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THE WATER IMAGERY IN THE PSALMS: AN INNER-
BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

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THE WATER IMAGERY IN THE PSALMS: AN INNER- BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

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To my bride,
Dominique M. Tamfu.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| 4QPs ^b | <i>Psalms Manuscript B</i> (Dead Sea Scrolls) |
| ANE | Ancient Near East |
| AOTC | Apollos Old Testament Commentaries |
| BDB | Brown, Driver, and Briggs |
| <i>Bib</i> | <i>Biblica</i> |
| <i>BibInt</i> | <i>Biblical Interpretation</i> |
| <i>BSac</i> | <i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i> |
| <i>CBQ</i> | <i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i> |
| <i>CBQMS</i> | <i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series</i> |
| <i>ChrisLit</i> | <i>Christianity and Literature</i> |
| <i>Coll</i> | <i>Collationes</i> |
| <i>CurTM</i> | <i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i> |
| <i>DOTPW</i> | <i>Dictionary of Old Testament Prophets and Writings</i> |
| <i>EBC</i> | <i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i> |
| <i>EDB</i> | <i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i> |
| <i>ExAud</i> | <i>Ex auditu</i> |
| <i>GTJ</i> | <i>Grace Theological Journal</i> |
| <i>HALOT</i> | <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> |
| <i>HOTC</i> | Holman Old Testament Commentaries |
| <i>HUCA</i> | <i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i> |
| <i>HS</i> | <i>Hebrew Studies</i> |
| <i>ICC</i> | International Critical Commentary |
| <i>JBL</i> | <i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i> |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>JBQ</i> | <i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i> |
| <i>JETS</i> | <i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i> |
| <i>JNES</i> | <i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i> |
| <i>JQR</i> | <i>The Jewish Quarterly Review</i> |
| <i>JSBLE</i> | <i>Journal of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis</i> |
| <i>JSOT</i> | <i>Journal of the Study of the Old Testament</i> |
| <i>JSOTSup</i> | Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series |
| <i>JSS</i> | <i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i> |
| <i>JTI</i> | <i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i> |
| <i>NAC</i> | The New American Commentary |
| <i>NFF</i> | <i>Novel: A Forum on Fiction</i> |
| <i>NIB</i> | <i>The New Interpreter's Bible</i> |
| <i>NICNT</i> | The New International Commentary on the New Testament |
| <i>NICOT</i> | The New International Commentary on the Old Testament |
| <i>NIDOTTE</i> | <i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> |
| <i>NIGTC</i> | New International Greek Testament Commentary |
| <i>NIVAC</i> | NIV Application Commentary |
| <i>NRTh</i> | <i>La nouvelle revue théologique</i> |
| <i>OTM</i> | Old Testament Message |
| <i>OTSSA</i> | <i>Old Testament Society of South Africa</i> |
| <i>Proof</i> | <i>Proof texts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History</i> |
| <i>RB</i> | <i>Revue biblique</i> |
| <i>ResQ</i> | <i>Restoration Quarterly</i> |
| <i>RevExp</i> | <i>Review and Expositor</i> |
| <i>RevScRel</i> | <i>Revue des sciences religieuses</i> |
| <i>SBJT</i> | <i>The Southern Baptist Theological Journal</i> |
| <i>ScEs</i> | <i>Science et esprit</i> |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| <i>SR</i> | <i>Studies in Religion/Science religieuses</i> |
| <i>TBW</i> | <i>The Biblical World</i> |
| TOTC | Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries |
| <i>TrinJ</i> | <i>Trinity Journal</i> |
| <i>TS</i> | <i>Theological Studies</i> |
| <i>TTE</i> | <i>The Theological Editor</i> |
| <i>TWOT</i> | <i>Theological Word Book of the Old Testament</i> |
| <i>TZ</i> | <i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i> |
| <i>VT</i> | <i>Vetus Testamentum</i> |
| <i>VTQ</i> | <i>St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly</i> |
| VTSup | Vetus Testamentum Supplements |
| WBC | Word Biblical Commentary |
| <i>WTJ</i> | <i>Westminster Theological Journal</i> |

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PREFACE

This dissertation could not have been completed without the contributions of colleagues, friends, and professors from a community where God's word is honored and scholarly discussions are entertained and encouraged. God has immensely blessed me during my time at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary through my colleagues and professors, who were all in varied ways instrumental in the process of completing this dissertation.

I am very thankful for my supervisor, Jim Hamilton, who has modeled for me how to study the whole Bible, and the Psalms in particular, from a biblical theological perspective. He has shown me that it is only from this perspective that one can rightly discern the worldview of the biblical authors. The seed that yielded this dissertation was sown in Hamilton's class on the Psalms, and I am so thankful for his interest in the topic. Throughout the writing process, he has steered me away from many exegetical pitfalls and offered constructive critique where appropriate. I count it a great privilege to call him not only my supervisor, but also my friend. I also give thanks for the members of my committee, Professor Schreiner and Professor Fuller, who have given me careful and constructive feedback to make this work better.

I cannot thank God enough for the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, an institution that is committed to the Scripture as the inerrant and unified word of God. It is a breath of fresh air to write within an institution that holds fast to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I cannot fully express my gratitude for friends and family who have partnered with me in this process. My time at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has been

baptized in the prayers of many faithful friends and family members. Some of these precious brothers and sisters have freely and joyfully given me financial support in order to keep me out of the bondage of debt as I prepare for ministry.

My wife, Dominique Tamfu, to whom I have dedicated this dissertation, has been a source of greater blessings, far more than I could possibly have imagined. In her, God has blessed me with a woman who is not only passionate about keeping our home but is also very eager to know and share with me the things that God has taught me through his word in the process of writing this dissertation. She carefully read through all chapters, meticulously correcting typos and grammar. I could not have asked God for a better wife, helper, and confidante.

Finally and above all, thanks be to the God who displayed his judgment on Gentile sinners at the flood of Noah and at the Red Sea, but sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to be baptized in his floodwaters of judgment to spare me from his wrath and provide for me grace unmeasured, matchless, and free. This grace has sustained me when the torrents of discouragement almost swept me away. “For this I will praise you, O Yahweh, among the nations, and sing to your name” (Ps 18:49).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The psalmists give us a window into the faith of Israel, the covenant people of God. Through the Psalms we see how Israel responded to God's work on their behalf. The authors witness to many works of God: creation, the flood, the exodus and conquest traditions. In their accounts, one sees the interplay of various motifs, including water imagery.

A motif, by definition, is a recurrent element or imagery that is related to a theme or reinforces one. An author may convey a motif in imagery.¹ The psalmists use two major kinds of imagery, simile and metaphor, to convey truths with such vividness of expression that simple language could not fully capture. Imagery in the Psalms significantly contributes to their meaning. Longman notes, "Images speak to us more fully than regular literal language. They stir our emotions, attract our attention, and also stimulate our imaginations, as well as help us discover some new truth about the objects compared."²

In this study, I will show that when one carefully explores the use of water

¹Freedman says, "[A motif] is generally symbolic—that is, it can be seen to carry a meaning beyond the literal one immediately apparent; it represents on the verbal level something characteristic of the structure of the work, the events, the characters, the emotional effects or the moral or cognitive content. It is presented both as an object of description and, more often, as part of the narrator's imagery and descriptive vocabulary. And it indispensably requires a certain minimal frequency of recurrence and improbability of appearance in order both to make itself at least subconsciously felt and to indicate its purposiveness. Finally, the motif achieves its power by an appropriate regulation of that frequency and improbability, by its appearance in significant contexts, by the degree of which the individual instances work together toward a common end or ends and, when it is symbolic, by its appropriateness to the symbolic purpose or purposes it serves" (William Freedman, "The Literary Motif: A Definition and Evaluation," *NFF* 4, no. 2 [1971]: 128).

²Tremper Longman, *How to Read the Psalms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 116.

imagery in a psalm it not only gives a clearer understanding of the meaning of the particular psalm, but it also reveals how earlier Scripture influenced the author. The water imagery highlights the interpretive method and the worldview of the authors. The authors used water imagery to allude to Scripture and to express their understanding of God's work in the future.

It is an indisputable fact that if one misses the imagery one will miss an essential part of the Psalms' message. Thus, this study aims to explore the use of the water motif in the Psalter. Based on my findings, I will suggest that the authors were steeped in Scripture and consequently used the water motif to vividly convey their views of how God's work in the past shaped their own events and the future.³

Thesis

While not discounting the possible minor influence of ANE mythology on the psalmists, this work primarily interprets the water imagery in the Psalms as one of the authors' figurative ways of echoing earlier Scripture. Based on verbal and thematic links, I set out to vindicate the following thesis: The psalmists mainly employed water imagery to allude to the features of four works of God—the waters of creation (Gen 1–2), the water in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:10–13), the flood (Gen 6–9), and the crossing of the Red Sea (Exod 14–15), and these historic events were their paradigms for understanding

³This study proposes an inner-biblical construal of the psalmists' water motif, which scholars have often interpreted in light of Ancient Near Eastern myths, suggesting ANE as its birthplace and polemics as its function. For examples of interpretations of the water imagery as anchored primarily in ANE mythology, see Tremper Longman III, "Psalms 2: Ancient Near Eastern Background," in *DOTPW*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 603–4; S. J. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms*, vol. 1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1966); S. J. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms*, vol. 2 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1968); S. J. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms*, vol. 3 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1970). Even with the emphasis on the ANE as the source of the water motif, scholars do not all agree on which particular myth the psalmists relied. For example, Kloos argues that Ps 29:10 originated in Israel (Carola Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat with the Sea: A Canaanite Tradition in the Religion of Ancient Israel* [Amsterdam: G.A. van Oorschot, 1986], 94–112). Futato on the other hand argues that Ps 29 was a Canaanite hymn (Mark D. Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007], 209–20).

the present and the future works of God.⁴

One could accurately call these writers true biblical theologians in that they based their writing on the Scriptures and hoped for a future that derived its design from earlier Scripture. For the psalmists, the design of the present and the future was in the past. The Scriptures saturated them, and their Scripture-pervaded worldview overflowed in their use of the water imagery. Therefore, this dissertation pursues an inner-biblical investigation of the water motif in the Psalms and argues that the authors drew this motif primarily from the Scriptural accounts of creation, Eden, Flood, and the crossing of the Red Sea because they viewed these events as archetypes that were being re-typified in their days before they would be reenacted in the future.

No monograph at this time exists that interprets the water motif from an inner-biblical standpoint. Thus, this dissertation intends to fill the gaping hole.

History of Modern Research

Each era of psalmic interpretation has had its own emphasis and focus. In the era of the early church, the apostles interpreted the Psalms messianically and apologetically. The New Testament writers also interpreted water like the psalmists did, as references to historic accounts in the Pentateuch. For example, the NT authors explicitly state that the Christian baptism was another installment of the crossing of the Red Sea (Matt 3:13–17; 1 Cor 10:2) and the flood of Noah (1 Pet 3:19–21).⁵ Within the NT, there are also implicit references to water in the Pentateuch. The NT authors' account of John's baptism at the Jordan implicitly mirrors the crossing of the Jordan into

⁴All the Scripture references from the Old Testament follow the chapter and verse number of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*.

⁵For a helpful discussion on the use of the flood in 1 Peter and other NT passages, see Scott T. Yoshikawa, "The Prototypical Use of the Noachic Flood in the New Testament" (Ph.D. diss., Deerfield, IL: Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2004).

the Promised Land, which was patterned after the crossing of the Red Sea.⁶ The NT also alludes to Eden with water imagery (Rev 22:1–5; Gen 2:10). Just as the river flowed in Eden (Gen 2:10), so shall it flow in the new cosmic edenic city (Rev 22:2). Along Eden’s rivers, there was “gold, bdellium and onyx stone” (Gen 2:12), and precious stones surround the river of Revelation 22:1 (cf. Rev 21:18–21). This imagery reveals that God will make the end like the beginning, albeit the consummated garden will be an escalation of the first.⁷ This brief overview of the NT shows that the NT writers read the water in the Pentateuch as archetypal of end time realities.

The early church fathers focused primarily on Christological interpretation of the psalms, reading the psalms eschatologically, prophetically, pastorally, allegorically, apologetically, and ethically. When they happened to touch on the water imagery, they saw it as building on the past and pointing to the future. For example, Hilary of Poitiers sees allusions to the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:9–10) in Psalms 1:3. He makes the following observation:

In the book of Genesis, where the lawgiver depicts the paradise planted by God, we are shewn that every tree is fair to look upon and good for food; it is also stated that there stands in the midst of the garden a tree of Life and a tree of the knowledge of good and evil; next that the garden is watered by a stream that afterwards divides into four heads. The Prophet Solomon teaches us what this tree of Life is in his exhortation concerning Wisdom: *She is a tree of life to all them that lay hold upon*

⁶Schreiner correctly notes, “The baptism in the Jordan River by John signaled that the people were, so to speak, entering into the land of the promise again, as they did after the first exodus when they crossed the Jordan and entered the promised land” (Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 26). Nolland also observes in v. 17 allusions to the Exod 4:22–23, the adoption of Israel as Yahweh’s son at the exodus from Egypt (John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 2005], 157). Davies and Allison also argue for the allusions to the adoption of Israel at the exodus and the crossing of the Red Sea (William David Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, vol. 1, ICC [New York: T. & T. Clark, 1988], 328).

⁷G. K. Beale and Sean M. McDonough, “Revelation,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 1153–54. See also T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2009); G. K. Beale, “Eden, the Temple, and the Church’s Mission in the New Creation,” *JETS* 48, no. 1 (2005): 5–31.

her, and lean upon her. This tree then is living; and not only living, but, furthermore, guided by reason, that is, in so far as to yield fruit, and that not casually nor unseasonably, but in its own season. And this tree is planted beside the hills of water in the domain of the Kingdom of God, that is, of course, in Paradise, and in the place where the stream as it issues forth is divided into four heads.⁸

The medieval period continued the allegorical method of the patristics, but the Reformation period reinvigorated the prophetic interpretation of the apostles with a focus on the biblical text alone apart from Roman Catholic dogma. By the eighteenth century the church's focus was on the historical and cultural setting of the Psalms. The historical focus later dominated Psalms studies in the nineteenth century.⁹ By the middle of the nineteenth century, among other things, psalm titles, which were formerly thought critical for interpreting the Psalms, were jettisoned as unoriginal and frivolous.¹⁰

Gunkel (1862–1932) located the Psalms in the pre-exilic period and moved towards the form critical method.¹¹ Mowinckel (1884–1965), albeit impacted by Gunkel, focused on the *Sitz im Leben* and the cultic function of the Psalms. He related each psalm to events in Israel's cultic life.¹² The influences of Mowinckel and especially Gunkel dominated psalms studies from 1920–1980.¹³ Childs (1923–2007) introduced and

⁸Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *Hilary of Poitiers; John of Damascus*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol. 9 (New York: Christian Literature, 1890), 239 (emphasis mine).

