (70:1).

   He then asks that his enemies be judged. "Let those who seek my life be ashamed and disappointed." He is asking for their nefarious schemes to fail. Likewise, "let those who delight in his harm be turned back and dishonored." "Let those who say aha, aha, be turned back because of their shame" (70:2-3).

   These imprecations consist of three parallel lines. All of them have to do with God bringing disappointment to the evil plans of the psalmist' enemies (70:2-3). There is a parallel passage in 40:13-17.[303]

2. Call for God's people to rejoice (70:4-5).

   Now the parallel lines are contrasting the bad (70:2-3) with the good (70:4-5). He calls upon those who seek God to rejoice and be happy in him. Furthermore, he wants those who love God's deliverance to say continually, "Let God be magnified" (70:4).

   The psalmist then turns to himself and laments that he (emphasis) is afflicted and needy. He pleads with God to hurry to his side. You, he says, are my help and deliverer, so, oh, Yahweh, do not linger.

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[302]Thirtle, *The Titles of the Psalms*, p. 228.

[303]Dahood, *Psalms 50-101*, p. 168, well says, ". . . to caution the overzealous biblical scholar not to attempt a perfect harmonization of the divergent readings that may appear in a Psalm transmitted twice" is borne out by the Ugaritic.

Category #8: Testimony of God's goodness

62, 63, **65**, 66, 67, 68

Psalm 65

Heading: A Psalm of David. A song. This is an extraordinary string of Psalms with a theme of testimony to God's goodness. Only Psalm 64 strikes a different note of complaint.

1. The joy of being chosen by God (65:1-4).

   "To you silence is praise, oh, God, in Zion." The word "silence" is translated by the Greek as "proper." One can arrive at that meaning by assuming that to be silent before God is to avoid complaint or interference.[304] We wait for God to act and that is our praise.[305] David argues that to stay trustingly silent is equivalent to paying the vows we have made regardless of the consequence (65:1).[306]

   All flesh shall come to you who hears prayer. This verse has undergone a fair amount of change in transmission, but sense can be made as it stands. "To the one who hears prayer, all flesh shall come" (65:2).

   The psalmist provides the treason for the prayer: "The deeds[307] of iniquity (he means "his deeds") prevail over me, but as for my rebellious acts, you, yourself, will atone for them" (65:3).

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[304]Cf. Psalm 62:1, 5.

[305]Psalm 83:1 contains three phrases, one of which uses the same root word, urging God *not* to be silent, i.e., to act.

[306]The Greek has added "in Jerusalem" as a parallel to "in Zion," but there is nothing in the Hebrew text to support it.

[307]דִּבְרֵי *divre* is usually "words," but it can also mean "deeds." Kirkpatrick, *The Psalms*, p. 362, treats this as the first part of a conditional sentence, "though."

The setting of this Psalm is the temple. God has chosen his people and brought them near. As a result, he will dwell in God's courts. The parallel line is that God's saints will be satisfied with good things in God's house; in his holy temple. There was no temple in David's time, but this language was applied to the tent in which the ark resided as used in 1 Samuel (65:4).

2. The joy of the manifestation of God's works (65:5-8).

   The God who brings deliverance will answer them with awesome deeds in righteousness; this is the God who is the source of trust for all the ends of the earth and the distant sea. The universality of God's grace is here for all to see. This was not typical of the Ancient Near East! (65:5).

   That God is capable of such activity is shown by the fact that he has established the mountains in his strength and girded himself with might (65:6).

   God's power is often related to the seas. Here he is able to calm the seas and the roaring of the waves. Note the phrasing of Jesus calming the seas (Matt. 8:26). Furthermore, he quiets the tumult of the peoples. Those who live at the farthest point are terrified of God's signs. On the positive side, you make the source of the morning and evening to praise (65:7-8).

3. The joy of God's care for the earth (65:9-13).

   The productivity of the land in the ancient world was evidence of God's blessing on his people. The language describing this productivity is colorful and varied.

"May you visit[308] the earth and water[309] it; may you enrich it abundantly. May the stream[310] of God be full of water; may you provide."[311] He stresses this process by repeating, "thus may you establish it" (65:9).

"May you water its furrows, press down its ridges, soak it up with showers, and bless its branches." This shows the importance of rain to agriculture. Thus, all ancient and modern farmers prayed for rain (65:10).

"May you crown the year with your goodness, and may your paths drip with fatness. May the pastures of the wilderness drip, and may the hills dress with rejoicing.[312] May your hills be clothed with flocks, and may your valleys drip with grain." This prayer for agricultural abundance brings us to the end of the Psalm: "Let them shout and sing" (65:11-13).

So, the Psalm concludes on a note of happiness as a testimony of God's goodness to his children. There is a note of joy throughout.

Category #9: The King

61:6; 63:11; 72:1

Three Psalms in Book II refer to the king. Psalm 61:6-7 represent a prayer for long life. "May you add days to days; may his years be as many generations." This is comparable to our "Long live the king!"

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[308]Dahood, *Psalms 1-100*, p. 1143, argues that the verbs in this passage are predicates or wishes. I am following that argument.

[309]This word appears only here, so any translation is a guess. Thus, the translations vary.

[310]As if there were a river flowing from heaven to earth.

[311]Usually, תָּכִין *takin* means "establish." Here, it means "to provide."

[312]This is a picture of the reaction to a bounteous harvest.

The heading of Psalm 63 is a Psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah. Kirkpatrick argues for Davidic authorship of this Psalm. "The connection is unintelligible unless the king is identified with the Psalmist, whose enemies are destroyed, Cp, lxi, 6 ff."[313]

Psalm 72 is devoted entirely to the king. The heading attributes it to Solomon, and the sentiment expressed resonates with his prayer at Gibeon in 1 Kings 3. Kidner says, "The New Testament nowhere quotes it as messianic, but this picture of the king and his realm is so close to the prophecies of Isaiah 11:1-5 and Isaiah 60-62 that if those passages are messianic, so is this."[314]

Category #10

Prayer for deliverance

59, 60, 64, 70, 71

Since prayer for deliverance often includes curses on the enemies, I have dealt with Psalms 70 at that spot (p. 225). I will not deal with other Psalms in that category.

Category #11

Praise to Yahweh

Psalm 61

This Psalm is attributed to David.

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[313]Kirkpatrick, *The Psalms*, p. 356.

[314]Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, p. 254. See also for an excellent discussion, Wenham, *The Psalter Reclaimed*, pp. 81-101.

1. David's prayer to God (61:1-4).

   David asks God to hear his cry and prayer when his heart is faint. What is his prayer? That God would lead him to a rock that is higher than he (61:1-2).

   He then fills out his request further by saying, "that you would[315] be a refuge for me; a strong tower from the enemy" (61:3).

   The imperfect אָגוּרָה *'agurah* should be treated as a subjunctive: "that I might dwell[316] in your tent forever and find refuge in the secret of your wings, Selah." (61:4).

2. David's obligations to God (61:5-8).

   It is customary to make vows to God connected with prayer. David reminds God that he has heard David uttering his vows. Treating נָתַתָּ *nathata* as a precative, we would say, "May you give the possession to me that belongs to those who revere your name" (61:5).

   David then turns to himself in the third person. He asks God to lengthen the king's life "days on days and years like generations." "May he dwell before God forever, and may he measure out kindness and truth to watch over him" (61:6-7).[317]

   This allows David to conclude his Psalm by promising to sing of God's name forever and to repay his vows day by day (61:8).

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[315]Treating the perfect הָיִיתָ *hayitha* as a precative.

[316]Dahood, *Psalms 51-100,* pp. 83-84.

[317]Critics have tended to excise 61:6-7 because there is a shift from first person to third. Dahood, *Psalms 50-100,* p. 84, cites the Yaḥawmilk of Biblos who makes a similar shift (see *ANET*, p. 656), and so he calls it a royal Psalm. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, seems to agree, pp. 110-11.

Category #12

Messianic Psalms

45, **69**, **72**

For Psalm 45 see my notes under the Psalms of the sons of Korah, p. 206. For a fuller discussion on messianism, see my lecture, "From Adumbration to Incarnation" (p. 172)

Psalm 69

Wenham says, "Christians have seen these Psalms [22, 69] as prophetic predictions of Christ's passion, a sense excluded by form critics such as Gunkel."[318] He further says that Psalm 69 is the second most quoted Psalm next to Psalm 22.[319]

69:9a is cited in John 2:17 in reference to the temple. After cleansing it from the crass materialism, his disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Thy house will consume me."

69b In a non-passion context, Paul cites this passage by saying, "For even Christ did not please himself; but as it is written, 'The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me'" (Rom. 15:3).