⁹L. Wray Beal, "Psalms 3: History of Interpretation," in *DOTWPW*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 608.

¹⁰Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), 1:100–101. For a succinct discussion of the psalm titles, see George R. Berry, "The Titles of the Psalms," *JBL* 33, no. 3 (1914): 198–200; D. A. Brueggeman, "Psalms 4: Titles," in *DOTPW*, ed. Tremper Longman and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 613–21; F. Cowell Lloyd, *Titles for the Psalms (With a Brief Exegesis of Each Psalm)* (London: James Clarke, 1953); Olivier Munnich, "Lecture Des Titres Des Psaumes: Questions de Methode," *VT* 61, no. 3 (2011): 360–73.

¹¹See, Hermann Gunkel, *Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967).

¹²Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*; Sigmund Mowinckel, *Psalmestudier*, 2 vols. (Kristiania, Norway: J. Dybwad, 1922).

¹³Gunkel's influence largely continues to the present, but Mowinckel has met mixed responses, being acclaimed by some (e.g., E. A. Leslie, *The Psalms: Translated and Interpreted in the Light of Hebrew Life and Worship* [New York: Abingdon, 1949]) and severely criticized by others (e.g., W. O. E.

stimulated great discussion on the canonical interpretation of the Psalms, arguing that the Psalms should be interpreted in its final form, as present in the Hebrew Scripture.¹⁴

Wilson, Childs' student, was the most influential advocate for the canonical reading of the Psalms. Wilson's convincingly argues that the Psalter is not an *ad hoc* assortment of isolated psalms, but that it bears marks of purposeful editorial activity.¹⁵

The above overview shows that each era of psalmic interpretation has its own particular emphasis. In all of these eras, however, we find examples of Pentateuchal interpretation of water imagery in the Psalms. Beginning with Gunkel, however, the tide shifted dramatically, as scholars began to designate ANE backgrounds as the source of the water imagery.

Ancient Near Eastern Myths as Backdrop of the Water Motif

A landmark study in 1895 by Gunkel introduced readers to the "struggle against chaos" (*choaskampf*) motif. In it Gunkel analyses the structure and the form of each psalm, and he categorizes the Psalms by subject, mood, and literary form.¹⁶ He then forcefully proposes that the Mesopotamian religion was the origin for OT passages that seem to describe a battle between Yahweh, the sea, Leviathan, and Rahab.¹⁷ Subsequent

Oesterday, *A Fresh Approach to the Psalms* [New York: Scribner's, 1937]).

¹⁴Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 504–25.

¹⁵Gerald Henry Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 199. Among many of Wilson's work on the editing of the Psalms, the most notable are Gerald H. Wilson, "The Shape of the Book of Psalms," *Int* 46, no. 2 (1992): 129–42; Gerald H. Wilson, "Evidence of Editorial Divisions in the Hebrew Psalter," *VT* 34, no. 3 (1984): 337–52; Gerald H. Wilson, "The Use of Royal Psalms at the 'Seams' of the Hebrew Psalter," *JSOT*, no. 35 (1986): 85–94; Gerald H. Wilson, "The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPsa) and the Canonical Psalter," *CBQ* 59, no. 3 (1997): 448–64. Wilson's argument is so widely accepted only one major work argues against him: Roger Norman Whybray, *Reading the Psalms as a Book* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

¹⁶Hermann Gunkel, *An Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (Mercer Island, WA: Mercer, 1998); Gunkel, *Psalms*.

¹⁷Hermann Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton: A Religio-*

studies, however, argue either for Babylonian or Canaanite literature as the origin of the new motif.

In his 1978 publication, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*,¹⁸ Keel argues that the nineteenth century discovery of ancient Egypt and ancient Mesopotamian empires revealed that the Bible is not the oldest book. He says that the content of the Bible “is as far removed from the beginnings of the high cultures of the ancient Near East as it is from us.” Keel maintains that based on its placement in history the Bible is imbedded within the most diverse broad stream of traditions and pedigree. These traditions included paintings and icons, which were intended not only to be viewed but also read because they simplified, summarized, and communicated concepts.¹⁹ Since the Bible shares the mentality of ANE,²⁰ he argues that only “when this rich environment has been systematically included in the study of the OT do OT conventionalities and originalities clearly emerge. It then becomes evident where the biblical texts are carried by the powerful current of traditions in force for centuries, and where they give an intimation of a new energy inherently their own.”²¹

According to Keel the OT becomes clear in light of ANE traditions. This clarity comes through the lens of comparative studies, when “iconography compels us to

Historical Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

¹⁸Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*, trans. Timothy J. Hallett (New York: Seabury Press, 1978). Although this work is not primarily focused on the water motif, its emphasis on the comparative study of the OT Psalms has motivated scholars to read the water motif in like manner. Keel does the same when he interprets Psalms with water imagery, as will be illustrated below.

¹⁹Ibid., 7. He argues that although the icons do not replace the text, they are not superfluous.

²⁰Ibid., 9.

²¹Ibid., 7.

see through the eyes of the ancient Near East.”²² We see an example of such comparative studies in his treatment of Psalm 1. He states that mountains are common in Semitic circles and that they function as a connecting link between heaven and earth as the locus of life. He makes the following observations:

On its summit rises the tree of life. The tree rises from a water vessel rather than from the earth-mountain itself. This detail emphasizes the close connection between water and (plant) life—a factor often stressed in the psalms (Pss 1:3; 65:9–13; 104:10–12; 147:8). The ‘springs’ are fed in a remarkable manner by the hands of the winged disc, which thus appears as source of all life (Pss 104:28; 145:16).²³

Keel thus proposes that the water imagery in Psalm 1 functions like ANE Iconography.

The rest of Keel’s book is devoted to such comparative studies, juxtaposing images drawn from a vast area spanning over three millennia with the text of the Psalms for clarity.²⁴ Keel is concerned mainly about the source of imagery, including water imagery, and how ANE iconography can serve our grasp of the water in the Psalms.²⁵

In his 1978 article “The ‘Subjugation of the Waters’ Motif in the Psalms; Imagery or Polemic,”²⁶ Curtis aims to evaluate the motif of Yahweh’s subjugation of the waters in light of Canaanite Baal traditions. His goal in this evaluation is to determine whether the motif “can be regarded as mere poetic imagery, or whether, in origin at least, they reflect the tension between the cults of Yahweh and Baal.”²⁷ He notes that in the

²²Ibid., 8.

²³Ibid., 29. This description is based on an image from which Keel believes the idea of a tree planted by the spring of water was sourced. It is in light of the ANE image that the biblical text is then given its meaning, since according to Keel, the OT gain more clarity from such comparative studies than when studied on its own.

²⁴Other examples are Keel’s understanding of the water motif in Pss 18; 24; 63 (ibid., 10).

²⁵Klingbeil follows a similar line of argument and thought (M. G. Klingbeil, “Psalms 5: Iconography,” in *DOTPW*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 612–31).

²⁶A. H. W. Curtis, “The Subjugation of the Waters Motif in the Psalms: Imagery or Polemic?” *JSS* 23, no. 2 (1978): 245–56.

²⁷Ibid., 245.

Psalms Yahweh is portrayed as subjugating the waters and Leviathan the same way that Canaanite Baal did.²⁸ Because of Yahweh's suzerainty over the waters, "the waters are no longer in a position to pose threat to Yahweh's control, because they have been utterly subjugated. Nor can the waters pose a threat to Yahweh's people."²⁹ Curtis assumes that waters are a threat to Yahweh's reign, although he acknowledges that we cannot find reference in Scripture to any clear antagonism between waters and Yahweh.³⁰

Curtis recognizes that there are times when the water imagery in the Psalms points to a historical event like the exodus, but he determines that these historical events are recalled in the same manner as the Canaanite mythologies. The phraseology is primarily reminiscent of Canaanite thought, although some of them relate to Yahweh's dominance over the water at the exodus.³¹ He argues, "It is hard to imagine how the hearers could fail to think of the great mythological battles of the storm god against the sea monster, when he was confronted with this vivid description."³²

According to Curtis, the Hebrew poets stressed Yahweh's reign over the waters in part for polemical reasons.³³ This reign of Yahweh over the waters meant that he could do whatever Baal could do. "At least so far as the Hebrews were concerned he was king above all gods. This is polemic, and more than mere imagery, at least in origin, even if, later, allusions to the conflict with the waters can be classed as 'poetic.'"³⁴ Such

²⁸Ibid., 245–47.

²⁹Ibid., 248.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., 248–49.

³³Ibid., 251.

³⁴Ibid.

polemic was salient because *Baalism* was practiced alongside *Yahwism*.³⁵

In *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*,³⁶ Day assumes the psalmists' language, which describes God's control of the sea, arises from a shared worldview between Israel and her abutting cultures. Day focuses on identifying the Canaanite background for the allusions to God's conflict with the dragon and the sea. He suggests that the dragon and sea mythology of the OT is of Canaanite and not Babylonian origin.³⁷

Day painstakingly argues that the conflict between God, the dragon, and the sea is Canaanite in origin and that it was used polemically by Israel's writers. For example, he argues that in Psalm 89 "the motif of Yahweh's victory over the dragon and the sea here alluded to is, of course, an appropriation to Yahweh of a theme originally associated with the Canaanite god Baal. There may therefore be . . . a polemical element here and in other comparable passages against Baalism."³⁸ He claims that Leviathan has its origin in Canaanite myth,³⁹ but concerning Rahab he states, "As for the name Rahab (cf. Ps 87:4, 89:11, ET 10; Job 9:13, 26:12; Is. 30:7, 51:9), however, this has not hitherto been found mentioned in any extra-biblical text, Canaanite or otherwise."⁴⁰

According to Day, the water imagery in the Psalms he studies are reminiscent

³⁵Ibid., 256.

³⁶John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (New York: Cambridge, 1985), 4. Although Day does not focus primarily on the Psalms, his treatment of the water motif is worth noting. His aim is to address all of the OT's use of water motif. He states that "all those passages in the Old Testament which speak about God's control of the sea at the time of creation naturally presuppose the archaic world view shared by the ancient Israelites along with other peoples of the ancient near east that both above the domed firmament of heaven and below the earth there is a cosmic sea References to Leviathan or Rahab etc. relate to a dragon associated with this cosmic sea."

³⁷Ibid., 7.

³⁸Ibid., 27.

³⁹Ibid., 5.

⁴⁰Ibid., 6.

of the battle with Yahweh and chaotic waters at creation. This myth is of Canaanite origin. Day does not concern himself with how the psalmists were influenced by their grasp of earlier Scripture. Even in the instances where Day considers scriptural influences, he quickly argues that the passage is solely about the creation battle between chaos and Yahweh and that its background is in Canaanite mythology. As noted, Day's primary focus is on the ANE background of the water motif, not its inner-biblical usage.

As one can quickly deduce from her title, *Yhwh's Combat with the Sea: A Canaanite Tradition in the Religion of Ancient Israel*, Kloos' aim is to examine the influence of Baal religion on Israel's religion.⁴¹ She states, "It is recognized nowadays, that Yhwh owes more to Baal than was formerly deemed possible, when the Ugaritic texts were not known."⁴² Kloos studies Psalm 29 and Exodus 15, as she does a comparative study to evaluate the extent of the influence of Baal religion on Israel's religion.⁴³ According to Kloos, "the Reed Sea story originates in the myth of the combat with Sea, which has been 'historicized', i.e. turned into pseudo-history, by the Israelites."⁴⁴ She observes that such historization was a common practice in the day.⁴⁵ Based on her comparative examination of Psalm 29 and Ugaritic literature, Kloos draws the following conclusion about Psalm 29: 3–9:

[It] represents a thunder-theophany, which is directed against the mighty waters—with which the arch-enemy, Sea, is meant. The voice of the deity causes the fright of nature. These motifs are also found at Ugarit, where they are connected with Baal. The pair 'Lebanon-Siryon', the wilderness of Qadesh, the enclitic *-m* and the form *kmw* in vs. 6, fit in with Ugaritic usage, not or less so with OT usage. Vs. 7 might be

⁴¹Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat*, 11.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid., 12.

a reminiscence of a mythological datum which is found at Ugarit.⁴⁶ She further states, “it was Baal who served as model for Yhwh in Ps. xxix.”⁴⁷ To explain the use of the “flood” in verse 10, she surmises, “Knowing the way creation, through a battle with Sea was accomplished in *Enuma elish*, we might expect it to have been pictured in the same manner in Israel.”⁴⁸ Her comparative study leads her to conclude that, although Psalm 29 is an original Hebrew composition,⁴⁹ not a transformed ancient Baal hymn, the psalm, in a non-polemical way, pictures Yahweh as Baal from beginning to end.⁵⁰

In his 1987 monograph, *Water in the Wilderness: A Biblical Motif and Its Mythological Background*, Propp examines the use of the “water in the wilderness” motif with an intentional focus on its origin. He states the following:

It appears that the crossing of the Red Sea, the locus of the creation of the nation under the sovereignty of Yahweh, was early associated with the mythic conquest of the primordial sea and the assumption of sovereignty over the dry land by Yahweh. This creation tradition in turn derived from pre-Yahwistic myth, as we know from the thematically similar Epic of *Ba‘lu* from Ugarit and *Enūma Eliš* of Babylon.⁵¹

He traces the origin of the motif back to pre-Yahwistic mythology. He also argues that biblical historiography obscures the mythological connotations; rather, they appear clearly only when the prose texts are re-examined in the light of the poetic. Propp argues that “biblical poetry is inherently more mythological than prose, since it frequently employs the Canaanite poetic formula and like myth tends to simplify stories,

⁴⁶Ibid., 60.

⁴⁷Ibid., 61.

⁴⁸Ibid., 74–75.

⁴⁹Ibid., 98–112.

⁵⁰Ibid., 90, 93, 94–98.

⁵¹William Henry Propp, *Water in the Wilderness: A Biblical Motif and Its Mythological Background* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 1. While his work covers the entire OT, it is worth including here because of the ways that he interprets this motif in the Psalms.

eliminating details and even characters.”⁵²

For Propp, “both Creation texts such as Genesis 2; Ps 74:15; Prov 3:19–20 and the Zion tradition stress Yahweh’s role as irrigator and fertilizer, showing contacts with the myths of other peoples. We therefore expect to find mythological allusions in tales of Yahweh’s creation of water in the desert.”⁵³ Speaking of Psalm 78, Propp notes, “The poetic ‘deep rivers’ evokes cosmology, and in particular it recalls the abode of *’Ilu*, perhaps intentionally, given the parallelism of this mountain with the holy mountain of v 54.”⁵⁴ In chapter 2, he primarily examines the relationship between fertility and rebellion, which are often connected with waters in the wilderness.⁵⁵ He argues that water in the desert prefigures fertility in the land of Canaan at the exodus.⁵⁶ In Propp’s opinion, the creation and water-in-the-wilderness motifs, in both the Psalms and the rest of the OT, are rooted in Canaanite and Babylonian myths.⁵⁷

Longman, in his article “Psalms 2: Ancient Near Eastern Background,”⁵⁸ argues that “scholars have found it illuminating to read the Psalms in the light of other ancient prayers. The best approach to studying the Psalms in the light of their cultural analogies is not simply to draw on parallels but also to take note of the differences that exists between these various prayer traditions.”⁵⁹ He then compares the ANE hymns and the Psalms, through form, poetic, and content analysis. He argues that “scholars are

⁵²Ibid., 2.

⁵³Ibid., 13–14.

⁵⁴Ibid., 30–31. Italics mine.

⁵⁵Ibid., 37.

⁵⁶Ibid., 38.

⁵⁷See his treatment of Ps 114 (ibid., 23–25).

⁵⁸Longman, “Psalms 2,” 593; cf. Longman, *How to Read the Psalms*, 118–21.

⁵⁹Ibid., 593.

rightly convinced that passages such as these (Pss 24:1–2; 18:14–15; 77:16; cf. 114) have as their background the ancient Near Eastern creation conflict motif as found in the Babylonian text known as the *Enuma Elish* and in the Ugaritic Baal myth.”⁶⁰ For him, Leviathan in Psalm 74:13–17 has as its background a Canaanite creature.⁶¹ Longman insists, “In Ugaritic literature, Leviathan (*Ltn*) is a seven-headed sea monster that is defeated by Baal (*KTU* 5.1.28). The picture in Psalm 74 is intentionally describing Yahweh in language that is reminiscent of the false gods.”⁶² For Longman, Psalm 104 bears some kind of definite relationship to a unique Egyptian hymn that was dedicated to the soul worship of the sun-disc, Aten.⁶³ With regards to Psalm 29, Longman argues that it portrays Yahweh as a storm-god in language reminiscent of Baal, while phrases like “heavenly beings,” geographic references, and the mention of the flood tie the Psalm to Canaanite theology.⁶⁴ He notes the following with reference to Psalm 29:

All in all, the evidence indicates that the psalm may be a Baal poem transformed to become a poem to worship Yahweh However, the fact that we have no Ugaritic hymns should give our confidence pause here We must allow for the possibility that an Israelite poet created this poem. However, if so, then that poet must have intentionally composed it using Canaanite ideas and poetic conventions.⁶⁵

According to Longman the rationale for such borrowing by Israelite poets was polemical.⁶⁶ He states that while it is profitable to study the Psalms in light of the ANE, there are also pitfalls to using this method.⁶⁷ Longman’s cautions against those who argue

⁶⁰Ibid., 601.

⁶¹Ibid., 602–3.

⁶²Ibid., 602.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid., 603; cf. Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 209–20.

⁶⁵Longman, “Psalms 2,” 603.

⁶⁶Ibid., 603–4.

⁶⁷Ibid., 604.

that the Hebrew of the Psalms should be rewritten,⁶⁸ and advocates for a comparative study of the Psalms, including their water motif as shown in the examples above.⁶⁹

The lacuna in Psalms scholarship on inner-biblical interpretation of the water imagery necessitates this work. Thus this project, without ignoring past scholarship on the subject, aims to examine this motif from an inner-biblical perspective. The study will evaluate the motif against Israel's documented history at the time of the writing of the Psalms, the Pentateuch. Approaching the Psalms from this perspective yields a wealth of insight into the biblical worldview that shaped the authors. In this dissertation, I interpret the water motif as verbal and thematic allusions to four historic narratives: creation, Eden, the flood, the crossing of the Red sea.

Methodology

In this study, I will combine various exegetical methods to determine the intended meaning of each text under examination. This will involve close examination of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, with careful attention given to the immediate literary context and the context of the book of the Psalms. I will also do several word studies in the process. I will study each word as used in the OT as a whole and sometimes examine the LXX translation as well, particularly as it relates to the water motif in the Psalter. I will approach the text of Scripture as present in the Canon.

While investigating each psalm with water imagery in its immediate and book contexts, the primary focus will be on how these psalms allude to earlier scriptures, inner-

⁶⁸The push to rewrite the Hebrew is based on the new discoveries in Northwest Semitic language, poetic devices and imagery. He notes S. Mowinckel and M. Dahood as examples of such advocates.

⁶⁹Longman, "Psalms 2," 604. In *How to Read the Psalms*, Longman interprets some of the water imagery inner-biblically, but does not argue for the method (Longman, *How to Read the Psalms*, 112–21).

biblical exegesis.⁷⁰ This approach to interpreting the water imagery in the Psalms will seek to address the psalmists' re-interpretation and reapplication of four narratives in the Pentateuch, creation, Eden, flood, and the Red Sea. Inner-biblical exegesis assumes that later texts embed earlier texts.⁷¹ Fishbane notes that "a canon presupposes the possibility of correlations among its parts, such that new texts may imbed, reuse, or otherwise allude to precursor materials."⁷²

Two other crucial assumptions that undergird inner-biblical exegesis are: first, the divine inspiration of the entire Bible. "This foundational perspective means that there is unity to the Bible because it is all God's word." Second, "the divine authorial

⁷⁰The term "inner-biblical exegesis" is used here as a preference. Intertextuality could be used, but based on Beale's argument about the present confusion that surrounds the term intertextuality, inner-biblical exegesis is preferred (G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012], 39–40).

⁷¹The identification of reinterpretation and reapplication of earlier texts in later texts in the OT is primarily due to Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985). Other notable works by Fishbane on inner-biblical exegesis are: Michael Fishbane, "Revelation and Tradition: Aspects of Inner-Biblical Exegesis." *JBL* 99, no. 3 (1980): 343; Michael Fishbane, "The Hebrew Bible and Exegetical Tradition." In *Intertextuality in Ugarit and Israel*, 15–30. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998; Michael Fishbane, "Types of Biblical Intertextuality." In *Congress Volume*, 39–44. VTSup 80. Leiden: Brill, 2000; Michael Fishbane, "Inner-Biblical Exegesis." In *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Vol 1, Pt 1, From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages (until 1300)*. *Antiquity*, 33–48. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996.

⁷²Michael Fishbane, "Types of Biblical Intertextuality" In *Congress Volume*, VTSup 80 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 39. Within the text of the OT, Fishbane identifies two major variants of reinterpretation of earlier texts: "unmarked and marked intertextuality." By unmarked intertextuality he means the "repetition or redundancy that seem to be more that[sic] the product of accident or formal style. Ineed, the repetitions at hand (whether fragmentary or extensive) reveal connections with other sources upon which their deeper sense depends" (ibid., 40). He states that marked intertextuality are the result of reading or study of earlier texts (ibid., 41). He argues that intertextuality "establishes a bould connection between distinct parts of the cultural canon—indicating that distinct genres (like psalms and historical narratives) must be read in tandem" (ibid.). For a critical evaluation of Fishbane's understanding of inner-biblical exegesis, see Lyle M. Eslinger, "Inner-Biblical Exegesis and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Question of Category" *VT* 42, no. 1 (1992): 47–58. Sommer responds to Eslinger and argues for the validity of Fishbane's diachronic approach to inner-biblical exegesis. He notes, "Careful examination of the passages Eslinger cites shows that his claims regarding Fishbane's reasoning in specific cases and Fishbane's method in general are unwarranted. Moreover, Eslinger's model of inner-biblical allusion melds what literary theorists rightly view as two different categories, one historical and one ahistorical, and in so doing he fails to confront the historical category in a serious fashion" (Benjamin D. Sommer, "Exegesis, Allusion and Intertextuality in the Hebrew Bible: A Response to Lyle Eslinger" *VT* 46, no. 4 [1996], 470).

intentions communicated through human authors are accessible to contemporary readers.”⁷³ The term exegesis implies authorial intent at interpretation. Thus, we assume, as it will be shown, that the authors of the psalms intended to communicate the message of the texts from which they draw water imagery.

Hays’ seven criteria for determining allusions undergird every section of this work, even when they are not overtly stated. They are the following:

Availability. Was the proposed source of the echo available to the author and/or original readers . . . This criterion implies that echo is a diachronic trope: analyses of literary echo are possible only where the chronological ordering of different voices is known.

Volume. The volume of an echo is determined primarily by the degree of explicit repetition of words or syntactical patterns, but other factors may also be relevant: how distinctive or prominent is the precursor text within Scripture, and how much rhetorical stress does the echo receive?

Recurrence. How often does the author elsewhere cite or allude to the same scriptural passage? This applies not only to specific words that are cited more than once, but also to larger portions of Scripture to which the author repeatedly refers. Where such evidence exists that the author considered a passage of particular importance, proposed echoes from the same context should be given additional credence.

Thematic Coherence. How well does the alleged echo fit into the line of argument that the author is developing? Is its meaning effect consonant with the author’s use of inner-biblical interpretation? Do the images and ideas of the proposed precursor text illuminate the author’s argument?

Historical Plausibility. Could the author have intended the alleged meaning effect? Could his readers have understood it? (We should always bear in mind, of course, that the author might have written things that were not readily intelligible to his actual readers). This text, historical in character, necessarily requires hypothetical constructs of what might have been intended and grasped by particular figures, stimulating one’s understanding of scriptural allusions.

History of Interpretation. Have other readers, both critical and precritical, heard the same echoes? The reading of our predecessors can both check and stimulate our perception of scriptural echoes. While this test is a possible restraint against arbitrariness, it is also one of the least reliable guide for interpretation. Thus, this criterion should rarely be used as a negative test to exclude proposed echoes that commend themselves on other grounds.

⁷³G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 22.

Satisfaction. With or without clear confirmation from the other criteria listed here, does the proposed reading make sense? Does it illuminate the surrounding discourse? Does it produce for the readers a satisfying account of the effect of the intertextual relation? This criterion is difficult to articulate precisely without falling into the affective fallacy, but it is finally the most important test: it is in fact another way of asking whether the proposed reading offers a good account of the experience of a contemporary community of competent readers.⁷⁴

It is important to note that when examining an inner-biblical allusion, one must admit that it is not a science and that there may be room for serious differences of opinions about whether a particular text may have an inner-biblical allusion or not. I allow for the likelihood that later authors merely presupposed the earlier Scripture associations in their mind because they were deep and long-experienced readers of Scriptures.⁷⁵

This study utilizes the tools of literary, historical, philological, and theological methods of interpretation to determine possible typologies in the Psalms. Lunde's assumptions on typological interpretation will shape the approach of the method in this study as well. He makes the following assumptions:

(1) God is sovereign over history and is directing it in ways that reveal his unchanging character; (2) historical patterns that pertain to significant events, institutions, and people theologically foreshadow later recurrences of similar things; and (3) the final historical fulfilments will eclipse their prior counterparts, since God's explicit expressions of his ultimate purposes outstrip what has already occurred. This 'eclipsing' can be a fulfilment that is more glorious than any previous fulfilment, or it can replace a previously negative occurrence with a positive one.⁷⁶

Lunde's last assumption will be modified in this study because, within the Old

⁷⁴Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 29–33. This is updated in Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005). I employ Hay's methodology here, but disagree with him on authorial intention. Contra Hay, the assumption here is that, in their use of the water imagery, the psalmist communicated the intention of the author of the Pentateuch and proper exegesis should seek to understand what they intended to communicate.

⁷⁵Cf. Beale, *We Become What We Worship*, 25.

⁷⁶Jonathan Lunde, "An Introduction to Central Questions in the New Testament Use of the Old Testament," in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Kenneth Berding and Jonathan Lunde (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 19.

Testament, we do not find the final fulfilment of the four narratives often pictured with water imagery in the Psalms. It will become clear that within the OT we find a progression and some minor escalations of four these historic narratives, but not the kind of escalation as in the New Testament.

As I approach each psalm that includes water imagery, I will address three key issues. First, based on the criteria listed above, I will determine the biblical allusion based on verbal and thematic links. The main question will be, is the psalmist alluding to Scripture in his use of the water imagery? Second, after establishing an allusion, I will determine the way the Psalmist is using it. The key question will be, how is the psalmist using the imagery? Third, I will determine the meaning connoted by the psalmist's use of the imagery. This work does not aim to assess in detail the interpretation of the water imagery in light of the ANE background; I will mainly point readers to those works that pursue this line of interpretation, as I pursue the inner-biblical method.

Organization

Each chapter will focus on a different book of the Psalms. Chapter 2 examines the use of the water imagery in Book 1 of the Psalms. This Chapter shows that every occurrence of water imagery reveals that the authors depended on Scriptures, alluding to the Garden of Eden, the exodus, the flood, and the creation account. The author of these psalms also hoped for a new Eden and a new exodus because they saw in history God's design for the future.

Chapter 3 focuses on Book 2 of the Psalms. This chapter asserts that the Pentateuch shaped the authors of the Psalms in their use of water imagery, except in a few instances where the imagery originates from the psalmist's observation of nature. Again, the psalmists look to the past to understand the present and to build hope for the future. In book 2 they express hope for a new edenic city, new exodus, new judgment and salvation through a flood, and the reign of the Davidic king, all expressed through water

imagery.

Chapter 4 inner-biblically interprets water imagery in Book 3. The imagery primarily alludes to the Red Sea and the exodus. In this chapter I argue that Leviathan and Rahab are symbolic of Pharaoh and the Egyptians who were defeated at the Red Sea; they also represent the seed of the serpent. Additionally, this chapter proposes that David is a new Israel and that his covenant mirrors the account of creation.

Chapter 5 examines Book 4 of the Psalter. In this chapter I observe that the first and the last instances of water imagery allude to the exodus, framing four echoes of the creation in between them. The book ends with the psalmist expressing his longing for God to reenact an exodus by bringing Israel out of exile.

Chapter 6 studies the use of water in the last book of the Psalms. The first instance of water imagery answers the longing for a new exodus at the end of Book 4. God has saved as he did at the exodus by bringing Israel out of exile. In this book, most of the allusions by water refer to the creation, picturing the restoration from exile as a renovation of creation. The psalmists believed that the restoration would have effects on the natural world, such that all of nature would praise God, the covenant God who restored his people.

Chapter 7 summarizes and concludes the findings of chapters 2–6 to show how they prove the thesis that the psalmists largely depended on the Pentateuch in their use of water imagery, interpreting their circumstances in light of the past with the hope that God's work in the future would take its design from history.

CHAPTER 2

THE WATER MOTIF IN BOOK 1

This chapter focuses on the water imagery in Book 1 of the Psalter (Pss 1–41). In this Book the water imagery is reminiscent of creation, Eden, the flood, and the Red Sea.¹ We will not only discover how the water imagery is connected to these four events in the Pentateuch, but we will also explore how these events relate to one another within the Psalms. We will study how the Psalmists relate creation, Eden, the flood, and the Red Sea through thematic and verbal connections that can also be observed in the Pentateuch.