69:21 is referenced by all the Gospels. "They gave him wine to drink mingled with gall; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink" (Matt 27:34); "And they tried to give Him wine mixed with myrrh; but He did not take it" (Mark 15:23); "And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine" (Luke 23:36); "After this, Jesus knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop, and brought it up to his mouth" (John 19:28-29).

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[318]Wenham, *The Psalter Reclaimed,* p. 89.

[319]*Ibid.,* p. 45.

69:23-24 is used by Paul to describe the hardened state of Israel. "And David says, 'Let their table become a snare and a trip, and a stumbling block and a retribution to them. Let their eyes be darkened to see not, and bend their backs forever'" (Rom. 11:9-10).

69:25 Matthew alludes to this verse with "Behold your house is left to you desolate" (Matt. 23:38), with parallel in Luke 13:35. Luke applies this verse to Judas, "Let his residence be made desolate, and let no man dwell in it" (Acts 1:20).

Psalm 72

We will not expound this last Psalm in Book II. It is important to know the extensive use of 2 Samuel 7 and the Davidic covenant. This is the only Psalm attributed to Solomon as though he, David's son, expounds the important place this covenant stands in God's plan. Psalm 2 begins with reference to David/Messiah's rule, and Psalm 72 concludes it. The Psalm's penultimate word is a doxology praising God and saying Amen and Amen.

Book III ends the same way in Psalm 89.

The concluding word indicates that Book II must have been a separate collection. "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are complete." The comment on Jesse takes us to Isaiah 11, where the messianic shoot will come from the stump of Jesse.

Wenham defends New Testament messianic interpretation by referring to canonical criticism.

> But canonical criticism would argue not that messianic interpretation is not the invention of the New Testament writers, but that the very arrangement of the Psalter indicates that its editors understood the psalms this way. And canonical criticism does hold that the psalm titles give us an insight into the way Psalms were understood by the arrangers of the Psalter. The titles tell us who the editors think wrote which psalm and under what circumstances.[320]

[320]Wenham, *The Psalter Reclaimed,* p. 90.

Book III Psalms 73-89

Some characteristics of Book III.

Attribution of authorship.

Asaph: 73, 74, 75, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83 (10)
Korah: 84, 85, 87, 88 (4)
David: 86 (1)
Heman the Ezrahite: 88, 89 (2)

Genre

Maskil, 74, 88, 89 (3)
Al Tashheth: 75 (1)

Instruments/tunes

Jeduthun: 77 (1)
Shoshanim eduth: 80 (1)
Gittith: 81, 84 (2)
*Mala*ḥ*ath Leannoth*: 88 (1)

We now come to another collection that is attributed mostly to one author. Psalm 50 and 73-83 make up twelve Psalms with the heading of לְאָסָף *le'asaph*. We have already dealt with the sons of Korah in the beginning of Book II (p. 206). Asaph,

> Son of Berachiah, eponymous ancestor of 'the Asaphites' . . . and one of the great families or guilds of musicians and singers in the Jerusalem temple (1 Chr 6:39; 25:1-2; 2 Chr 5:12). These headings of 12 psalms (50, 73-83) include the designation *l*^{e}*asap*, most likely an indication that they were part

> of an Asaphic collection or were performed according to the style or tradition of the guild bearing Asaph's name (note also the Asaphic attribution of the psalm anthology in 1 Chr 16:7-36).[321]

The Chronicler, with his intense interest in all things temple, recounts that when David had brought the ark to Jerusalem and deposited it in a tent, that he appointed some Levites, including Asaph,

> To give thanks to Yahweh. Then he appointed before the ark of Yahweh some of the Levites as servants to memorialize, give thanks, and praise to Yahweh, God of Israel.
>
> Asaph was first and next to him were Zachariah, Jeiel, Semiramoth, Jehiel, Mattathiah, Eliab, Benaiah, and Obed-edom. Jeiel was sounding with musical instruments, flutes and harps, and Asaph sounding with loud cymbals. And Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests were continually blowing the trumpets before the ark of the covenant of God.[322]

Category #1

Complaint/Confidence

73, 74, 77, 80

Psalm 73

1. The arrogant success of the wicked (73:1-9).

   The age-old question of why the wicked are successful, especially when the righteous are not is marvelously set out in this Asaph Psalm.

   He begins by extolling the goodness of God—the conclusion of the Psalm

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[321]J. S. Rogers, "Asaph," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, New York: Doubleday, p. 471.

[322]1 Chronicles 16:4-6 in Heater, *God Rules among Men*, p. 50.

as its heading (73:1). The problem is stated: the psalmist allowed himself to fall into the "slough of despond" because of his jealousy of the rich wicked. He describes this success in graphic terms (73:4-12).

2. The lament of non-success by the righteous (73:13-14).

   The psalmist then laments that his efforts to walk with God are futile since they do not protect him and assure him of success.

3. The revelation in the temple (73:15-20).

   The psalmist then acknowledges that to discuss his doubts openly would be a betrayal of the believing community (73:15).[323] More meditation on these imponderable issues brought more misery. The turning point was his going to the temple as a place of peace and refuge.[324] Did he receive a vision as did Isaiah (Isa 6)? Whatever, he came into a knowledge of the final situation of the wicked. God, he says, will ultimately destroy these atheistic wicked people (73:18-20).

4. The hope of the believer (73:21-24).

   This is a wonderful testimony and, as such, it has generated many different opinions as to its meaning. He first castigates himself for thinking the way he did (73:21-22), but after his temple experience, he recognized that he was continuously with God who had seized him by his right hand (73:23).

   Then he utters amazing words, "You will lead me by your counsel,[325] and afterward you will take me into glory." This statement is all the more startling when one notes that the Old Testament saint knew next to nothing about the afterlife. It was a dim, dark place where no one wanted to go.[326]

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[323]See Kirkpatrick, *The Psalms*, p. 435.

[324]"Sanctuary" is literally holy places of God, but no doubt refers to the temple.

[325]Syriac has "you will comfort me," but there is no textual evidence for this otherwise.

[326]See Psalm 88 for a description of the afterlife; Hebrews 2:14-15 for a New

Dahood says, "As many commentators have seen, the psalmist uses terms that allude to the story of the assumption of Enoch and Elijah (II Kings ii 11). The meaning is evident enough; the psalmist finds the solution to the inconsistencies of this life in the final reward of the righteous after death"[327] In this life, the crooked will not always be made straight, but in our eternal state, it will be!

Category #2

God's Glory (Asaph)

75, 76

Psalm 75

Psalm 75 calls upon all to give thanks to God because he is the arbiter of the earth, and he will judge it in his time. The wicked will be put down and the righteous will be exalted.

Psalm 76 speaks of God as warrior. He is known as the one who dwells in Salem (Jerusalem) and Zion. He lurks there as a beast of prey.[328] He will vanquish all warriors who are against God, while he will be clothed in light and mightier than the mountains of prey. The stouthearted warrior (enemy of God) will be put into deep sleep. "You," says the psalmist, "You are awesome. Who can stand before you when you are angry?" God will cause judgment to be heard from heaven, and the earth will become quiet. People must make and fulfill vows to Yahweh and bring gifts to the awesome One. He will be treated with awe by the kings of the earth.

Testament response.

[327]Dahood, *Psalms 51-100*, p. 195.

[328]See Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, pp. 261, 62.

Category #3

History of Israel to the time of David (Asaph)

Psalm 78

The place of David looms ever larger with the passage of time. By the time we are in the restoration from Babylon, we are told that God has rejected the northern kingdom (Joseph and Ephraim) and the tribe of Judah has been elevated to first place, Mt Zion is the favorite place of geography, and David is the main character in Judah's later history (78:67-72).

The Psalm opens with wisdom ideas. "I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter riddles from of old" (78:2). These special truths are to be passed on from one generation to another. This whole section indicates that this special revelation is to be passed on to succeeding generations (78:4-8).

The rest of the Psalm, leading up to the choice of Judah, David, and Zion, are a recounting of Israel's perpetual perfidy, but God's continuous grace even after judgment.

Book III will close with an extensive discussion of the Davidic covenant. He concludes Psalm 89 with a plea: "Where are your former kind acts, Oh, Yahweh, which you swore to David in your faithfulness" (89:51).

Category #4

Destruction of Jerusalem/Temple (Asaph)

74, 79

Psalm 74

Psalm 74 contains description of the utter destruction of the temple. While there were other attacks on the temple, only the Babylonians in 586 fulfill this description (74:1-8).

The ministry of prophets has ceased. There is no one to let them know when God will cease being angry at Israel (74:9-11).

The psalmist reminds us that God is still king. In the past he has brought victory to Israel in Egypt, and he is the great creator (74:12-17).

He then pleads with God to remember the evil deeds of the adversary, and for God to arise and plead his case (74:18-23).

Psalm 79 picks up the same theme. The temple and the city have been laid in ruins (79:1-7).

The second half of the Psalm pleads with Yahweh not to remember the sins of the past. The final verse is a delightful confession, "We are your people, the sheep of your pasturage. We will praise you forever; we will recount your praise from generation to generation" (79:13).

Category #5

God's Plea to Israel (Asaph)

81, 82

Psalm 81

1. The Call to Rejoice (81:1-5).

   This command to rejoice and to use musical instruments is said by Kidner to refer to the feast of the Tabernacles.[329] God speaks of Egyptian as a language he did not know. By this he simply means that he did not choose Egypt as a people.[330]

[329]Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, p. 292. Dahood says it is either for the Tabernacles or the Passover, *Psalms 51-100*, p. 262.

[330]The versions have third person, referring to Israel hearing but not understanding.

2. God's redemption of Israel (81:6-10).

   God redeemed them from the slavery of Egypt. In the process, he tested them by the waters of Meribah. God's plea to Israel comes at 81:9-11. He urged them to worship only one God and not any foreign god. The opening line of v. 11 is the same as the first commandment, "I am Yahweh your God who brought you up from the land of Egypt" (Exod. 20:2). He then says that he would provide for them. "Open wide your mouth so that I might fill it."

3. Israel's rejection of God's gracious offer (81:11-16).

   If Israel would only obey God; if they would only walk in his ways, he would have subdued their enemies and turned his hand against their adversaries. His judgment would be forever against those who feign obedience to him; but Israel he would feed from healthy wheat and satisfy them with honey from the rock.

Category #6

Plea for Deliverance (Asaph)

Psalm 83

1. Plea for God to hear (83:1-8).

   The psalmist uses three different words, all meaning to keep quiet. The prayer is for God to speak. The reason for the request is that God's enemies have made a tumultuous noise and have reared their head. This action is against God's people; they make cunning plans. The parallel line says that they have taken counsel against God's treasured ones (Israel). (83:1-3).

   Their plans are now in the open: they plan to wipe out Israel, so that her name will be remembered no more, ever. Modern echoes from Iran say the same thing. In their heart, they have taken counsel together and have made a covenant against God (83:4-5).

Now the specific enemies become clear: Edom, the Ishmaelites, Moab, the Hagrites, Gebel, Ammon, Amalek, Philistines, along with the inhabitants of Tyre. Assyria has also joined with them, and the sons of Lot have lent their strength (83:6-8).

2. Plea for special judgment on their enemies (83:9-12).

   The psalmist reaches back in history for examples of victory over the enemies of Israel and God. Midian (Judges 6); Sisera and Jabin (Judges 4-5); Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah, Zalmunna (Judges 8). The psalmist reaches into the book of Judges and to Gideon in particular for his examples.

3. Final plea for judgment (83:13-18).

   He turns to violence in nature to illustrate the judgment he longs for against the enemies: the whirlwind, the stubble before the wind, a fire burning in the forest, a flame bursting over the mountains, the tempest and the storm[331]

   Then he turns to the shame and fear that comes from defeat. Once that happens, he says, they will seek the name of Yahweh.[332] Let them be ashamed and terrified forever; let them be embarrassed and perish. Let them know that your name is Yahweh, the covenant keeping God, the one who is alone the most high over all the earth.

   This brings us to the end of the Asaphite Psalms. We turn now again to the Sons of Korah (84, 85, 87, 88) . See p. 206, for a discussion of the Korahites.

[331]M. E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991, p. 349, says, "The Psalm serves as a paradigmatic prayer of lament and complaint for a people surrounded by hostile nations and threatened with overwhelming force," p. 349.

[332]This Psalm uses Elohim in the first part, but Yahweh in the second part. Some want to change the text, but there is no need of that.

Category #7

Praise for the Temple/Jerusalem (Korah)

84, 87

Psalm 84

The Korahites as well as the Asaphites loved Zion, the place where God dwells (87) and especially the temple, where an intimate relationship is experienced (84).

1. Longing for the temple (84:1-4).

   In this beautiful Psalm, the writer speaks of the beauty of the temple.[333] Yahweh's courts are the object of his soul's longing and yearning. His heart and flesh sing to the living God. He then speaks of God's creatures who have taken advantage of this pleasant place to dwell and raise their young. He then cries out, "Oh, Yahweh of Hosts, my king and my God"[334] All those who dwell in God's house are blessed and will praise him. Selah (84:1-4).

2. Blessings on the pilgrims on their way to the temple (84:5-7).

   The phrase, "highways of their hearts" is debated. I believe Tate is correct when he says, "V 6 may very well have been a double entendre (in a good sense) on the 'ways": the 'ways' of pilgrimage and the 'ways' of God in a metaphorical sense."[335] The rest of the unit describes the way God blesses their pilgrimage (84:5-7).

3. Rejoicing having arrived at the temple (84:8-12).

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[333]He uses the plural "dwelling places" to enhance the imagery.

[334]BHS editors suggest that this is an addition, but I take it as an ejaculation after describing the use of the temple by the birds.

[335]Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, p. 353.

He calls on God to allow them to go from one level of strength to another and to appear in Zion. Now he can ask God to hear his prayer and pay attention to him (84:8).

The phrase, "See our shield," is debated. Tate argues that it probably refers to the king or priest.[336] This would make it parallel to "Your anointed" in the next line (84:9).

He then speaks of his satisfaction in being in God's temple and concludes with "Blessed is the man who trusts in You" (84:11-12).

Category #8

Restoration from the Captivity (Korah)

Psalm 85

1. The reflection on God's restoration (85:1-3).

   The decree of Cyrus permitting the Jews who wished to return was greeted with much joy (Isa. 40:1-2). That joy is found here as well. This context may be looking to past glories in anticipation of future restoration.[337]

2. The prayer for God's present action (85:4-7).

   The psalmist now pleads with God to restore them. He almost personifies the next imperative: "End your provocation with us." He then asks querulously, "will you always be angry with us; will you draw out your wrath from generation to generation" (85:4-5).

   The questions continue, "Will you, yourself, not again restore us to life and make your people rejoice in you again? Show us, oh, Yahweh, your grace and give us your salvation" (85:6-7).

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[336]*Ibid.*, p. 354.

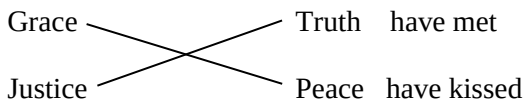
[337]Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, p. 308.

3. The joining of justice and grace (85:8-13).

   The psalmist is now in a position to hear what God the Lord has to say. Indeed, he will speak peace or wholeness. He will speak to his people and his saints. Only, do not let them turn back to foolishness (85:8).

   The rest of the Psalm is outstanding in both its literary structure and its theology. Because the salvation of God is near those who fear him, and his glory dwells (root for tabernacle) in their land, certain things can happen: Grace and truth have met together; justice and peace have kissed. Here we see justice (judgment) and grace (forgiveness) meeting. These are the two great actions of God placed in juxtaposition (85:10).

   From a literary point of view, we call this a *chiasm* or an X.



The same words appear in verse 11: "truth will spring from the earth (the voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the earth") (Gen. 4:10), and justice leans over from heaven (85:11). Now productivity can be expected, and righteous conduct will follow (85:12-13).

Category #9

Prayer of David

Psalm 86

This is the only Psalm in Book III attributed to David, and the only Psalm in the Psalter with a title of "A prayer for David." The Psalm is also mixed in the use of the divine name. Yahweh is used four times; God is used five times plus one of foreign gods. **אדני** (*'Adonai*) is used seven times, but in each case, there are more than twenty manuscripts that have Yahweh. This latter would argue for transition in the text from the use of the divine name Yahweh to a substitution of the word Lord (*'Adonai*). This is usually dealt with as a perpetual qere (always

read Yahweh as Adonai), but in this Psalm it is in the text.

David makes demands of God in this Psalm. By my count, there are fourteen imperatives. Without hesitation, he barges into the presence of Yahweh, his God, and demands a response.

1. The demand to be heard (86:1-7).

   Four of the imperatives (incline, answer, give ear, give heed) have to do with hearing and answering. David's circumstances are dire. He demands a hearing. The reason is that he is poor and needy.

   The other four imperatives (preserve, save, be gracious, make glad) all call upon God to do something, based on a predicate: 1) he is a holy man, 2) He is a trusting man, 3) He calls all day long, and 4) He lifts up his soul. He expands on the attributes of God as a reason for his request: Yahweh is great, ready to forgive, abundant in kindness. Finally, he says that he expects God to answer when he calls.

2. The uniqueness of God (86:8-10).

   The statement, "There is no one like you among the gods, Oh, Yahweh" is not polytheism. The last line refutes that idea, "You alone are God." The idea of other gods or purported gods is common in the Old Testament. When Yahweh is compared there is none like him. See in the New Testament 1 Cor. 10:18-22.