Features that Link Creation, Flood, and Red Sea in the Pentateuch

In the Pentateuch Moses employs similar terms for creation, the flood, and the Red Sea. The term *תְּהוֹם* describes both creation (Gen 1:2), the flood (Gen 7:11; 8:2), and the crossing of the Red Sea (Exod 15:5, 8; cf. Isa 51:10; Ps 106:9).² Exodus 15:5 employs imagery from the flood narrative saying, “The floods covered them.” The language is also similar to the description of the waters that covered the face of the uninhabited earth (Gen 1:2; 1:9). In all three accounts of creation, flood, and Red Sea, the “*dry land*” emerges out of deep waters—*יַבְשָׁה* for “*dry land*” at creation (Gen 1:9,10) and the Red Sea (Exod 14:16, 22, 29; 15:19), and *תֶּרֶבֶה* for “*dry land*” after the flood (Gen 7:22). In

¹The creation, Eden, flood, and Red Sea refer to God’s work for his people in those events. The exodus and Red Sea are used interchangeably in this study because the OT psalmists often allude to the entire exodus journey by simply mentioning the crossing of the Red Sea. Moreover, the crossing of the Red Sea was one of the high point of the exodus—the time when Israel was made God’s nation.

²Similarly, Michael A. Grisanti and Elmer A. Martens, “תְּהוֹם,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997).

addition, ስፍራ (cover) associates the flood (Gen 7:19, 20) and the Red Sea (Exod 15:5, 10), describing the watery judgment on the wicked. “The waters prevailed above the mountains, *covering* them fifteen cubits deep” (Gen 7:20). Although using a different phraseology, waters also covered the face of earth at creation (Gen 1:2).

Of these three historical events—creation, the flood, and the Red Sea—the Red Sea dominates the rest of the OT. The Psalms are no exception. In Book 1, the Red Sea is most often referred to through water imagery. The flood and creation narratives, however, are also present, and they are often alluded to in contexts where the Red Sea receives the spotlight. Even in contexts where creation is the focus, one or more of the main themes of the flood and the Red sea are typically present.³ This raises a significant question. Like Moses, do the Psalmists see these historical events as interrelated, and what underlying themes do they see and attempt to convey to their readers?

The first theme that seems to span all three events is that of the creation of something new through water. As the inhabited world was made out of water at creation and the new world at the flood,⁴ so was the nation of Israel created at the Red Sea.⁵ God

³Childs also sees a close affinity between creation, exodus, and return from Exile. “The point has long since been made that the depiction is not of three separate events spread along a historical trajectory, but rather that the occurrences are three moments in the one purpose of God for Israel’s salvation. Because the content of God’s redemptive intervention, that is, its substance, is the same, the three events have been fused together as a unified ontological witness to the one purpose of God concerning his people” (Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001], 403–4).

⁴Similarly Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 190. For extensive discussions of the parallels between creation and the flood, see Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 127–30; Warren Austin Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology* (Winona Lake, IN: Carpenter, 1984), 9–15.

⁵First Cor 10:1–2 says Israel was baptized into Moses at the Red Sea. “For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Cor 10:1–2). Paul fuses the cloud and the experience at the sea and refers to them as baptism into Moses. In the NT *baptism* is an initiation into Christ, an indication of rebirth and new creation (Rom 6:3, 4; Gal 3:27). That Paul uses the same word (baptism) to describe Israel’s experience in the cloud and the Sea demonstrates that he sees similarities between Israel at the Red Sea and Christian baptism. According to Paul’s reshaping of the story of Israel in 1 Cor 10:1–2, Moses therefore was a type of Christ, Israel of the believers, and the crossing of the sea as prototypical of

separated the dry and arable ground from the waters to sustain vegetation at creation. After the flood the dry ground emerges for the same purpose (Gen 9:20). The dry land at the Red Sea prepared Israel for the arable land, Canaan (cf. Deut 6:11). Out of the waters of the flood and the Red Sea emerged families, all of whom bore God's image, as the heads and representatives of the human race. These functioned as a reprise of the creation of man, male and female in the image of God. Hamilton makes the following argument,

The commission to be fruitful and multiply was not only given to Adam and Eve but also passed to Noah and his sons (Gen 8:17; 9:1, 7). God's promise to multiply Abraham links Abraham and his line with God's original charge to Adam, and these connections are made with the children of Abraham right down to the exodus generation Thus, the Old Testament establishes the universal significance of Israel in God's purposes by showing that the nation of Israel has inherited God's charge to Adam to be fruitful and multiply.⁶

Just as God separated the dry land from the waters for Adam's good, so he forms dry land out of waters at the flood and the Red Sea for the good of Noah, who function as a new Adam.

It may be helpful to view the Red Sea as an offspring of creation and the flood. Often in the OT the creation and the flood live, as it were, vicariously through their offspring, the Red Sea.⁷ In contexts where creation is the focus, one or more of the main themes of the flood and the Red sea are often present.

The theme of salvation through judgment is at the heart of the accounts of the

Christian baptism. Thus, as a prototype to what signifies the rebirth of a believer in Christ, the sea experience can also be understood as signifying Israel's birth. Prop rightly argues "To its associations with judgment and cleansing, water can symbolize both death and birth. Israel's emergence from the Sea might be regarded as a rebirth or resurrection. First Cor 10:1-2 aptly analogizes the Sea crossing with Christian baptism, itself symbolic of birth. And some Christian writers regard the Sea event and baptism as symbolizing both death and resurrection—even though in Exodus the Egyptians alone do the dying, and the Hebrews alone are 'reborn'" (William Henry Propp, *Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 2 [New York: Doubleday, 1999], 562).

⁶James M. Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 90.

⁷Yoshikawa, "The Prototypical Use of the Noahic Flood," 211. Leeuwen rightly argues that "the separation of the 'Red' Sea and of the Jordan to form dry ground recapitulates the original acts of creation, demonstrating to all nations that 'Yahweh is king' of creation and thus of history" (Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, "ברא," in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997]).

flood and the Red Sea (cf. Exod 14:30) and often appears implicitly in later texts. Ross notes the thematic and verbal connections between the flood and the Red Sea:

These two motifs of judgment on sinners and deliverance from the judgment had a special significance for Israel. On a smaller scale but in a similar way, the Lord judged the wicked Egyptians with water and brought Israel through the flood of the sea to worship him on the other side with sacrifices (Exod 14–15). It is not surprising that many expressions used in Noah’s account—the judgment on sinners, the deliverance of the righteous, the walking in righteousness, and the sacrifice of clean animals—are also used in the instruction of the nation in the law.⁸

Smaller in scope, the Red Sea clearly resembles both events in the theme of creation through water; it uniquely resembles the flood in the theme of salvation through (water) judgment. It is likely that the Psalmists made these same thematic connections, as we shall see. In the Psalms when the creation, flood, and/or the Red Sea are the referent, we may ask whether there are marks of the other two events present. Do the Psalmists see them as interrelated?

Watery Allusion to Eden (Ps 1:3)

Psalm 1 fuses with water imagery of Eden (v. 3) the themes of salvation and judgment, which the flood and Red Sea highlight.⁹ Psalm 1:3 is reminiscent of the

⁸Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 190.

⁹Although the themes of salvation and judgment occur together with pictures of Eden, it is worth noting that allusions to Eden with water imagery are distinct from those that are reminiscent of the accounts of creation, flood, and Red Sea. The Garden of Eden, Noah’s garden (Gen 9:20), and the Promised Land (cf. Deut 6:11) are the aftermath of the formation of dry ground respectively at creation, the flood, and at the Red Sea and therefore distinct from them. The three, Eden, Noah’s garden, and the Promised Land share close parallel: Noah’s garden (Gen 9:20) and the Promised Land share similarities with the Garden of Eden. Like Eden, they are all planted (נטע) (Gen 2:8; 9:20; Exod 15:17; Deut 6:11 [albeit the Garden of Eden and the Promised Land are stated as the Lord’s planting]), inhabited by God’s covenant people (Gen 2:8; 9:20; Deut 6:10–11; Josh 24:13), fructuous (Gen 2:9; 9:21; Deut 6:11), the fruitfulness of each gives occasion for human sinfulness (Gen 2:17; 9:20–21; Deut 4:22–27; 6:11ff.; 8:12–20), and nakedness as a result of human transgression is a common motif in them (Gen 3:7, 10; 9:24; Lam 1:8). Stordalen observes similarities between what happened in Eden and in Noah’s garden, thus supporting the argument that Noah’s garden is a restaging of Eden. Stordalen notes that in both Gen 2–3 and 9:20–27 “seeing (ראה) nakedness is essential, and both the situation is relieved by the hero being covered. Both incidents end in curses with fatal consequences, for the persons involved and for their descendants” (T. Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2-3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2000), 444.

Garden of Eden, portraying the righteous man as one who will enjoy endtime edenic prosperity.

Psalm 1:3 and Genesis 1–2

Psalm 1:3 shares close verbal parallels with Genesis 1–2. Cole observes that Genesis 1–2 pictures fruitful trees (עֵץ פְּרִי עֹשֶׂה פְּרִי [Gen 1:11]; עֵץ עֹשֶׂה-פְּרִי [Gen 1:12]; פְּרִי-פָּרִי [Gen 1:29]) and well-watered trees in the garden of Eden (כָּל-עֵץ נָחֵמָד . . . וְעֵץ הַחַיִּים) (Gen 2:9)) with words which resonates with those of Psalm 1:3 (עֵץ, פְּרִי, מִים, and).¹⁰ In addition, just as the trees in the Garden of Eden were of Yahweh’s planting, so in Psalm 1:3—the Torah lover will flourish like Yahweh-planted trees.¹¹ These parallels indicate that the imagery in Psalm 1:3 may be a reuse of Genesis 1–2.

Ezekiel 47 is relevant for understanding the use of the edenic imagery in Psalm 1:3 because it also builds heavily on Genesis 1–2 and because it employs language that is used in Psalm 1:3. Cole notes the following parallels between Genesis 1–2 and Ezekiel 47: “each river’s egress is depicted using the same participial form: וְהָיָה-מִיָּם יִצְאִים מִתַּחַת (Ezek 47:1, similarly 47:8, 12), וְנָהָר יֵצֵא מִעֵדֶן (Gen 2:10). The trees along the river (Ezek 47:7, עֵץ, 12, כָּל עֵץ מֵאֲקָל), swarming creatures (Ezek 47:9, כָּל נֶפֶשׁ חַיִּי-אֲשֶׁר שָׂרֵץ), and fish of the sea (Ezek 47:10, כָּדָגַת הַיָּם) likewise recall the opening chapters of Genesis.”¹²

¹⁰Robert Luther Cole, *Psalms 1-2: Gateway to the Psalter* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), 64.

¹¹Moses also talks of Israel’s possession of the Promised Land using agrarian terminology. “You will bring them in and *plant* them [Israel] on your own mountain, the place, Yahweh, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, Lord, which your hands have established” (Exod 15:17; cf. Ps 44:3; 80:9; Jer 32:41) (emphasis mine).

¹²Cole, *Psalm 1–2*, 65–66. Beale makes a similar observation, “Just as water had its source in the first sanctuary in Eden and flowed down and became a life-giving element, likewise Ezekiel, alluding to the Garden of Eden, prophesied that the same thing would be the case with the end-time temple to be built in the new Jerusalem (Ezek 47:1–12)” (G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* [Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004], 196). For scholars who argue for allusions to Eden in Ezekiel 47, see Lamar Eugene Cooper, *Ezekiel*, NAC, vol. 17

Ezekiel 47:12 shares verbal parallels with Psalm 1:3 and Genesis 2:9, which suggest that, like Ezekiel 47, the imagery in Psalm 1 is reminiscent of Eden.¹³

כָּל-עֵץ-מֵאֵכָל לֹא-יָבוֹל עָלָיו Ezek 47:12b

וְעָלָיו לֹא-יָבוֹל Ps 1:3

כָּל-עֵץ נֹחֵם לְמִרְאָה וְטוֹב לְמֵאֵכָל Gen 2:9

Ezekiel 47:12 like Genesis 2:9 depicts trees of all kinds that are for food whose leaves do not wither (כָּל-עֵץ-מֵאֵכָל לֹא-יָבוֹל עָלָיו), like those in Psalm 1:3 (וְעָלָיו לֹא-יָבוֹל). The striking verbal similarities between Ezekiel 47:12 and Psalm 1:3 and the clear parallels between Ezekiel 47 and Genesis 1–2 and between Psalm 1 and Genesis 1–2, as shown above, suggest that Psalm 1 and Ezekiel 47 use the same passage.¹⁴

Based on the above argument, since Psalm 1:3 likens the righteous to the tree, it is safe to note that the author intended to compare the man who delights and meditates on the Torah with the well-watered trees in Eden, bespeaking of an edenic, paradisaical description of the righteous. The two passages, therefore, share thematic coherence.

In addition, the term שָׁחַל often occur in contexts that allude to Eden. שָׁחַל occurs 10 times in the OT in *qal* stem all involving metaphorical usage, referring to Israel or the righteous man, as planted by Yahweh. Ezekiel uses שָׁחַל six times for Israel. It occurs four times in chap 17, which is a riddle (חִידָה) that describes Israel as a *planted* tree (Ezek 17:8, 10, 22, 23; cf. Hos 9:13). Because of her infidelity, Yahweh uproots

(Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1994), 414; Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, WBC, vol. 29 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990), 279–80; Cooper, *Ezekiel*, 408–14; John B. Taylor, *Ezekiel: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC, vol. 22 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1969), 270–72; Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 335–54; Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 363–68.

¹³I saw the parallels between Gen 2:9, Ezek 47:12, and Ps 1:3 before reading Cole, who makes a similar observation (Cole, *Psalm 1–2*, 66).

¹⁴Briggs and Briggs see literary dependence between Ezekiel and the psalmist (Charles Augustus Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 1, ICC [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1907], 6–9).

Israel, whom he *planted* (שָׁחַל), and causes her to wither (Ezek 17:8, 10; 19:10, 13).

Nevertheless, in the future, Yahweh promises to *plant* Israel by abundant waters, the mountain of God, the paradisaical place of Yahweh's presence (cf. Ezek 20:40; 28:14), and cause her to flourish permanently (Ezek 17: 22, 23).¹⁵

Jeremiah 17:8 uses שָׁחַל for the man who trusts in Yahweh¹⁶ and Psalm 92 for the righteous man *planted* in Yahweh's house. Psalm 92 says that the righteous will thrive like a fruitful palm tree, like cedars of Lebanon (v. 13), as trees planted (שָׁחַל) in the courts of God (v. 14) and shall always be green and fructuous (v. 15). Verses 13–15 depict the courts of God as a paradisaical garden with water and fruitful trees as in Genesis

¹⁵Cf. Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 367.