3. A humble request for guidance (86:11-13).

   David urges Yahweh to teach him his way. Then he can walk in the truth. When his heart rejoices,[338] it will fear Yahweh's name. He will give thanks and glorify God's name forever. Why? Because God's *ḥesed* or grace is great, and God has kept him alive (not allowed him to go to Sheol).

[338]So Greek and Syriac. MT has "unite."

4. A final plea for deliverance (86:14-17).

   Proud men have risen against David, and a band of oppressors has sought his life. This could have been true many times in David's life. He emphasizes the "you" in "You, oh, Yahweh are compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, full of grace and truth." Therefore, says David, turn to me and be gracious to me. "Give your strength to your servant and deliver the son of your handmaid." Finally, David asks God to give him a sign that Yahweh is going to do good to him. So, make those who hate me see and become ashamed—why? because Yahweh has helped and shown compassion to him.

Category #10

The Davidic Covenant

Psalm 89

Psalms 88 and 89 are attributed to Heman the Ezrahite and Ethan the Ezrahite respectively. Psalm 88 also attributes it to the Sons of Korah, but see the arguments of Thirtle for breaking off the first part and assigning it to Psalm 87.[339]

Book III ends with the Davidic covenant found in 2 Samuel 7. The first 18 verses are a paeon of praise to the God who made a covenant with his anointed, David (89:3). The specific references to the Davidic covenant are found in 89:19-37. These follow closely the text of 2 Samuel.

The nub of the psalmist's complaint is found in 89:38-51. The perspective of the psalmist is probably the exile (586-539). He cries out that God has chosen to ignore the wonderful covenant he made with David. This could have been written during many difficult times of David's descendants. The temple destruction is not mentioned, but the emphasis is on the throne of David. So, I would place it in the exile.

This lament, seen often in the Psalms, asks God what has happened to cause him to seem to have abandoned his people. He clings to the Davidic covenant, and

[339] Thirtle, *The Titles of the Psalms*, p. 302.

based on the promises found therein, begs for God's grace to be manifest (89:49-51).

Book III closes with the liturgical phrase, "Blessed be Yahweh forever: Amen and Amen" (89:52).

Book IV 90-106

Some characteristics of Book IV.

Attribution of authorship (3)

Moses: 90 (1)
David: 101, 103 (2)

Genre (9)

Song for Sabbath: 92 (1)
A Psalm: 92, 98, 100, 101 (4)
Psalm of Thanksgiving: 100 (1)
Psalm of David: 101 (1)
A prayer: 90, 102 (2)

No Headings (10)

91, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 99, 104, 105, 106

Category #1: Complaint/Confidence

90, **94,** 102

Psalm 94: A God of Vindication[340]

1. The awful deeds of the wicked (94:1-7).

[340]See Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, 340 and Dahood, *Psalms 51-100*, p. 345.

This Psalm is similar to the "Why do the wicked prosper" Psalms. In this stanza the wicked deeds are delineated: they are arrogant; they oppress and afflict Yahweh's people; and the famous triad (widow, orphan, and stranger) are murdered. In their arrogance, they say, "Yahweh will not hold us accountable."

2. God knows them in spite of their arrogant assumptions (94:8-11).

   He admonishes these brutish people to pay attention. If God is the creator of all (ear, eye) why would he not hold them accountable? The one who chastens[341] the nations and teaches man knowledge, will he not rebuke? He knows that man's thoughts are but a breath.

3. The righteous recognize the value of chastening (94:12-13).

   The man who receives Yahweh's chastening and is taught from the Torah is blessed indeed. This gives him quietness (peace) when things go bad; but the time will come when a pit will be dug for the evil-doer.

4. The psalmist's affirmation of God's goodness (94:14-23).

   The assurance that God will not abandon his people nor forsake his inheritance is always encouraging. Still, he questions who will stand up for him against wicked people (94:14-16).

   The answer comes in the next paragraph. It is Yahweh who has been his help. The psalmist recognizes the faithfulness of God, without which his life would have dwelt in silence. When his feet almost slipped, Yahweh sustained him. When he had disturbing thoughts within him, God's comfort delighted him (94:17-19).

   The next line is difficult. Literally, it says, "Can a throne of destruction be joined with you. Can one who forms evil upon a statute?" Tate translates, "Can a seat of destruction be allied with you?—One who forms misery by decree?"[342]

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[341]MT has a question mark הַ (*h);* Greek has the definite article.

[342]Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, p. 493.

The psalmist reverts to complaining. "They troop together against the life of the saint, and they condemn the innocent violently." In spite of all that, Yahweh is still his refuge, and his God is his stronghold. But, he says, Yahweh, his God, will repay their iniquity and cut them off in their wickedness.

Category #2: No Headings

91, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 99, 104, 105, 106

These ten Psalms (out of 17) have no headings to describe events, music, or other issues. In contrast to Book I (all of which except for 1-2 which are the introduction, are attributed to David). There are many lament Psalms in Book I, perhaps because many of them are of David's biography. None of these ten Psalms in Book IV are laments or complaints.

Psalm 91 speaks of the security of the believer. Satan quotes 91:11-12 to Jesus in Matthew 4. Psalm 93 exalts Yahweh. Psalm 94 contrasts the wicked with the righteous. Psalm 95 is a praise Psalm that concludes with a warning not to harden one's heart. It is the basis of the argument in Hebrews 3-4. Psalm 96 is a call to worship Yahweh with a closing verse reminding us that Yahweh is coming to judge the earth. Psalm 97 is another Psalm of exaltation of Yahweh and his might. It also contains a brief diatribe against idols. Psalm 98 is a wonderful song of singing and gladness of heart because of all Yahweh has done for his people. The coming of Yahweh to judge the earth is found at the end as in Psalm 96. Yahweh's enthronement is set forth in Psalm 99. He references Moses, Aaron, and Samuel as those who kept his testimonies. Psalm 104 speaks of God's care of his universe. Psalms 105 and 106 rehearse the Exodus and give glory and praise to Yahweh.

Other Psalms in Book IV, though they have headings, are none-the-less full of praise and thanksgiving. Psalm 92 is a praise Psalm for the Sabbath day. Psalm 100 is full of thanksgiving (as the heading indicates). Psalms 101 and 103 are Psalms of David, praising God and warning the wicked.

A major exception to the joyous tone of almost all Book IV is Psalm 102. The heading alerts us to what is to follow: "A prayer for the afflicted when he is overwhelmed and pours out his complaint before Yahweh."

Book V 107-150

Some characteristics of Book V.

Attribution of authorship

David: 108-110; 138-145 (11)
Solomon: 127 (ascents) (1)
Psalms of Ascents: 120-134 (15)
No headings: 107, 111-119, 135-137, 146-150 (18)

Genre

A song 108 (1)
Maskil: 142 (1)
Psalm: 109, 110, 138, 139, 140, 143 (6)
Prayer: 142, 145 (2)

Historical notes (headings)

When David was in the cave: 142 (1)

Category 1: Complaint/confidence

116, 118, 139 (ascents), 138, **140,** 142

Psalm 140

Protection from the wicked

1. Prayer for deliverance from the wicked (140:1-3).

Only three Psalms in Book V are attributed to David in contrast to Book I, which arguably attributes all (Psalms 3-41) to David.[343] As is usual, there are many situations in David's life that would fit this Psalm.[344]

Verse 1 is parallel to verse 4, with the second half of the line identical.

1a Preserve me, oh, Yahweh, from evil men.

4a Keep me, oh, Yahweh, from the hand of the wicked.

1b Watch over me from violent men.

4b Watch over me from violent men.

1c Who think evil thoughts in their hearts.

4c Who think to hurt my steps.

After pleading with God to keep him from wicked men, he then sets out what the wicked are doing. They think evil thoughts in their hearts; all day long they stir up war. 2 Samuel 10 is a good example of the enemy stirring up war. "They sharpen their tongue like a snake, and the poison of serpents is under their lips, Selah."

2. Prayer for preservation from the wicked (140:4-5).

The second stanza repeats much of what is in the first. They are trying to trip him up (140:4).

The proud have hidden a trap for him. They have spread out a net with ropes,[345] and laid snares by the path for him. Selah (140:5).

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[343]Dahood, *Psalms 101-150*, p. 301, argues that the occurrence of so many *hapax legomena* (one occurrence) and archaic forms indicate an early date for the Psalm.

[344]Kidner, *Psalms 73-150,* p. 468, says, "The single theme of malicious intrigue dominates this Psalm, as it has dominated many others, especially those of David.

[345]חֲבָלִים (*ḥabalim*) "ropes," treated as חֲבָלִים, *ḥ^{a}bbalim*), meaning "corrupt" as a parallel to proud, is followed by Dahood, *Psalms 101-150,* p. 302 and Allen, *Psalms 101-150,* p. 264.

3. Prayer for protection from the desires of the wicked (140-6-8).

   In this stanza, the psalmist becomes very personal with Yahweh. "I have said to Yahweh, 'You are my God.'" In light of this he asks Yahweh to listen to his supplication. He appeals to Yahweh as his strong deliverance. Yahweh has covered (protected) his head in the day of battle (140:6-7).[346]

   In light of who Yahweh is, he begs him not to allow the desires of the wicked (against David) to happen, nor his plans to be enabled, lest they be puffed up (140:8).

4. Prayer for judgment on the wicked (140:9-11).

   At this point, the Psalm becomes imprecatory. All that the wicked were trying to bring on him, he prays that Yahweh will bring on them.[347] As for the word "head" in v. 9, it links to v. 7. He prays that the mischief of their lips would cover them. It is instructive to relate the word "lips" in v. 9 to the same word in v. 3 (140:9).

   The psalmist then has violent thoughts. "May they heap (move) coals of[348] fire on their heads." "Let them make them fall into the pits, and let them not rise" (140:10).

   The imprecation continues with the hope that no slanderer (man of tongue) will be established in the land. Allen translates, "May they lose their homes."[349] This man who "tells tales" on David, he hopes will not be established (do well) in the land. Finally, he prays that calamity will pursue the violent man, hunt him and push him down[350] (140:11).

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[346]Hebrew: נָשֶׁק *nasheq* usually a weapon. Here, by metonymy, "war."

[347]See Allen, *Psalms 101-150,* p. 268.

[348]Reading ב "b" "in" as מ "m" "from."

[349]Allen, *Psalms 101-150,* p. 268.

[350]So Allen, *Psalms 101-150,* p. 265.

5. Confident conclusion to the psalmist's prayer (140:12-13).

   The psalmist is confident that Yahweh will adjudicate the case of the afflicted and provide justice for the poor. So much has happened to him that he has the right to expect little, but contrarywise, he is looking for vindication of those who have suffered at the hands of the wicked. A ringing affirmation closes the Psalm: "Surely, righteous people will praise your name, and upright people will sit in your presence" (140:13).

Category #2: God's Glory

Psalm 115 Yahweh, Not Idols

1. The vanity of idols (115:1-8).

   There is considerable textual evidence for joining Psalms 115 and 116. But Kidner and Tate agree that joining the Psalms does not improve either, and thus should be rejected.[351]

   Allen argues, rightly, I believe, that the setting of the Psalm is in a time of dejection on the part of Israel, and it has continued for a long time. Consequently, he dates it in the exilic period, where a small dispirited group of Jews were disconsolate.[352]

   The opening verse is a ringing assertion of the uniqueness of Yahweh, the God of Israel. The basis of God's love and concern for Israel is his mercy and truth. How different is Yahweh from even the other gods of modern religion. He maintains his *ḥesed* attitude (grace, mercy), even while dealing with his truth (115:1).

   This truth is self-evident, says the psalmist, and leads him to ask, "how can the nations possibly ask, 'where is their God.'" Israel's subjection to Babylon leads their captors and even themselves to ask this question. Many

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[351]Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, p. 404 and Tate, *Psalms 101-150*, p. 107.

[352]Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, p. 109.

modern Christians asked the same question when things do not go as they wish. The psalmist answers that his God is in heaven. As a monotheist and an aniconic believer, the fact that he is unseen does not mean he does not exist. This God does what he pleases, even including the discipline of his people with captivity. To the contrary, the gods that can be seen are handmade and not eternal (115:2-4).

He then discusses in detail the body parts of the idols and indicates that they are useless: mouth, eyes, ears, nose, hands, feet, and throat. None of these is functional. Thus, they are useless. Not only so, the people who fashion these idols are like them in that their trust in idols is not functional (115:5-8).

2. The admonition to God's people to trust in Yahweh (115:9-15).

   This is a liturgical Psalm, with participants reading or reciting the various parts antiphonally. God's people (Israel,[353] house of Aaron, and fearers of Yahweh) are urged to trust in Yahweh. The reason is that he is their help and their shield. Yahweh has remembered them, and he will bless! He will indeed bless the triad admonished to trust Yahweh, both small and large. The psalmist then prays that God would increase his blessings on Israel and their children, because they are blessed by the one who made heaven and earth (115:9-15).

3. The call to praise (115:16-18).

   Heaven, says the psalmist, is where Yahweh dwells and functions. Mankind does not share that sphere with him.[354] On the other hand, God has committed the earth to humanity as a place where they function (see Genesis 9). In the earthly sphere, only the living will praise God.[355] Those who have

[353]Several manuscripts have "house" before Israel (BHS), and thus match the phrase with those following.

[354]This, of course, does not exclude New Testament revelation. He is only making a point.

[355]Only in the New Testament is there hope for the dead (Hebrews 2:14-15). The Old Testament state of the dead was still being debated by the Pharisees and Sadducees.

died and gone to the place of silence cannot praise Yah (a shortened form of Yahweh).

On the contrary, we[356] will bless Yah from now and forever. A final separate affirmation repeats the call to praise: "Praise Yah!

Category #3: The Psalms of Ascent or 'Aliya

Psalms 120-134

There is a broad consensus that הַמַּעֲלוֹת (*hama"aloth*) refers to annual pilgrimage psalms as people "went up" to Jerusalem. However, I believe Michael Goulder is onto something when he argues that the word rather refers to "going up" from the captivity. His argument is 1) the word is not used elsewhere for an annual feast pilgrimage (the other uses refer to a step(s): 1 Kings 10:20; 2 Kings 9:13; 2 Chron. 9:19; Nehemiah 3:15; Isaiah 38:8). 2) The later revisions of the LXX seem to apply it to the return from exile. 3) The Midrash of the Psalms supports this meaning, so does the Peshitta, and 4) Rabbi David Kimḥi prefers this meaning (of four possibilities). 5) Ezra 7:9 uses it in the singular for returning from Babylon to Jerusalem.

Goulder believes that the "I" passages in the Nehemiah memoirs indicate that Nehemiah is the author of the ascent Psalms. I find his arguments clear, but I am less sanguine about his thesis that the Psalms of Ascent are parallel to the events in Nehemiah.[357]

These fifteen Psalms contain several different genres.

Psalms 120 and 123 deal with a prayer for deliverance. Psalm 120 cries out against treachery and prays for deliverance. Psalm 123 is a sweet Psalm of dependance on Yahweh. Psalm 130 and 131 urge Israel to hope in Yahweh.

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[356]Greek adds "the living."

[357]Michael D. Goulder, *Psalms of the Return*, JSOT Supplement Series #158, Ed., David J. A. Cline, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998. pp. 1-33.

Psalm 122 has references to David (title), thrones, and temple. This leads some to argue for a monarchal date for this Psalm. Goulder (as part of his theory) links it to Nehemiah 2:10-18, with Jews making the dangerous pilgrimage to Jerusalem from Babylon or Susa.[358]

Psalms 124 celebrates Yahweh's deliverance from enemies. Psalm 121, 125 and 127 describe the daily dependence on Yahweh required for a successful life. Psalm 133 extols brotherly unity.

Psalm 126 is clearly rejoicing over the return from Babylonian captivity during the Persian period.

In 2003 our four sons and their families rented two cabins in the Algonquin State Park on the Potomac River to celebrate our 50th anniversary. With apologies, I am reproducing my commentary and application of Psalm 128 to my family.

Psalm 128

A Commentary on the Heater Family

Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in his ways.

I look back on the past fifty years, on a wonderful family, a marvelous and satisfying career, and say, "How blessed we are." This blessing is not coincidental; however, it is a blessing from God and the result of walking in his ways. Our lives began together haltingly. Though I had a lot of exposure to Christianity and had accepted the Lord as a youngster, I really knew very little about the Lord. When your mother and I met, we were going to a liberal church that taught us how wonderful the United Nations were and supervised our dances. She, likewise, had limited understanding of true spirituality, even though she had come to know the Lord as a teenager. We had no parental guidance from either side, no mature Christians to help or advise us, and were almost children ourselves at the age of 18. I received all my education after marriage, going all the way to a Ph.D. while your mother had only three months of business school and the adult education program at WBC.

[358]Goulder, *Psalms of the Return*, pp. 44-47.

All this is a recipe for disaster. Most marriages beginning like this would end up on the rocks. The question of how we can be celebrating fifty good years of marriage can only be answered by Psalm 128:1: Because we sought to walk with the Lord, He has blessed us in unimaginable ways. I have slight introspective habits, and as a result, I tend to look back with regret on not having been a better husband, father, and spiritual leader. But overall, I can only thank God for all his goodness to us.