¹⁶Jer 17:8 shares very close verbal parallels with Ps 1:3, which leads Briggs and Briggs to assume that Ps 1 is late and depends on Jer 17:8 (Briggs and Briggs, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 1:3; William O. E. Oesterley, *The Psalms* [London: SPCK, 1953], 119–20). For arguments on Jeremiah's dependence on Ps 1, see William Lee Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1–25*, ed. Paul D. Hanson (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1986), 489–90. The context in Jeremiah is eschatological, which may suggest the same understanding in our psalm. Jer 17:8 is about the future restoration of Israel (Jer 16:14–21), a time when the city of David will be inhabited forever (Jer 17:24–26) if Israel observes Yahweh's Sabbath. In that day, the man who trusts in Yahweh, who observes Yahweh's Sabbath (Jer 17:24–26), will flourish with edenic blessings (Jer 17:7–8), just as the man whose delight is in the Torah of Yahweh in Ps 1. In the Hebrew, Jeremiah lacks "streams" (פְּלִיגִי) and adds the phrase "its leaves remain green." Jeremiah's text is longer and the simile is of the man who trusts (בָּטַח) in Yahweh (Jer 17:7), whereas Ps 1 talks about the man who meditates on the Torah (Ps 1:2). Jeremiah uses the passive form of בָּרַךְ (Jer 17:7) whereas Ps 1 uses אֶשְׁרֵי (Ps 1:1).

| Ps 1:3 | Jer 17:8 |
|--|--|
| He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, <u>Whose leaf</u> <u>also shall not wither</u> ; And whatever he does shall prosper. | For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; <u>But its leaf will be green</u> , And will not be anxious in the year of drought, <u>Nor will</u> <u>cease from yielding fruit</u> . |

The context in Jeremiah also suggests that the clause "he shall be like a tree planted by streams of waters" may have eschatological connotations. Although one may not agree with Creach that Ps 1 depends on Jeremiah, he aptly observes that the imagery is eschatological and depicts the righteous man as planted in the precincts of the Temple (Jerome F. D. Creach, "Like a Tree Planted by the Temple Stream: The Portrait of the Righteous in Psalm 1:3," *CBQ* 61, no. 1 [1999]: 36). Cole also argues for an eschatological understanding of Ps 1 (Cole, *Psalms 1–2*, 64–65). The LXX, which provides a very literal translation of the Psalms, translates all the verbs in v. 3 in the future (ἔσται, δώσει, ἀπορρυήσεται, and κατευσδοθήσεται) indicating that the translator understood that the verse will find fulfilment at a later time.

2:9–3:24 (cf. Ezek 28:13–14).¹⁷ Consistent, especially with Psalm 92 and Jeremiah 17:8, the use of שָׁחַל in Psalm 1 allude to the Garden of Eden. Thus Psalm 1:3 looks back to Eden (Gen 2:9), describing the Torah lover as blooming like edenic trees; the fertility of the Garden of Eden will mark the lives of the righteous.¹⁸

The Use of פְּלֵי

The word פְּלֵי in Psalm 1:3 possibly has the normal meaning, water channels (cf. Ps 119:136; Job 20:17; 29:6; Prov 5:16; 21:1; Lam 3:48).¹⁹ However, the fact that four of its occurrences depict water flowing from the holy place (Isa 30:25; 32:2; 46:4; 65:9) may support the proposal that the righteous man is pictured as a tree in Eden, the place of Yahweh's presence. Isaiah 30 speaks of the last days (Isa 30:23) and gives hope to God's people. On the day that Yahweh restores Zion, פְּלֵי shall flow with water on every mountain (Isa 30:25).²⁰ Psalm 46:4 also portray פְּלֵי as streams that make glad the

¹⁷Tate also sees allusions to the paradise of God in Ps 92:13–14, saying that they “probably allude to the idea of the courts of the temple as a paradise, a garden of God with ample water and highly productive trees” (Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, WBC, vol. 20 [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990], 468). Calvin comments on Ps 92 saying, “By *those who are planted* in the Church he means such as are united to God in real and sincere attachment, and insinuates that their prosperity cannot be of a changeable and fluctuating nature, because it is not founded upon anything that is in the world. Nor indeed can we doubt that whatever has its root, and is founded in the sanctuary, must continue to flourish and partake of a life which is spiritual and everlasting” (John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, trans. James Anderson [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949], 3:441).

¹⁸Eugene Peterson, the translator of *The Message* displays an edenic understanding of this imagery. “You’re a *tree replanted in Eden*, bearing fresh fruit every month, Never dropping a leaf, always in blossom” (Ps 1:3) (emphasis mine).

¹⁹The root (פֿלֵי) of the word פְּלֵי “streams” occurs 29 times in the Hebrew OT. Apart from its usage as proper names (Gen 10:25; 11:16, 17, 18, 19; 1 Chr 1:19, 25), division (Judg 5:15, 16; Dan 2:41; 7:25; Ezra 6:18; 2 Chr 35:5, 12), its verbal form (Gen 10:25; Ps 55:9; Job 38:25; Dan 2:41; 1 Chr 1:19), it always depicts streams or canals.

²⁰The context of Isa 30 also has the judgment of the wicked as in Ps 1. While the curse on creation will be removed, according to Isaiah, and the righteous will be blessed and streams will flow to make the land fertile, the wicked will be slaughtered before Yahweh (Isa 30:26). Similarly, Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, NAC, vol. 15A (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 522.

city of God and Psalm 65:9 shows heaven as the source of the streams (לִנְהָרִים).²¹

This analysis of לִנְהָרִים and the verbal and thematic similarities between Psalm 1:3, Ezekiel 47:12, and Genesis 2:9 argue that Psalm 1:3 uses “streams of water” and other agrarian terminology, to portray the righteous man as in an edenic precinct.

Salvation and Judgment

The psalmist fuses the theme of judgment on the wicked and the redemption of the righteous in Psalm 1. While the righteous will flourish in edenic blessings, Yahweh will banish the wicked (Ps 1:4), separate them from the righteous (Ps 1:5), and destroy them (Ps 1:6b). Mays aptly views this passage as referring to eschatological judgment:

Almost certainly verse 5 came to be understood in the light of apocalyptic eschatology like that of Daniel (see Daniel 7; 12) as a reference to a vindicating judgment beyond this life. Nevertheless, qualified in all these ways, the doctrine endures and is heard again in the New Testament from another teacher who uses beatitudes and warns that the outcome of life depends on one’s guidance by his Torah (Matthew 5–7).²²

The wicked will be condemned but the righteous will flourish.

The author links the theme of judgment to Eden, making the enjoyment of Eden exclusive of the wicked. The righteous man will enjoy edenic sanctuary blessings similar to what Adam (Gen 2:8–17), Noah (Gen 9:20), and Israel (Deut 8:7–10; 11:8–17) enjoyed. However, whereas Adam, Noah, and Israel did not enjoy their edenic blessings forever, Psalm 1 does not insinuate such a fate for the righteous man.

The water imagery in Psalm 1 is reminiscent of the Garden of Eden,

²¹Tate sees a link between Pss 65:9 and 46:4. “The divine channel of waters provides moisture for the land. The language is poetic and metaphorical, of course, for describing a heavenly source of rain. It reflects the idea of a conduit for rain water from reservoirs above the heavens down to the earth (cf. Job 38:25; Deut 11:11)—a divine irrigation system operated by God the master farmer! (cf. ‘the windows of the heavens’ in Gen 7:11; 8:9; Mal 3:10). Allusion may also be present to the river that ‘makes glad the city of God’ (Ps 46:5; cf. Isa 33:21; Ezek 47:1–12; Joel 3:18; Zech 14:8)” (Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 143).

²²James Luther Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994), 44. Schaper argues that the Septuagint of Psalm 1 conveys eschatological judgment (Joachim Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter* [Tübingen: JCBMohr Paul Siebeck, 1995], 46–48).

highlighting the edenic blessings of the righteous. While the righteous will enjoy paradisaical bliss, the wicked will endure judgment and their way shall perish “For Yahweh knows the way of the righteous” (Ps 1:6).

Exodus Re-enacted (Ps 18:4, 15–16)

Psalms 18 typologically alludes to the exodus from Egypt. David depicts his rescue with water imagery that points back to the deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea (Ps 18:4, 15–16), with faint echoes of the flood. The Exodus forms the framework by which he interprets God’s salvation, and as a result, in David’s personal deliverance, he sees a re-enactment of the Exodus.²³

David’s Distress

In verse 4 David describes his distress as, “the cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction assailed me.” The phrase “cords of death” (חַבְלֵי־מָוֶת) stands in synonymous parallelism with “the torrents of wickedness” (נַחֲלֵי קְלִיעַל).²⁴ The term קְלִיעַל (wickedness) shows that the distress has a moral dimension. The superscript also tells us that David was faced with human threats. In that case, we should find it curious that he refers to these human beings as giant waves. In Psalm 18:4 and 2 Samuel 22:5, David immediately evokes memories of the Exodus by painting the mortal danger as engulfing waters from which Yahweh saves him as he saved Israel at the Red Sea (Ps 18:7–19).²⁵

²³Goldingay, commenting on Ps 18:7–15, observes that the author presents God’s deliverance for him as what he did for Moses. He notes, “there might be several reasons why the psalm should describe the deliverance and victory in terms of such physical phenomena. Perhaps there was a victory that involved extraordinary weather phenomena. But elsewhere in the Scriptures the point of such phenomena is to express Yhwh’s involvement in events (e.g., Exod 14–15; 19; Judg 4–5), and this thus portrays David as a figure in whose life Yhwh acted as Yhwh has for Moses, at the Red Sea and at Sinai” (John Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 1-41*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 260.

²⁴The synoptic text 2 Sam 22:5 replaces “the cords of death” in the first line with “the waves of death” while maintaining “the torrent of destruction” in the second line, accenting more clearly the watery distress.

²⁵Although נַחֲלֵי does not always refer to the Red Sea, in Ps 18 it is used figuratively to depict

Exodus Imagery in David's Deliverance

The Exodus imagery swells in Psalm 18:8–15, as David continues to portray his deliverance in terms of what God accomplished for Israel. Yahweh comes in judgment to rescue David (Ps 18:10), just as he did for Israel (Exod 6:6). He rains lethal “heavy hail” (Ps 18:14; cf. Exod 9:18, 23), mingled with “thunder” (Ps 18:14; cf. Exod 9:23, 24), “fire” (Exod 9:23–24; cf. Ps 18:9, 13), and “thick darkness” (Pss 18:10, 12; 105:32; cf. Exod 10:21). These are all signs of a theophany like that of Mount Sinai. At Sinai God came down in “thunder and lightning” (Exod 19:16; cf. Ps 18:14, 15), a “thick cloud” (Exod 19:16; cf. Ps 18:12), and “smoke” (Exod 19:18; cf. Ps 18:9). The “mountain trembled” (Exod 19:18; cf. Ps 18:8; 68: 9), as “the Lord came down” (Exod 19:18, 20; cf. Ps 18:10). At the Red Sea, God also displayed his presence by “cloud” (Exod 14:19; cf. Ps 18:12), “darkness” (Exod 14:20; cf. Ps 18:10, 12), and “fire” (Exod 14:24; cf. Ps 18:13). With this montage of imagery, David depicts his rescue in terms of the exodus, with God’s manifest presence appearing to make war against his enemies. While Yahweh revealed his presence by this collage of physical phenomenon, the greater focus in the exodus was the crossing of the Red Sea.²⁶

David's Red Sea-Like Rescue

In his distress David calls upon the Lord (Ps 18:7) who comes down (Ps 18:10) to rescue him through a miraculous physical display of his presence (Ps 18:8–15). The outcome is a new exodus (Ps 18:16), “Then the channels of the sea were seen, and the foundations of the world were laid bare at your rebuke, Yahweh, at the blast of the breath

distress, which v. 15 portrays as similar to the Red Sea water ordeal. Johnston observes that “water and the resultant mud and mire are frequent images of distress, with the psalmist variously stuck, sucked down, trapped, helpless against rising water, swept away and drowning. This is one of the most pervasive sets of images in the entire Psalter, reflected in a wide variety of detail and length, and always evoking danger and eliciting fear” (Philip S. Johnston, “The Psalms and Distress,” in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. David Firth and Philip S. Johnston [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005], 70).

²⁶When other OT writers recount the events of the exodus, they often place the spotlight on the crossing of the Red Sea (cf. Pss 77:17–21; 78:13; 136:13; Neh 9:11).

of your nostrils.” Yahweh’s “rebuke” (גָּעַרָה) and the phrase “the blast of his nostrils” (מִנְשֵׁמַת רוּחַ אֱפִידָה) evoke the exodus, precisely the crossing of the Red Sea.

Yahweh’s rebuke (גָּעַרָה). When God is the subject of *rebuke* (nominal or verbal) it is associated with judgment. The root (גער) with water as the object of divine rebuke refers to either the flood or the crossing of the Red Sea (Nah 1:4; Ps 106:9).²⁷ The noun גָּעַרָה with water as the object of the rebuke only refers to the flood (Ps 104:7; cf. Gen 8:1) and the crossing of the Red Sea (Isa 50:2; cf. Job 26:11).²⁸ At Yahweh’s rebuke “both rider and horse lay stunned” (Ps 77:6)—an echo of the Red Sea. Thus גָּעַרָה of Yahweh could refer to both Noah’s flood and Israel’s salvation at the Red Sea. In a flood-like and Red Sea-like rebuke, Yahweh rescues David, linking him to Israel (Ps 18:15; cf. 2 Sam 22:16) and Noah.

“The breath of your nostrils” in Psalm 18 and Exodus 15. The phrase “at blast of the breath of your nostrils,” which also evokes exodus imagery is a synonymous parallel with “your rebuke.”²⁹ The phrase בְּרוּחַ אֱפִידָה channels our attention to Exodus 15:8: “At the blast of your nostrils (בְּרוּחַ אֱפִידָה) the waters piled up.”³⁰ David describes his deliverance with language that shows him to be a new Israel—he represents God’s people; Yahweh is redoing the exodus in David’s rescue.

²⁷With other occurrences of the verb, Yahweh rebukes (גער) Satan (Zech 3:2), enemy nations (Isa 17:13; Ps 9:5), the unruly (Mal 2:3; Ps 119:21), the devourer (Mal 3:11). In Isa 54:9 Yahweh swears never to rebuke his faithful people.

²⁸In other instances of the use of the noun, Yahweh also directs his rebukes (גָּעַרָה) at the unruly people (Isa 51:20; Ps 80:16; cf. Deut 28:20), at the army of his enemies and the enemies themselves (Ps 76:6; Isa 66:15).

²⁹An appositional genitive (appositional hendiadys) emphasizing a single idea, although there is no conjunction between the phrases. Waltke and O’Connor note that a hendiadys must not have the conjunction (Bruce K. Waltke and Michael P. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 70).

³⁰The only other place where “blast of your nostrils” (בְּרוּחַ אֱפִידָה) is used as directed to water is in the synoptic passage (2 Sam 22:16), strengthening the connection.

Echoes of the Flood and the Red Sea

Not only has Yahweh led David through a Red Sea-like deliverance (Ps 18:15), Yahweh is also restaging in David the same kind of rescue he did for Moses. “He sent from on high, he took me; he drew me out of many waters” (Ps 18:17). The phrase “he drew me out of mighty waters” (יִמְשְׁנִי מִמַּיִם רַבִּים) alludes to Exodus 2:10, the birth narrative of Moses, which Moses patterns after Noah’s salvation in the *ark* (תֵּבָה).³¹ The verb מִשָּׁה only occur in Exodus 2:10, 2 Samuel 22:17 and Psalm 18:17.