2 You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours.

In 1955 we decided to go to Bible College. Pat's parents were visiting us from Iowa when we made the decision. She returned with her parents for a visit and told them of our plans. They were not happy with them. Her Dad told her that we would starve to death.

Since that time, we have visited 45 countries and all fifty states. We have traveled in Europe, the middle east, far east, Africa, Central, and South America. We have been able to have a sabbatical that allowed us to live for two and a half months in Israel, a month in France, and three and a half months in England. I have been able to teach at two Seminaries and to lead our school as President. We have always had more than enough. How truly does the Psalmist say that blessings and prosperity will be yours.

3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house;

Having given God the glory for bringing us to this point, I must now turn to the human instrument who has had far more to do with it than most people realize—my wonderful wife and your mother. Pat is the most loyal, unselfish woman I have ever known. She has worked all her life with the end of pleasing her children and me. She has done it, not of necessity, but because she revels in it. I have sent her out to buy clothes for herself, and she would come back with something for me instead. She nursed her children in the middle of the night without awaking me. She never asked me to help with the children, and usually did not even want me to, because she viewed that as her domain.

She arose at 4:00 a.m. to get the boys off to a trip or some other venture. She never complained if I brought extra people home for dinner. Nothing makes her happier than to be able to serve people. She left me free to go to school (more

than 12 years), take trips alone, or to minister all hours. She typed my dissertation and gnashed her teeth at my advisor. She is an independent person who did not need me to hold her hand all the time. She reveled in serving her children and still does. When they are coming to our home, she goes into high gear buying their favorite food and providing all their desires.

When I told her that we should go to Bible College, she said, "When do we start?" When I told her we should take a small struggling church in Maryland, she said, "let's get packing." I finished my dissertation in 1976 and decided to go overseas for the summer. We left the children with her cousin and boarded a plane for London. She began to cry, and I thought "what a miserable two weeks we will have in Europe." However, she soon dried her tears and we had the most marvelous two weeks of our lives to that point. It was the first time we had an extended time away from the children in over 20 years. She came back from Rome, and I spent the rest of the summer in Greece, Turkey, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and Nigeria. She got along quite fine without me, but I was desperately lonely for the next two months. When I was looking for a place to minister in 1985, she was convinced that God wanted us in Texas. When her instincts proved to be correct, she happily packed up and moved with me to Dallas. I had more of an empty nest syndrome than she did.

Pat has always been Pat. I have been completely unsuccessful in getting her to accept the fact that she is the President's wife. She is her own person and will not bend to the perception of others. She is a great lady, and I thank God for her and praise God that she has been my companion, supporter, and friend for these many years.

your sons will be like olive shoots around your table.

Our sons, are a great joy in our lives. To have all four of you walking with the Lord and serving Him in so many ways is a blessing undeserved. When I see so many families with so many problems, I can only thank God for your obedience to Him. You are certainly like tender olive plants around our table.

Ken, you are our firstborn. You have always been courageous, outgoing, and willing to take risks. You were a leader from the start. In high school, you led a Christian group even when you were criticized for witnessing to people and the principal called you into his office. You went to South America alone when

you were in your last year of high school. You took the lead in evangelism when you visited WBC as a prospective student. Robert Glahn spoke at Cherrydale Baptist Church recently and told the people that you had led him to the Lord. As a firstborn, you and I struggled a bit in our relationship. Our time together at WBC when I was both your boss and your father were so beneficial in bringing us both to a mutual respect and admiration. I thank God for you.

Linda, you are our first daughter. We have always loved you. Your quiet loving spirit has always been appreciated. I remember teaching you to use the stick shift. You gave us the joy of our first grandchild in 1977 and then a grandson three years later. Thank you for being a wife to our son and a wonderful member of our family.

Rick, you were always special to your mother. She reveled in working in the kitchen with you. Your love of cooking, gardening, and music were a source of delight to both of us. You inherited much of her attention to detail. You patterned your budget after ours and organized your life so that you always did the right thing at the right time. Your gift in music always thrilled us, and your shy, retiring personality is a credit to the Lord. I appreciate the fact that you seldom join in in gossip and always conduct yourself in an upright way.

Jo, thanks for being such a stalwart support of Rick. You have been a wonderful couple, admired and respected by so many. Your mutual support in the ministry of music is encouraging to all of us. I remember that it was hard for you to leave NJ and come to Virginia to teach when Rick got his job at a Christian school. Thanks for being willing to sacrifice in that way.

Kevin, you are special. You were always such a bright little guy and a joy to be around. It was always special to work with you—on cars, on the house, and many other projects. You always wanted to learn and endured my lectures better than the other boys. Your dedication to the Lord in going to France while in College and then vocationally are an example for all. I know that first year in France was very difficult. You must have been lonely, but you never complained (at least to us). Thank you for being such an example of godly commitment.

Lucy, we got our first glimpse of you when you dropped off some things at our house to send to France. Then we met you, really for the first time, in Philadelphia when you were getting married. Thank you for your faithful

commitment to the Lord and to Kevin. When Kevin came home in 1985, he talked to me about his goals in marriage. I told him he could not hit a home run from the locker room, and that he needed to get more active in pursuing his goal of marriage. He went back, became more active with you, and hit a home run.

John, by the time you came along, I believe I had finally become old enough to be a father! You were always a very special delight to both your mother and me. I spent a lot of time with you and always found it easy to share with you. Even though I tried to run over you with the car, I still loved you ☺. We love your humor, your way with people, and your love for your family. I will never forget your tender compassion toward your grandfather's spiritual state and the time you witnessed to our JW neighbor when you were only a little boy.

Linda, what a blessing you are. You always seek to know where we are and how we are doing. Your spirit is gentle and full of compassion. You have been such a wonderful partner and support to John in his ministry. It was such a pleasure to have you in Dallas for a couple of years. Thank you for trying to keep John straight.

6 and may you live to see your children's children.

Grandparenting is a special treat. Some way we see ourselves extended into the future through this third generation.

Jennifer, I suppose it is inevitable that the first grandchild is special. It does not help that you are a girl in the midst of a male family. We have always cherished you. It has been a joy to see your focus on education, vocation, and above all on pleasing the Lord. You will always hold a special place in our hearts.

John, as our first grandson, we always enjoyed you. You loved to mess with every gadget and so indicated from the beginning your interest in things that move. We were so proud of you when we went to your graduation from Paris Island. We thank God for you. Our greatest desire is to see you follow Him.

Eric, you are growing up. You have adopted your father's humorous way of dealing with people. I believe you are gifted to serve the Lord. We are grateful for your willingness to join mission possible and serve Him during the summer.

Megan, you have adopted your mother's winsome ways. Your motherly compassion and quick desire to help in the kitchen and at the table are wonderful traits. As you follow the Lord, He has something very special for you.

Jeremy, God has given you unusual gifts. You have a wonderful capacity to learn, and the privilege of being bilingual gives you unlimited opportunities. As you quickly grow up, you will be greatly used of God if you yield yourself to him. You are a pleasure to have around.

Ben, you have always had a gentle spirit. Our prayer is that you will grow up into a fine young man who allows his personality and talent to be used of God. May all your potential for goodness be realized.

Michelle, you make our third girl. You know that your grandfather tends to dote on his girls. You are very bright and quick-witted. You have all the potential of being greatly used of God—so follow Him and let him temper you into the godly young woman He wishes you to be.

Mark, God has allowed you to go through some difficult times so that He can make you into a great man. We love your gentle spirit, your athletic ability, and your quickness to learn. God has something in store for you that I look forward to seeing.

Dawson, you are unique. I have felt from the beginning that you have great potential for the Lord. You are a quick learner, fearless, and focused. As God knocks some of the edges off, you are going to be greatly used of the Lord.

4 Thus is the man blessed who fears the LORD.

5 May the LORD bless you from Zion all the days of your life;

may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem,

At this significant milestone in our lives, let us give thanks to the eternal God who plucked us from the miry clay and from the pit and set our feet on the rock, who established our ways, and put a new song into our mouths. Thank you one and all for making us twice blessed. Thanks for honoring us on this our fiftieth anniversary. **********

Psalm 129 is an imprecatory Psalm. "May all who hate Zion, be put to shame and turned back."

Psalm 132 is a prayer for the temple. Reference is made to the Davidic covenant and Yahweh's choice of Zion.

Psalm 134 is a closing benediction to the Psalms of Ascent. It commends those who work at night in the temple.

Category #4: Imprecatory Psalms

109, 129 (ascents), **137**, 140

Psalm 137 is often cited as a classic example of imprecation. "How blessed will be the one who seizes and dashes your little ones against the rock." See p. 139 for my discussion of imprecatory Psalms.