Just as Moses patterns his deliverance on that of Noah, David depicts his rescues with language that associates him with Moses. Just as Yahweh by the hand of Pharaoh’s daughter drew Moses from waters (מִן־הַמַּיִם מִשְׁיֵתָהּ) (Exod 2:10), so he draws David from many waters (יִמְשְׁנִי מִמַּיִם רַבִּים) (Ps 18:17).³² Psalms 18:17 “portrays David as

³¹The only other place where the term תֵּבָה occurs apart from Moses’ birth narrative (Exod 2:3, 5) is in the flood narrative (Gen 6–9). Moses, with the use of this term, associates his rescue with Noah’s. Stuart observes, “Moses apparently was consciously drawing the reader’s attention to the fact that God, through Moses’ mother’s actions, was graciously protecting him from death by a small ark, just as God had protected Noah and the animals by a great ark in the days of the great flood. Indeed, it is hard to imagine that Moses was not keenly aware of the obvious comparison between himself and Noah. They both were deliverers/rescuers who were called by God to lead people and animals through and out of danger into a new location where those people and animals would become dominant in establishing a new stage of God’s unfolding plan of redemption of the world (Douglas K Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC, vol. 2 [Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2006], 88). If Moses’ mother knew the flood narrative, which is very likely, it is possible that she, by faith (Heb 11:23), was trusting that God will rescue her son on water in an *ark*. The water that brought judgment on others (cf. Exod 1:22) brought deliverance to Moses. In like manner, the waters that condemned the world saved Noah (Gen 6–9). Moses thus presents himself as a new Noah. Enns sees three similarities between Moses’ rescue and Noah’s: (1) Both Noah and Moses are specifically selected to forego a tragic, watery fate; (2) both are placed on an ‘ark’ treated with bitumen and are carried to safety on the very body of water that brings destruction to others; and (3) both are the vehicles through whom God ‘creates’ a new people for his own purposes (Peter Enns, *Exodus*, NIVAC [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000], 62). In addition to Enns, both Moses and Noah entered into covenant with God (I owe this insight to James M. Hamilton, my supervisor).

³²The differences in these two phrases are not significant to discount this assertion. The most significant is the fact that in Exod 2 it is Pharaoh’s daughter who drew Moses, whereas in Ps 18 it is Yahweh who draws David. This difference can be explained simply by noting that God’s sovereign hand was behind Moses’ miraculous rescue. Stuart observes “In the story’s surprising twist, however, the discovery by an Egyptian, under other conditions likely to lead to the boy’s death, leads instead to a perfect protection of his life. This is God at work, providing deliverance in an unanticipated yet wonderful way” (Stuart, *Exodus*, 90). With regard to verbal differences, David adds רַבִּים likely to magnify the distress he is facing (cf. Ps 18:18–20). Another difference is that in Moses’ birth narrative the rescue resulted in a name, but not so in David’s. However, although David’s name does not change, God’s rescue changes him, as Yahweh exalts him (cf. Ps 18:44).

a figure in whose life Yhwh acted as Yhwh has for Moses, at the Red Sea and at Sinai.”³³

The above shows that Psalm 18 is pregnant with typology. David pictures his deliverance as a type of Noah’s Flood, a type of Moses’ rescue and a type of Israel’s Exodus.

The Outcome of David’s Rescue

Throughout the OT, God shows that he intends to use Israel to receive praise among the nations (cf. Ps 67). David fulfils this mission, through his personal exodus. Because of Yahweh’s rescue, David, a representative of Israel, resolves to praise Yahweh among the nations (Ps 18:50–51). The Rock (Ps 18:3) and the Divine Warrior has delivered David, the messiah king, in a Moses and exodus-like rescue (Ps 18:8–17), has utterly subjugated his enemies (Ps 18:48), and has exalted him above the nations (Ps 18:49) as an exhibition of divine vindication (Ps 18:48). All these is for Yahweh’s universal praise (Ps 18: 50–51) as it was in Israel’s rescue (cf. Exod 9:16; Josh 4:23–24). Although David’s deliverance and its immediate prototype, the exodus, were of limited scope, they both had universal implications. Thus Israel’s and David’s deliverance have the same effect on the nations.

David, the messianic king, points to the ultimate Messianic King, Jesus the offspring of David (cf. Ps 18:51; John 7:42; Rom 1:3; 2 Tim 2:8; cf. Matt 1:1; Luke 1:32, 69; Acts 2:29–30; Rev 22:16) whom Yahweh will rescue from the great flood and the collapsing Red Sea of his judgment.³⁴ In Romans 15:9, citing Psalm 18:50, Jesus is the Messianic King par-excellence who will praise Yahweh among all the nations.³⁵

³³Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 1-41*, 260.

³⁴VanGemenen observes that “the psalmist reflects on the acts of God as celebrated in the psalm for the purpose of encouraging God’s people to look at the messianic king as the divinely chosen instrument of deliverance. The Divine Warrior has chosen the anointed king of David’s lineage to establish his kingdom (v. 50). Every Christian knows that the King is none other than Jesus the Messiah” (Willem A. VanGemenen, *Psalms*, rev. ed., in vol. 5 of *EBC*, ed. Tremper Longman and David E. Garland [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008], 212).

³⁵Wagner notes that in Rom 15:9b–12, “Paul clinches his argument by summoning Torah

This leads to the conclusion that God rescued the Messianic King David *par-excellence*, Christ, through the waters of his judgment. Because of this, the promises to the patriarch may now find fulfilment—Jews and Gentiles praising God together for his mercy. The Psalmist in Psalm 18, thus demonstrates a typological understanding of the exodus. He associates his deliverance with that of Moses and Israel, through this comparison shows that he is a new Israel, and foreshadows his own offspring, Christ, who will draw all of the nations to Yahweh through his victory over his enemies and over death.

Echoes of the Exodus (Ps 23:2)

Psalm 23 contains echoes of the exodus and hint a new exodus theme. In concert with the water imagery, David uses language that recalls the exodus of Israel out of Egypt and reveals Yahweh's role in the new exodus.³⁶ First, we will examine exodus allusions and then attempt to interpret the water imagery in light of that context.

Allusions to the Exodus

The metaphor, Yahweh as shepherd is pregnant with meaning; the author does not draw it primarily from nature, but from history. With this metaphor the psalmist links himself to the experience of Israel at the exodus. The metaphor, which dominates the first part of our psalm, frequently occurs in context of the exodus from Egypt. Israel is God's flock (Pss 77:21; 100:3; 28:9), whom Yahweh, as their shepherd (Ps 80:1), led out of

(Deut 32:43), Prophets (Isa 11:10) and Psalms (Pss 17:50; 116:1 LXX) as witnesses that the divine goal of the Messiah's ministry is the creation of a community of Jews and Gentiles glorifying God together" (J. Ross Wagner, "The Christ, Servant of Jew and Gentile: A Fresh Approach to Romans 15: 8-9," *JBL* 116, no. 3 [1997]: 475).

³⁶Steingrímsson rightly argues for allusions to early Scriptures in Ps 23, but the texts, the date of the Psalms, and his attribution of the psalm to a priest who served in the Temple seem anachronistic and incongruent with the Superscription of the psalm "לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר" (Sigurður Örn Steingrímsson, "Der Priesterliche Anteil: Bedeutung und Aussageabsicht in Psalm 23," in *Text, Methode Und Grammatik: Wolfgang Richter Zum 65 Geburtstag*, ed. Walter Gross et al. [St. Ottilien, Germany: EOS Verlag, 1991], 483–519). It seems best to allow for David as the author since the psalm attributes it to him.

Egypt and in the desert pastured them like their sheep (Pss 78:52; 95:7–11). The prophets also associate this metaphor with the return from Exile, the new exodus. For the prophets, Yahweh will again tend Israel like a shepherd his flock (Isa 40:11).³⁷ As their shepherd, he will gather them from the coastlands (Jer 31:10) and they will come and sing in Zion (Jer 31:12) because of the goodness of God, which he will show them by establishing a new covenant with them (Jer 31:31–34). According to Ezekiel, Yahweh will again search for his sheep (Ezek 34:11), set over them a new shepherd (v. 23), and make with them a new covenant of peace (v. 25).³⁸ Similar to Psalm 23:1–2, Yahweh says, “I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down (Ezek 34:15).³⁹

Since the metaphor is common in exodus contexts, it is possible that David may have the exodus in mind, when he says Yahweh is his shepherd. In concert with other exodus allusions, as we will see, it is clear that David personalizes the Israel’s exodus experience, calling Yahweh, “my shepherd.” Yahweh as shepherd is reminiscent of the exodus and point to Yahweh’s work in the new exodus (cf. Mic 2:12–13).

As a consequence of Yahweh as David’s shepherd he will not lack anything. The phrase “I shall not want” (לֹא אֶחְסֹר) (Ps 23:1) closely links the Psalm to the wilderness wandering tradition.⁴⁰ Yahweh miraculously provides heavenly bread from

³⁷See also Isa 35; 41:17–20; 43; 48:20–21; 49:9–10; 50:2; 51:9–23; 52:4–12; 55:12–13; 63:10–14. Anderson observes that “in the development of Second Isaiah’s eschatological message, one of the dominant themes is that of the new exodus. Previous prophets, to be sure, had appealed to the memory of the exodus. But it was Second Isaiah who, more than any of this prophetic predecessors, perceived the meaning of the exodus in an eschatological dimension.” See Bernard W. Anderson, “Exodus Typology in Second Isaiah,” in *Israel’s Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, ed. Bernard W. Anderson (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), 181.

³⁸Similarly, Louis Jonker, “רָעָה,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997).

³⁹The other instances of Yahweh as Shepherd are Gen 48:15 and 49:24. Several times Israel is pictured as Yahweh’s “sheep” and “flock” (cf. Num 27:17; 2 Sam 24:17; 1 Kgs 22:17; 1 Chr 21:17; 2 Chr 18:16; Pss 44:11, 22; 49:14; 74:1; 78:52; 79:13; 95:7; 100:3; Isa 53:6, 7; Jer 12:3; 23:1; 50:6, 17; Ezek 34:2–11, 15ff.; Mic 2:12; Zech 13:7).

⁴⁰Apart from Ps 23, of the ten occurrences of this clause, only four are not directly related to

heaven in such a way that, no matter how much or how little each congregant gathered, no one lacked anything (Exod 16:18). Yahweh led Israel in the wilderness, making sure they “did not lack any thing” (לֹא חָסְרָתָּ דָּבָר) (Deut 2:7; cf. Neh 9:21). Deuteronomy 2:7 recalls Yahweh’s provision while Psalm 23:1 hopes for it. Also, in the Promised Land, Israel shall not lack (Deut 8:9). In place of the hand-to-mouth provision in the desert, the means of livelihood will be present regularly and in abundance.⁴¹

Because of the few instances of the use of the phrase, לֹא חָסַר, almost always about the exodus, it is safe to conclude that David is evoking the same theme in Psalm 23. The righteous did not lack on the exodus and would not lack in the Promised Land. Likewise, those who seek Yahweh shall not lack anything (cf. Ps 34:10) in the exodus and in the Promised Land (cf. Isa 51:14).⁴²

In addition, the verb נָחָה with Yahweh as subject (v. 3), frequently speaks of the exodus. Yahweh led (נָחָה) Israel out of Egypt (Exod 13:17; Deut 32:12; Ps 77:21), guiding (נָחָה) her by a pillar of cloud and fire, which went before them (Exod 13:21; Ps 78:53). He led (נָחָה) them by his steadfast love, guided (נָחָה) them by his strength to his holy abode (Exod 15:13). Although Yahweh was angry with Israel and sent them on exile (Isa 57:17), he will led (נָחָה) them and restore them (v. 18). Like in Psalm 23, when Yahweh led Israel, “they were glad that the waters were quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven” (Ps 107:30). The psalmists frequently recall how God led his people along the right path and implore him to do so again (cf. Ps 27:11; 31:3; 43:3; 61:2).⁴³

the exodus (cf. 1 Kgs 17:14, 16; Ps 34:10; Prov 31:11).

⁴¹J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, AOTC, vol. 5 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2002), 170.

⁴²Another possible connection to the exodus motif is with the phrase “For you are with me” in v. 4. Yahweh’s promise to be with his people in the OT is so closely connected to the exodus, the Promised Land, and salvation in general (cf. Gen 26:3, 24; 28:15; 31:3; Exod 3:12; Deut 31:23; Josh 1:5; 3:7; 7:12; Judg 6:16; 1 Kgs 11:38; Isa 7:9; 41:10; 43:2, 5; Jer 1:8; Jer 1:19; 15:20; 30:11; 42:11; 46:28; Hag 1:13; 2:4).

⁴³Leonard J. Coppes, “נָחָה,” in *TWOT*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K.

Also, the clause “You arrange a table before me” (תַּעֲרֹךְ לִפְנֵי שִׁלְחֹן) (Ps 23:5) closely links the Psalm to the exodus. Psalm 78:19 records Israel questioning Yahweh’s ability to provide. “They spoke against God, saying, ‘Can God arrange a table (שִׁלְחֹן לַעֲרֹךְ) in the wilderness?’” In Psalm 78:52–53 Yahweh is the shepherd who led Israel out of Egypt, in the wilderness, and through the Red Sea, juxtaposing, as in Psalm 23, the image of Yahweh as host and as Shepherd. These parallels, verbal and thematic, between Psalms 23 and 78 support the thesis that Psalm 23 echoes the exodus. God will provide for David just as he did for Israel at the exodus.

Barré and Kselman correctly argue for a new exodus motif and note that this provision reverses the curses in Deuteronomy 28.

On the level of the new exodus/restoration imagery Ps 23:5 points not only to a new provisioning of the people in the wilderness on their return journey, but also a reversal of the ‘hunger and thirst’ synonymous with the exile (cf. Deut 28:48). The fate of the people, who had broken the covenant and had been cursed with the loss of ‘grain, wine, and oil’ (Deut 28:51; cf. 38–40) so that they were ‘in want of everything’ (Deut 28:48, *bḥōser kōl*; cf. *lō’ eḥsār* in Ps 23:2), will be reversed: now food, wine, and oil will be superabundantly available to God’s people when they re-enter the Promised Land.⁴⁴

Following in the line of Barré and Kselman, the term רָדָה in Psalm 23:6a also reverses all the curses in Deuteronomy 28:45 that pursued (רָדָה) Israel on account of her disobedience. To the contrary, instead of all these curses pursuing her (כָּל־הַקְּלָלוֹת הָאֵלֶּה) (וְרָדָפוּךָ), “only goodness and covenant steadfast love will pursue” (אֶךָ טוֹב וְחֶסֶד וְרַחֲמֵיךָ כָּל־יְמֵי), “only goodness and covenant steadfast love will pursue” (וְרָדָפוּךָ) David all the days of his live.

The above verbal connections validates the suspicion of echoes of the exodus

Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1981).

⁴⁴Michael L. Barré and John S. Kselman, “New Exodus, Covenant, and Restoration in Psalm 23,” in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Carol Lyons Meyers and Michael P. O’Connor (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 107. Others scholars also argue for a new exodus motif in Ps 23. Similarly, David Noel Freedman and David Noel Freedman, “The Twenty Third Psalm,” in *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: Studies in Early Hebrew Poetry* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1980), 275–302; Pamela J. Milne, “Psalm 23: Echoes of the Exodus,” *SR* 4, no. 3 (1975): 237–47.

tradition. In light of these allusions to the exodus, let us turn our attention to the water imagery and examine whether it aligns with all the above exodus allusion.

Yahweh Leads besides Waters of Rest

If the exodus tradition undergirds this psalm, as argued above, then at issue is whether or not the water imagery in 2b “he leads me besides still waters” echoes the same theme.

First, Yahweh as subject of נָהַל is always in the context of the exodus from Egypt or the return from exile—new exodus. Yahweh led (נָהַל) Israel from Egypt (Exod 15:13), and will, again, as their Shepherd, lead (נָהַל) them in the new exodus (Isa 40:11; 49:10). Thus when David confesses that Yahweh leads (נָהַל) him beside still waters and in paths of righteousness (Ps 23:2b, 3) and prays that he will continue to lead (נָהַל) him, there are exodus overtones. The use of נָהַל in Psalm 23:2b associates the verse to the wilderness wanderings (cf. Exod 15:13). Jeremiah links the wilderness wandering with “shadow of death” (צֶלְמָוֶת) (Jer 2:6; cf. Ps 107:10, 13), thus supporting the idea that נָהַל is about desert wanderings.⁴⁵ Coppes also sees the exodus from Egypt and the eschaton in the use of נָהַל in the OT:

The root specifically is connected with what . . . a shepherd does in leading pregnant ewes. It is this loving concerned shepherd-like leading that typifies God’s conducting his people to Palestine (Exod 15:13). David confesses that God gently leads him besides still waters (parallel to ‘make me lie down in green pastures,’ Ps 23:3), and prays God’s continued care (31:3 [H. 4]). The eschaton will attest God’s tender leading of his people (Isa 40:11; 49:10).⁴⁶

Baker rightly observes, “God, through his gentle care, will provide for nations and individuals the sustenance they need and the tranquility in which to enjoy it (Ps 23:2;

⁴⁵The phrase “you shall not fear any evil” is used one other place (Zech 3:15) to refer to the state of God’s people when he comes to dwell with them as King.

⁴⁶Leonard J. Coppes, “נָהַל,” in *TWOT*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1981).

31:3[4]). The physical goal of this direction and guidance is God's holy dwelling (Exod 15:13).⁴⁷ Moreover, just as Yahweh led Israel at the exodus for the sake of his name (Ps 106:8; Ezek 20:9, 14, 22), so he leads David for the same goal, "his name's sake" (Ps 23:3).

Second, מְנוּחָה (a plural of intensification)⁴⁸ occurs only one other time in the OT (Isa 32:18). Isaiah 32 is pertinent to our discussion because Isaiah foresees מְנוּחָה as the final place of rest for God's renewed people. Isaiah foresees a royal leadership that will secure justice (32:1) and afford protection, pictured in exodus-like language (32:2). The people of this king will be transformed (32:3–8). According to verses 15–18, there will be an effusion of new divine life by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (32:15), transforming the world, and establishing true moral and spiritual values (32:16). It will be a time when the wilderness will be transformed into a fruitful field (32:15), and God's people will dwell in *peaceful habitation*, in *secure dwellings*, and in *quiet resting places* (בְּמְנוּחָה שְׁאֲנָנוּת) (Isa 32:18). Isaiah's usage of the plural מְנוּחָה further supports the suggestion that Psalm 23 builds on the exodus and point to the new exodus (return from exile).⁴⁹

Third, the phrase "beside still waters" (עַל־מַי מְנוּחָה) may contrast the waters of *Meribah/Massa* (עַל־מַי מְרִיבָה) in the wilderness wanderings (Pss 81:7; 95:8; 106:32). The term מְרִיבָה (*Meribah*) comes from the root רִיב, to strive or contend. David's experience, pictured as the new exodus, reverses the bitter experience of Israel at the waters of

⁴⁷David W. Baker, "נהל," in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997).

⁴⁸Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, ed. E. Kautzsch, trans. A. E. Cowley (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2006), 397–98.

⁴⁹John alludes to Ps 23:1–2, in Rev 7:17, and shows the resting place as God and its duration as eternal. The righteous will be before God and serve him forever (Rev 8:15) and God, their shepherd, will lead them to springs of living water and they shall never again know sorrow (Rev 7:17). John thus confirms an eschatological understanding of Ps 23.

Meribah (*waters of striving*) with security, rest, peace, and refreshment beside *waters of rest*. For Oswalt “waters of rest” refers to the dwelling place of God’s people (Ps 23:2, 6), Canaan, the Promised Land, which prefigured the New Heaven and New Earth.⁵⁰

Thus, we may conclude that Psalm 23 employs water imagery in concert with other metaphors, alluding to the exodus from Egypt and points forward to the new exodus. Future grace takes its pattern of past grace; God’s history will repeat itself. God will again shepherd his king, David, who represents the people, in a new exodus besides waters of rest, lead him in paths of righteousness, provide for him (Ps 23:1–5), and settle him in his eternal dwelling place (Ps 23:6). “For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Rev 7:17).

Watery Allusion to Creation (Ps 24:2)

While Psalm 23 focuses on the new exodus, Psalm 24 reveals a soteriological understanding of creation.⁵¹ It depicts Yahweh as the God who laid the earth on the waters (v. 2), who desires to rule in a special way over his people (vv. 3–6), as a divine warrior (vv. 7–10).

The water in verse 2 refers to creation (cf. Pss 93:1; 96:10; 102:24). God owns the world and all its inhabitants (inanimate and animate) since he founded it “upon the seas and established it upon the rivers” (Ps 24:2). The pronoun *אֵלֶּיךָ* emphasizes that

⁵⁰John N. Oswalt, “Rest,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997).

⁵¹DeClaissé-Walford argues for verbal and thematic connections between Pss 22, 23, and 24 that are aimed to build trust in Yahweh as King and Sovereign Lord of the universe. She observes that “the lamenting king in Psalm 22, who is surrounded by bulls and dogs and evildoers, expresses confidence in Psalm 23 in the LORD as the ‘shepherd-king’ who provides for the psalmist’s needs—green pastures, still waters, right paths, protection, a secure dwelling place. And in Psalm 24, the king leads the congregation in a celebration of the LORD’s sovereignty, justice, kingship, and glory” (Nancy L. DeClaissé-Walford, “An Intertextual Reading of Psalms 22, 23, and 24,” in *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception*, ed. Peter W. Flint et al. [Boston: Brill, 2004], 151).

Yahweh himself is Creator. The term יסד and the *poel* of כִּין are used synonymous to ברא and עשה to depicts God's forming of the earth,⁵² but only here do they take the prepositional phrase and noun, עַל־יָמִים and עַל־נְהָרוֹת.⁵³ This poetic depiction alludes to Genesis 1:9 (cf. Ps 136:6). The synonyms נָהַר and יָם point to מַיִם in Genesis 1:9 (cf. Isa 44:27). The water imagery distinguishes Yahweh as Creator of the earth, presupposing his sovereignty over all.⁵⁴

The rest of the psalm shows that David has a soteriological perception of creation. He parallels creation and redemption; while God is Creator of all, he aims to rule over his obedient covenant people, whom he will bless with righteousness (Ps 24:3–6).⁵⁵ The final section of the psalm portrays Yahweh as King. In the context of the entire psalm, Yahweh's kingship is rooted in the work of creation (Ps 24:1–2), but it is also established in redemption (cf. Exod 15:18).⁵⁶ Both in creation, captured with water

⁵²Cf. Job 26:7; Ps 102:27; Prov 3:19; Isa 48:13, 18; 51:13, 16.

⁵³The passage does not suggest subjugation of chaos as Craigie asserts (Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, WBC, vol. 19 [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983], 212); while this a battle between Yahweh and Chaos is possible, that is not the focus of this work.

⁵⁴Some scholars suggest combat an mythological background to Ps 24:1–3. For scholars who argue for a cosmic battle, see Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 157; Marc Girard, *Les Psaumes Redécouverts: De la Structure au Sens*, 2nd ed. (Saint-Laurent, Quebec: Bellarmin, 1996), 1: 443–44; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Die Psalmen: Psalm 1-50* (Würzburg, Germany: Echter Verlag, 1993), 159.

⁵⁵Kraus observes that the fact the blessings and righteousness emanate from Yahweh shows that “the ‘holy area’ is no magic area of good fortune. The worship of Israel is directed towards Yahweh’s ruling will and his gifts of good fortune as the center that is alone determinative The ‘true Israel’ consists of human beings who subordinate daily life to the demands of the תּוֹרָה. That is the way of the ‘generation’ that is cultically prepared and that appears before Yahweh” (Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Commentary* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000], 314).

⁵⁶In Exod 20:11 Moses grounds the command to observe the Sabbath in God’s work of creation (“For in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day” [cf. Gen 1–2]), but in Deuteronomy the second creative act of God, the redemption of Israel from Egypt, is the bases for observing the Sabbath. “Observe the Sabbath day you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore Yahweh your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day” (Deut 5:12–15).

imagery (Ps 24:1–2), and redemption (Ps 24:3–6), Yahweh is King.⁵⁷

Allusions to the Flood, Creation, and Exodus (Ps 29)

Psalm 29⁵⁸ alludes to the flood and to the exodus, demonstrating the close connection between the Flood and the Red Sea.

Allusions to the Flood

Psalm 29 shares key verbal and thematic links with the flood narrative of Genesis 6–9, making it evident that history played a significant role in the composition of the psalm.

The concluding praise (Ps 29:10–11) draws upon the flood narrative, precisely with the use of the rare term מְבוּל. Of the thirteen occurrences of מְבוּל, twelve occur in

⁵⁷Kraus argues that the King who enters the temple in Ps 24 finds fulfillment in the NT, “God himself in Jesus of Nazareth comes forth from the hiddenness of the history of Israel into the midst of his people and into the midst of the world. He is the king to whom all power in heaven and on earth is given” (Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 316). The only other place in the OT where Yahweh is said to enter through a gate is in Ezek 43:4, a chapter that is fraught with images of the eschatological temple. The eschatological temple, where the glory of Yahweh will enter, will also be the place of his throne (Ezek 43:7), where he will dwell with his covenant people forever (Ezek 43:7, 9). The entrance of Yahweh as King in Ps 24:7, 9 seems to relate to Yahweh’s entrance into his eschatological temple in Zion. King observes, “The Psalm is a Dedication-Psalm and will be best understood from the Vision that Ezekiel saw of the Dedication of his Temple. When the Temple at Jerusalem was lying in ruins God shewed Ezekiel a Vision of another Temple unlike the former (Chaps. xl.–end). Ezekiel describes its Gates and all its measurements most minutely; for everything was symbolical. But what avails a Temple unless God dwells in it? And Ezekiel has seen the ‘Glory of the Lord’ desert the Temple at Jerusalem, being driven away by the sins of the people (Chap. xi. 22f). Will God then return to the Temple in the future? This question is answered in Chap. xliii. 1ff., That ‘Glory’ [which entered the future Temple in Ezekiel’s vision] was not a Pillar of Cloud and Fire but ‘Upon the likeness of the Throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man’ (Chap. 1. 26). Such was to Ezekiel the Dedication of the Temple of the future. God would not leave His Temple of the Universe, though men were sinners; He would enter that Temple through its eastern Gate, He would pass through the inner Gate into the inmost Shrine and His Glory would be ‘the likeness as the appearance of a Man upon the Throne’—a ‘King of Glory’” (E. G. King, *The Psalms in Three Collections* [Cambridge: Deighton Bell, 1898], 1:108). Smart notes similarities between Ps 24:3–6 and Isa 33:10ff and reasons, “The presence of a passage parallel to Ps 24:3–6 in a chapter like Isaiah 33 which deals definitely with eschatology would itself suggest that the setting of the psalm might be eschatological” (James D. Smart, “The Eschatological Interpretation of Psalm 24,” *JBL* 52, nos. 2–3 [1933]: 178).

⁵⁸Oswald considers this Ps 29 one of the oldest (Hilton C. Oswald, *Psalms 1-59: A Commentary* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988], 347). For a structural and comparative study of Ps 29, see Dennis Pardee, “On Psalm 29: Structure and Meaning,” in *Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception*, ed. Peter W Flint et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 153–83.

Genesis 6–11, describing the flood of Noah. The only other occurrence of מְבוּל is in Psalm 29:10. The fact that the word is not common makes Psalm 29:10 a strong candidate for a flood allusion. In both Genesis and our psalm, Yahweh demonstrates total control over the מְבוּל. He brings and causes מְבוּל to cease (Gen 6:17; 9:11, 15), signifying that he rules over it (Ps 29:10). In Psalm 29:10, the definite article on לַמְבוּל suggests the author has a specific “flood” in mind. According to Kaiser, מְבוּל is a technical term reserved for the watery catastrophe, which God brought on the earth during the days of Noah.⁵⁹ That event was so well known that מְבוּל usually occurs with the definite article (except in Gen 9:11, 15).⁶⁰ This means that מְבוּל in verse 10 refers to the flood of Noah.

The phrase בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים refers to בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים in Genesis 6:2. Given the rarity of the phrase and David’s use of another rare word from the flood narrative, מְבוּל, it is most likely that בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים refers to בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים in Genesis.⁶¹ In Genesis the sons of God are

⁵⁹Walter C. Kaiser, “מְבוּל” in *TWOT*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1981).

⁶⁰Coppes, “נהל.” Futato argues to the contrary, seeing מְבוּל as a reference to Gen 1:2. He notes, “A reference at this point in the psalm to the Flood in the days of Noah seems quite out of place.” He then goes on to argue that it has reference to the waters in Gen 1:2. “Given the use of מְבוּל in the Flood story—where מְבוּל refers to the waters that returned the earth to the chaotic state described in Gen 1:2 (‘Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters’)—and given the reference to the waters of chaos in Psalm 29:3 (‘the LORD thunders over the mighty waters’), it is best to interpret מְבוּל as referring to these same waters” (Futato, *Interpreting the Psalm*, 218–19). Futato’s argument seems unlikely because of the overall theme of the psalm.