Category #5: Testimony of God's goodness

111, **113**, 116, 118, 135, 136, 139, 144

It is difficult to avoid the suggestion that the psalmists complain a lot in the earlier books. However, as we move toward the conclusion of the collection, we see more and more praise. Psalms 111, 113, 135, 136, 145, 146 and 147 have only a minimum of complaint against the ungodly. The latter two both open and close with the phrase, "Praise the Lord." This is also true of Psalm 148-150. We thereby move to a crescendo at the end, where every verse of Psalm 150 urges praise.

Psalm 113 Exaltation of Yahweh

This short Psalm is full of praise, using characteristic words for praise.

1. Praise the ineffable Yahweh (113:1-4).

   Allen says, "The setting was clearly cultic. In v. 1 the congregation appears

to be addressed by a temple choir or soloist."[359] Surrounded by a culture of polytheism, such Psalms as this stand out. It is not simply a diatribe against idols as are several others, it is a pure statement of the uniqueness of Yahweh, the God of Israel.[360]

As the text stands, the servants of Yahweh are admonished to give praise (with no object). The Greek translates as if Yahweh were the object and so, "Praise the Lord, oh, servants." This makes the line parallel with the second, "Praise the name of Yahweh."

The word "bless" is almost a synonym of "praise." Thus, he calls upon the people of Yahweh to bless the name of Yahweh."[361] This blessing is to have no end. It is to go on from now till eternity.

Verse 2 gives the time element of the blessing, but verse 3 gives the spatial dimensions: it is from east to west. In that same space, let Yahweh's name be blessed.

Yahweh is high or exalted above all nations, and his glory is above the heavens. Nebuchadnezzar might take glory to himself, but Yahweh would not let that stand long (Daniel 4:28-30) (113:4).

2. The incomparable Yahweh cares for his people (113:5-9).

This glorious being chooses to stoop to serve everywhere (in heaven and earth). When he stoops to see the need of his people, he "raises the poor from the dust, and the destitute from the ash heap." He does this so that he can

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[359]Allen, *Palms 101-150*, p. 99.

[360]Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 677, "Psalms cxiii-cxviii form the *Hallel*, or Hymn of Praise, which according to Jewish liturgical usage is sung at the three great Festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles…. It was probably the hymn sung by our Lord and his disciples before they left the upper chamber (Matt. xxvi.30; Mk. xiv.26)."

[361]The form is passive, "Let Yahweh's name *be* blessed," but the meaning would be the same.

make them sit with princes,[362] namely, the princes of the people.

Verses 7-8 are almost identical with 1 Sam. 2:8-9, Hannah's beautiful Psalm of praise at the dedication of her son, Samuel. Finally, a verse that would fit Hannah's prayer precisely, but is not there, says that Yahweh makes the barren woman sit happily in her house surrounded by her children. Metaphorically, this refers to Zion and her children.

Category #6: Psalms of Deliverance

107, 108, 110, (121, 124, 125, 126, 131, Psalms of Ascent), 142

Psalm 107 could have been a part of the Psalms of Ascent, since it speaks of the regathering of Israel (107:1-3).

The Psalm is built around four units. The stage is first set for their afflictions. This is followed by their cry for help. The first line says that they cried out to Yahweh in all their distresses, and he saved them (107:6, 13, 19, 28). The only differences are in the last word. 107:6, "he delivered them"; 107:13, 19 "he saved them"; 107:28 "he brought them out." Thus, in Israel's history, there has always been trouble, and Yahweh has always been attentive.

The facts about deliverance are different in each unit: (1) He led them by a straight way; (2) He brought them out of darkness; (3) He sent his word and healed them; (4) He stilled the storm and led them to their desired haven.

Each unit concludes by urging the people to give thanks to Yahweh for his grace (חֶסֶד *ḥesed*) and for his wonderful works to the sons of men.

Two final units speak of Yahweh's wonderful works to his people with an admonition to wise people to take heed and consider those miraculous works.

Psalm 108 is attributed to David. The references to various geographical entities, with Moab, Edom, and Philistia coming up last (as wash pot, humiliation, and a shout of victory), point to the Davidic era when he was fighting these three areas.

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[362]This form, לְהוֹשִׁיבִי *l^{e}hoshibi* is called faulty by Joüon (*Grammaire*, p. 227; 93*p*).

Psalm 110 with the strange discussion of Melchizedek, has been referred to under the Messianic lecture (p. 172). Psalms 121, 124, 125, 126, and 131, are all part of the Psalms of Ascent. They also speak of Yahweh's protection and deliverance of his people. See the Psalms of Ascent on p. 258.

Psalm 142 is also attributed to David. It is a prayer for deliverance. This is an intense prayer, beseeching Yahweh to hear the prayers he makes for help in his distress (143:1-4).

His mode of prayer is that he remembers what Yahweh has done in the past. He meditates or thinks about all that Yahweh has done and thinks about all his work. He spreads out his hands (in prayer); his soul (longs for Yahweh) the way seared land longs for water. Selah. This is an interesting suggestion of the way believers should worship: remember, think, and meditate on all that Yahweh has done (143:5-6).

He then prays specifically. "Answer me quickly," "do not hide your face from me, lest I die (go down to the pit);" "Let me hear your grace (*ḥesed*) in the morning;" and finally he asks for deliverance from his enemies (143:7-9).

His final prayer is that Yahweh would teach him, lead him, revive him, bring him out of his distress, and cut off his enemies, "for I am your servant" (143:10-12).

Category #7: A Psalm of Praise

Psalm 117: Praise Yahweh

Since volume of praise is increasing as Book V moves to a conclusion, it may seem superfluous to single out one Psalm and assign it to this category. However, this little 17-word Psalm is so devoted to praise that I have decided to draw attention to it.

The first point is the universality of the Psalm. It is requested of all nations and all people. The phrase "because his grace (*ḥesed*) has prevailed over us" invites scrutiny. The word גָּבַר *gabar* has to do with strength or might. The noun often refers to warriors. Here, Yahweh's grace does not simply appear, it appears with vigor—we cannot resist it (cf. 103:11).

Furthermore, Yahweh's truth will endure forever. The psalmist loves to juxtapose these two words. *ḥesed*, grace, is his open hand toward his people. Truth אֱמֶת *'emet* is the counter balance. Yahweh's grace does not function in a vacuum; it is kept on track with truth—God's word. Cf. 85:11 where grace and truth have met together (see p. 245).

Therefore, "Praise Yah."

Category #7: Acrostic

111, 112, **119,** 145

Psalm 119

Psalm 119 is an unusual Psalm. It is long (176 verses), has eight lines per letter, and speaks of the revealed word of God and the implications of that word in the believer's life. Ten different words are used; eight are used frequently.[363] The most common word, as might be expected is *Torah*. It is used 25 times, and only stanza two is missing it. Second place is held by עֵדוּת, מִשְׁפָּט and דָּבָר *'eduth* (testimonies), *mišpat* (judgment), and *davar* (word), all three of which occur 23 times. Tied for third place, with 22 each חֹק *ḥoq* (statute) and מִצְוָה *miṣwah* (commandment). פִּקּוּדִים *piqude* (precepts), 21 times. אִמְרָה *imrah* (word, utterance) appears 19 times. Smaller units are "way" דֶּרֶךְ *derek* (2 times), and אֹרַח *'oreḥ* (once). The adjective "faithful" appears once as a modifier for God's word. Only one verse contains no word for God's revelation (122), leading BHS to suggest דְּבָרְךָ *d^{e}bar^{e}ka* (your word), but there is no textual support for this emendation.

The psalmist has chosen these ten different words to express his commitment to the verbal revelation of God to his people. It is not easy to come up with a different word for 176 verses! While this piece of poetry, built around an

[363]See Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, pp. 417-19, for a helpful discussion.

acrostic, can be a bit tedious, the psalmist wants us to see how very important is God's revelation to his people.

The meaning of six of these words is discussed at Psalm 19 (p. 129). חֹק *ḥoq* is missing from Psalm 19. It comes from the verb חָקַק *ḥaqaq* which means to cut or inscribe, probably originally on a hard surface. Now it simply means a decree, or a prescription.

Category 8: Messianic Psalms

110, 132

See my lecture "From Adumbration to Incarnation" on p. 172. For an excellent discussion, see Wenham, "Reading the Psalms Messianically" in the *Psalter Reclaimed*, pp. 81-101.

The Conclusion of the Psalter.

Psalm 148-150. These three Psalms close out the Psalter with a resounding clash of cymbals, praising the God of the universe. It reminds us of Handel's "Messiah" and the hallelujah chorus.

Psalm 148

The psalmist opens with an emphatic "praise the Lord!" (הַלְלוּ יָהּ).

1. Praise from the heavens (1-6).

   The song delineates those who should praise the Lord in the heavens and in the heights. Angels and the host (created beings) (2) Sun, moon, and stars (3-4).

   Highest heaven's

   Waters above the heavens.

   The psalmist then admonishes them to praise the Lord because he created

them. He established them forever and made a decree, and it will not pass away. Thus, everything above the earth is to praise the Lord.

2. Praise him from the earth (7-12).

   Now, the psalmist turns to everything on earth:

   Sea creatures, and all the deeds.

   Fire, hail, snow, and smoke (thick clouds).

   The violent wind performing his word (7-8).

   The mountains and all hills; the fruit trees and all cedars.

   Wild animals; and all domestic animals (9).

   Creeping things and winged birds (10).

   Kings of the earth and all people princes and all judges of the earth (11).

   Young men, and also young women.

   Old men with the young men (12).

3. Concluding issues (13).

   All these are to praise the name of the Lord, because his name alone is exalted. His glory is above the earth and heaven. Furthermore (the Lord is exalted). He has condescended to exalt the horn of his people and is a source of praise for all his saints, and for the sons of Israel who are near him.

Praise the Lord!

Psalm 149

1. The jubilant people (149:1-4).

   Happy people sing. One person said that believers should pray with the Bible in one hand and the hymn book in the other. The believers are commanded to sing a new song to Yahweh. It is new because they are celebrating a victory. Yahweh's praise will be sung in the assembly of the saints.

   Next, he names the people as Israel. "Let them rejoice in their maker."[364] The reference to children of Zion exulting in their king harkens back to the monarchal period.[365] As with all victory celebrations, they praise Yahweh's name with dances, tambourines, and harp (1 Sam. 18:6).

   Why can they rejoice? Because Yahweh is pleased with his people. What a warm, comforting thought. Furthermore, he has beautified the afflicted with victory.

2. The militant people (149:5-9).

   The saints are urged to exult in their glorious one. They are to shout on their beds. Dahood remarks, "The true purport of this clause becomes clearer upon comparison with such texts as Pss iv 5, vi 7, lxiii 7; Hos vii 4; UT Krt: 27-29 [Ugaritic] which reveal that the bed room was a proper place for the expression of emotions deeply felt."[366]

   In verse 6, the Hebrew says, literally, "Let exaltations of God be in their throats." This is the people running into the melee with shouting and a sharp sword in their hand. The purpose of this battle is to wreak vengeance on the nations and reproof or punishment on the people. Israel as Yahweh's instrument will carry out his vengeance. The word "people" is preceded by the Hebrew negative (בַּל *bal*). These are "no people."

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[364]עֹשָׂיו *'osayw* is plural. Either a plural of majesty or singular as in Greek and Syriac.

[365]Dahood, "Psalms 101-150," p. 357 assigns it to the pre-Exilic era.

[366]Ibid.

The vengeance will include binding their kings in chains and their nobles in iron fetters. All this is to carry out the written judgment against them. Where is it written? Probably in the prophets. When all this happens, it will he glorious to all Yahweh's saints.

Praise Yah!

Psalm 150

Praise Yah!

The grand climax to the entire Book of Psalms comes in the last Psalm. These hallelujahs enwrap the people of Israel and any group that honors Yahweh with joy and pleasure.

The praise is to take place (space) in the temple, his mighty expanse, and (character) his mighty deeds, and excellent greatness, (instruments) shophar, harp, lyre, tambourine, dance, stringed instrument, flute, and cymbals (loud and echoing).

Finally, let everything that breathes praise Yah.

Praise Yah!

Index of Psalms Expounded

SONG OF SOLOMON

I. Introductory Data.

This book has been debated perhaps more than any book in the Bible as to its origin, date, and meaning. Judaism itself debated why the book was in the canon (see statements in the Talmud).

The Jews allegorized the book as a statement of the love between Yahweh and Israel. The Targum (Aramaic paraphrase) interprets it as the story of Israel from the Exodus on.[367] The Church allegorized it as a story of the relationship between Christ and His church. Delitzsch reports that Bernard of Clairvaux died after he had delivered eighty-six sermons on the book and only reached the end of the second chapter!

Some have seen in it the attempt by Solomon to seduce the young country girl. Others believe it is the marriage between Solomon and the daughter of Pharaoh. Delitzsch sees a relationship between Solomon and the Shulamite in which she wins his heart away from polygamy to the highest level of conjugal love and from there to a picture of God's love for His people. In recent days it has virtually been turned into a sex manual for Christians.[368] Marvin Pope's recent commentary in *AB* (the longest of all the commentaries in *AB* to date!) treats it as a remnant of an ancient fertility cult song. Gordis argues for a literal interpretation. He says that Hebrew does not separate ἔρος (*eros*) from ἀγαπή (*agape*). The Hebrew word for love (*'ahava* אַהֲבָה) is used for the love of God, strangers, and in Song of Solomon 7:7, it refers to love between man and

[367]M. H. Pope, *Song of Songs* in Anchor Bible, NY: Doubleday, 1977, pp. 89-92, says this treatment of Song of Solomon began in the Christian era [first 500 years] and is reflected in the Talmud. He refutes efforts to show that such interpretation existed before that time. The evidence is meager for *any* type of interpretation.

[368]See, e.g., J. C. Dillow, *Solomon on Sex*, New York: Nelson, 1977.

woman.[369]

The composition of the book has been dated from Solomon's era to the Hellenistic period. Pope speaks favorably of a position taken by an Israeli scholar who considers the work to be of great antiquity (he relates it to Indian poetry coming through Mesopotamian contacts). He responds to the linguistic argument (similar to that in Ecclesiastes) that the Greek and Persian words can be otherwise explained, and the relative pronoun *šˊ* is an old Hebrew relative known in northern literature (Joshua, Song of Deborah and other parts of Judges).[370]

Since Solomon and "the king" are mentioned several times in the book, we must conclude that the Song is about Solomon. It describes a high level of love one would not expect to find in one who had 700 wives and 300 concubines, nor in the one who could not find one woman among a thousand (Ecc. 7:27). Yet it must be an ideal presentation of love which perhaps even Solomon aspired to. In contemporary application, we should see it as a statement of God's attitude toward the ideal relationship existing between a husband and a wife. God may not want all to be married, but for those who become such, may you have the blissful relationship spoken of in the Song.

At the same time, Rabin has a point when, reminiscent of older commentaries, he speaks of this type of literature as showing the longing of a person for God. (He cites Ps. 42:2-4 as an example of a similar type of literature.) May God give to us the same longing for Him as one has for his or her human beloved.

Childs says, Human love, *per se*, is never celebrated in wisdom literature—it is "the joyful and mysterious nature of love between a man and a woman within the institution of marriage."[371]

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[369]R. Gordis, *The Song of Solomon and Lamentations*, New York: KTAV, 1954.

[370]Chaim Rabin, "The Song of Songs and Tamil Poetry" *SR* 3:205-219, 1973.

[371]B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, p. 575.

II. Outline of the Book.

Working on the assumption that the Song speaks of the ideal relationship between a man and a woman from courtship to marriage, the outline is as follows (there are *many* difficulties in verses or section, but we are assuming a unity of the story):

A. The heading (1:1).

"Song of Songs" is a Hebrew way of intensification (e.g., "holy of holies": means "most holy"). The Song is identified as Solomon's.

B. The courtship of the couple (1:2—3:5).

1. The expressing of longing (1:1-11).

The Shulamite expresses her strong attraction for the lover, and her desire for marriage. She also speaks of her backwardness (1:1-7).

The lover and the Shulamite exchange words of praise for one another (1:8-11).

Daughters of Jerusalem (1:5; 2:7; 3:5; 5:8,16; 8:4) are characters in the drama to provide interaction with the Shulamite (who they were historically cannot be determined).

2. The courtship intensifies (1:12—3:5).

a. A banquet scene shows the developing love (1:12-17).
b. They exchange compliments and embrace (2:1-7).

She tells the daughters of Jerusalem not to arouse her love until the right time. This enigmatic phrase probably means that she wants them to prevent her from becoming excessively aroused before it is proper. It may also mean, I am lost in love, do not wake me up.

c. The lover came to her home courting (2:8-17).
d. The Shulamite dreams of losing her love, but in the dream, she finds him (3:1-5).

C. The marriage (3:6—5:1).

1. The lover comes with great pomp for the wedding (3:6-11).

2. The lover lauds his bride (4:1-15).

3. They respond to one another (4:16—5:1).

D. Growth in the marriage (5:2—8:4).

1. Some kind of estrangement developed (5:2-16).

2. She pursues the lover for reconciliation (6:1-3).

3. The lover responds, and they are reconciled (6:4-13).

4. The lover lauds her beauty again (7:1-9).

5. The Shulamite responds invitingly (7:10—8:4).

E. Conclusion (8:5-14).

1. Love is very strong (8:5-7).

2. A review of the history that led up to this point (8:8-14).

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