⁶¹The exact phrase בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים occurs in Ps 89:6 and a similar one (בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים) is Hos 2:1. Hosea adds the adjective “living” (חַיִּים) and omits the masculine plural ending on אֱלֹהִים. In Hosea it refers to the children of God (cf. 1 Pet 2:11; Rom 9:26). In Ps 89:6 (7) it parallels the “holy ones” (קְדוּשִׁים) (Ps 89:5, 7) and refers to angels, heavenly being. The exact phrase in Genesis (בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים) occurs twice elsewhere (Job 1:6; 2:1), and refers to angels. The nature of the “sons of God” in Genesis is disputed. It is defined as the sons of Seth while daughters of men refer to daughters of Cain (see John Calvin, *A Commentary on Genesis*, ed. and trans. J. King [London: Banner of Truth, 1965], 167–68.), as a dynasty of tyrants (see Meredith G Kline, “Divine Kingship and Genesis 6:1-4,” *WTJ* 24, no. 2 (1962): 187–204. And as angels bases on 2 Pet 2:4 and Jude 6 (see Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, NAC, vol. 37 [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003], 336). All of these definitions can be supported. Humans are called sons of God (Hos 1:10), angels (Job 1:6), and divine kings (Ps 82:6). However, the view that sons of God are sons of Seth and the daughters of men are daughters of Cain may not be supported because in Gen 6:1 men is generic for humanity and daughters refers to all female offspring. The argument for angels is also questionable since the judgment in Genesis was against humans. The view that sees the sons of God as

dishonoring God by their sexual union with the daughters of men, and in Psalm 29 David calls on them to do what they should have been doing, ascribe praise to Yahweh.

The “waters” (הַמַּיִם) and “many waters” (מַיִם רַבִּים) in verse 3 may also refer to the flood. In Genesis 6:17 מַבּוּל stands in apposition to מַיִם. And in Psalm 29, the same control God as over the מַבּוּל he exercises over הַמַּיִם and מַיִם רַבִּים.⁶² In Israel’s history, Yahweh’s control over מַיִם and מַיִם רַבִּים would evoke the flood or the Red Sea (cf. Ps 77:18), contexts where Yahweh water is also a tool in his hand as in Psalm 29:3. In this context, it most likely refers to the מַבּוּל in verse 10.⁶³

Since Psalm 29 is about the praise of Yahweh’s destructive power, it is similar to the display of such power at the flood. Thematically, the psalm coheres with the flood in that the two passages address Yahweh’s destructive power and control of water. In our psalm the list begin and culminates with water. Yahweh’s voice controls the waters (v. 3), it breaks the cedars of Lebanon (v. 5), makes Lebanon to skip like a calf and Siron like a wild ox (v. 6), flashes flames of fire (v. 7), shakes the wilderness (v. 8) and causes the deer to give birth (v. 9). The list of the destructive powers of Yahweh climaxes in

dynastic tyrants can be supported, in some sense, by the context: They seem to have a lot of authority, taking any woman they wanted (Gen 6:2). Moreover, this view fits the context of the flood and connects the sons of God to the Nephelim. It seems best to combine the angelic view with the tyrants view and define the sons of God as demon possessed men, considering that angels cannot have sexual union according to Matt 22:23. “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven” (cf. Willem A. VanGemeren, “The Sons of God in Genesis 6:1-4: An Example of Evangelical Demythologization?” *WTJ* 43, no. 2 [1981]: 320–49; Waltke, *Genesis*, 115–17).

⁶²For an extensive study of the phrase מַיִם רַבִּים, see Herbert G. May, “Some Cosmic Connotations of Mayim Rabbim, ‘Many Waters,’” *JBL* 74, no. 1 (1955): 9–21.

⁶³Similarly, Oswald, *Psalms 1-59*, 349. Craigie argues that “many waters” refers to both the Canaanite sea god, *Yamm*, and the Red Sea (Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 247). Day sees the term as referring to creation’s cosmic ocean and v. 10 as making a similar reference (Day, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 58). McCann says, “It is likely . . . that we should hear an allusion to the cosmic waters above and below the earth (see v. 10; Gen 6:17; 7:6, 7, 10; see Psalm 93” (J. Clinton McCann, *The Book of Psalms*, ed. Robert Doran et al., *NIB*, vol. 4 [Nashville: Abingdon, 1994], 4:792). Ross says it could refer to the Mediterranean sea or to the waters above the firmament (Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms: 1-41*, vol. 1 [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011], 1:659). Rashi considers it as a reference to the Red Sea (Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, *Tehillim / Psalms: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and Rabbinic Sources [English and Hebrew ed.]* [Brooklyn, NY: ArtScroll Mesorah Publications, 1985], 349).

what is the most destructive work of Yahweh in history, the flood (v. 10). The theme of destruction parallels the flood, especially that the power affects all aspects of creation, animate and inanimate.

These verbal links establish the fact that the flood is in view in these verses. David is influenced by God's watery judgment as he celebrates his present judgment. He interprets the present with light from the past.

Creation and Exodus

The theophanic display of Yahweh's power in Psalm 29 echoes the exodus. David's portrayal of theophany with natural phenomena is similar to the depiction of Yahweh's presence at Sinai. In both contexts, Yahweh comes in thunder (Ps 29:3; cf. Exod 19:16), lightening (Ps 29:7; cf. Exod 19:16), and earthquake (Ps 29:8; cf. Exod 19:16). In both passages the voice of Yahweh generates these natural phenomena (Ps 29:3,4; cf. Exod 19:16). In Psalm 114 the skipping of a place (vv. 4, 6) and earthquake (v. 7) are linked to the exodus (v. 1). Psalms 77:16–19 also links thunders, earthquakes, lightening to the Red Sea rescue.

When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; indeed, *the deep trembled*. The clouds poured out water; the skies gave forth *thunder*; your *arrows flashed* on every side. The crash of your *thunder* was in the whirlwind; your *lightening lighted* up the world; *the earth trembled and shook*. Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen. (Emphasis mine)

The fact that Psalm 29 shares the same natural phenomena with the exodus narrative and that other psalms also link the same natural phenomena to the exodus, support the suspicion that Psalm 29 echoes the exodus. The names of the places where some of these took place—Kadesh (Num 13:26; 20:1) and Sirion (Deut 3:9)—in our psalm may also link it to the exodus. Stuhlmüller notes,

Ps 29 . . . acclaims Yahweh, supreme among the awesome forces of heaven and earth, challenging all opposition and transforming world history by the revelation at

Sinai (or Kadesh), supporting Israel against the hostile power of oceans and deserts and enthroned forever as King in the Jerusalem temple.⁶⁴

Craigie argues that Exodus 15 forms the background for Psalm 29. He notes that in Exodus 15:11, as in Psalm 29:1, אֱלֹהִים provides the context for an expression of the incomparability of the Yahweh by his mighty victory. Thus, in Psalm 29, David calls on the אֱלֹהִים to praise Yahweh.⁶⁵

Exodus 15 and Psalm 29 also share comparable military undertones. In Exodus 15, the song begins with praise to Yahweh for his prowess, “Yahweh is a man of battle, Yahweh is his name (שְׁמוֹ). So too, in Psalm 29, praise is given to Yahweh’s strength and name, which were sources of strength and victory to Israel. Craigie argues that the use of צִל in verse 11 as something that Yahweh gives to his people, and parallels the refuge that he gives to Israel in Exodus 15:2. Considering broader connotations of צִל, he argues that in Exodus 15, צִל is used with two senses, “refuge, protection” and “strength” and “might.” A similar dual usage can be discerned in Psalm 29. The context of 29:1 indicates the sense “strength” and “might.” In verse 11, however, צִל is something given by Yahweh to his people, namely for “refuge” and “protection,” the prerequisites of peace (v. 11b).⁶⁶

In addition to the links suggested above, the clause יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ לְעוֹלָם only occurs in Exodus 15:18, reinforcing the similarities between the two passages. The only difference is that Exodus 15:18 uses the verb מָלַךְ while uses the noun מֶלֶךְ. However, both passages declare Yahweh’s eternal reign after watery victory. In Exodus 15, Yahweh’s eternal reign comes after praise for his control over the waters for the good of his people. In like manner, his eternal reign is celebrated in Psalm 29:11 after he subjugates waters,

⁶⁴Carroll Stuhlmueller, *Psalms 1 (Psalms 1–72)*, OTM (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 21:169.

⁶⁵Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 246.

⁶⁶P. C. Craigie, “Psalm XXIX in the Hebrew Poetic Tradition,” *VT* 22, no. 2 (1972): 146.

while keeping a people for himself who worship in him his sanctuary (Ps 29:9).⁶⁷ While the voice of Yahweh is destroying, his blessed covenant people are worshipping in his temple (Ps 29:9–10)—salvation through judgment as at the Red Sea. Thus, Psalm 29 absorbs the liturgy and history of Israel as it celebrated the theophany of God at the exodus.⁶⁸

The above arguments establish that Psalm 29 fuses the flood and the Red Sea with both verbal and thematic connections. The psalm therefore looks back to Yahweh’s work and interprets the present in light of that past. Yahweh was over the flood in Noah’s day, he reigns in David’s day; the same God who manifested himself to Israel with natural phenomena appears in similar ways to David, as he celebrates it in Psalm 29.

A Flood-like Watery Judgment (Ps 32:6–7)

The waters of Yahweh’s judgment—a chime that resonates with the flood—will not reach the one whose sins Yahweh has covered (Ps 32:6–7). The warning for people to pray to Yahweh while he may be found (6a), an inference from God’s mercy on David in verses 1–5, indicates that the waters in 6b signify Yahweh’s wrath that will come upon those who fail to call upon him and whose sins are, therefore, not covered like David’s.

In Psalm 32 David declares that those whose iniquity Yahweh has covered are extremely blessed (אַשְׁרֵי) (1–2).⁶⁹ Having rehearsed Yahweh’s mercy towards him, David

⁶⁷The temple in v. 9 is possibly cosmic in nature. Ryken says, “in Psalm 29, after the poet has described the progress of the thunder storm, he suddenly inserts, ‘And in his temple all cry, Glory!’ (29:9). The usual gloss is that we are suddenly transported from the storm to either the heavenly temple where the angels ascribe glory to God or to the temple in Jerusalem where the Israelite worshiper ascribes glory to God. I would suggest a metaphoric reading: the earthly scene of the storm is itself a temple—a place where God’s presence is encountered as directly as when a pilgrim worshiped on Mt. Zion” (Leland Ryken, “Metaphor in the Psalms,” *ChrisLit* 31, no. 3 [1982]: 17).

⁶⁸Likewise, Stuhlmueller, *Psalms 1 (Psalms 1–72)*, 169.

⁶⁹Rubin examines the Semitic etymology of אַשְׁרֵי and suggests that it is a remnant of the elative adjective and best rendered “most happy” (Aaron D. Rubin, “The Form and Meaning of Hebrew ’ašrê,” *VT*

invites all the godly to pray to Yahweh at a favourable time. “Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found;⁷⁰ surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him.” Yahweh surrounds those who trust in him and confess their sins to him with “songs of deliverance”⁷¹ and “steadfast love” when the flood (הַשֹּׁפָק) of “many waters” (מַיִם רַבִּים) comes, so that they are not swept away.

The allusion here is to the flood of in Noah’s day. In Noah’s day, those who found favor with God were spared from the rushing waters of the flood as in our psalm (cf. Gen 6:8–9; 7:16; Ps 32:5b). Just as Noah was surrounded by the ark, the means of Yahweh’s deliverance (Gen 7:16), so David is surrounded and preserved by Yahweh from the watery distress (Ps 32:7, 10). The flood is the paradigm through which David interprets Yahweh’s deliverance through the judgment of rushing waters.

The Use of הַשֹּׁפָק in the OT

The noun הַשֹּׁפָק occurs six times in the OT and is associated with water. In Daniel 9:29; 11:22 and Nahum 1:8, הַשֹּׁפָק invokes flood imagery to depict future judgment. In Daniel 9:26, Daniel says the destruction of Jerusalem in the Messianic age will come by a “flood” (הַשֹּׁפָק) (cf. Dan 9:24–27). Miller notes that הַשֹּׁפָק figuratively emphasizes the magnitude of the desolation.⁷² Nahum 1:18 also sets הַשֹּׁפָק in a context of consummate

60, no. 3 [2010]: 366–72).

⁷⁰This line in the Hebrew literally says “in the time of finding” (לְעֵת מֵצֵא) and ends with קָרָא (surely/only). With this reading, the phrase would be “in the time of finding only.” Craigie, however, suggest that the text be emended to מִצֹּר “distress” (in the time of distress [cf. NRSV, RSV]), positing that the *waw* (ו) could have been written erroneously as *resh* (ר), and the aleph (א) in the Hebrew may have been introduced to resolve the anomalous form (Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 264; Briggs and Briggs, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 1:283–84; I. Swart and Robin Wakely, “צֹרֶק,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997]). While this solution is plausible, there is no support for the emendation. It seems best to retain the MT. The adverb קָרָא should be translated with the next line (In a time of finding; surely in a flood of great waters, they shall not come near him) (cf. LXX, ESV, NASB, NET).

⁷¹“Songs of deliverance” in the context of a salvation through waters of judgment evokes the song of deliverance at the Red Sea (Exod 15; cf. Ps 18:1). David may be evoking both the flood and the Red Sea here, with the Red Sea living vicariously in the clearer flood imagery.

⁷²Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, NAC, vol. 18 (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1994), 268.

divine judgment, which is a prototype of end time judgment.⁷³ These flood waters are under Yahweh's control (Job 38:25). The flood imagery also represent intense anger, overwhelming fury, "flood of anger" (Prov 27:4).

In all the above passages, שָׁטָף connotes judgment and possibly reminiscent of the flood of Noah. So the NLT may be preferable. "Let all the godly pray to you while there is still time, that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment" (Ps 32:6).

The Use of מַיִם רַבִּים in the Psalm

The phrase מַיִם רַבִּים occurs seven times in the Psalms. Once it refers to a mass body of water (Ps 93:4). Once in Psalm 77, a psalm of Asaph, it reverberates the Red Sea (Ps 77:19). Once in Psalm 107:23, the words describe a rescue from the sea similar to Jonah's (Jonah 1–2), whose deliverance is described in terms that are similar to that of Moses (Jonah 2:2–9).⁷⁴ In Davidic Psalms it refers to Noah's flood (Ps 29:3) and figuratively to the Red Sea (Pss 18:16; 144:7). The usage in Davidic psalms may inform its usage in our psalm. In which case, מַיִם רַבִּים in Psalm 32:6 may also have faint echoes to the Red Sea or the flood, assuming that David uses the phrase in the same way.⁷⁵ The many waters, like in Psalm 18:5, refer to gentile armies. The Targum confirms this: "let

⁷³Similarly, Michael A. Grisanti and Elmer A. Martens, "שָׁטָף," in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997); William J. Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 215.

⁷⁴Hunter suggests that Jonah's deliverance echoes Moses. See Alastair G. Hunter, "Jonah from the Whale: Exodus Motifs in Jonah 2," in *Elusive Prophet: The Prophet As a Historical Person, Literary Character and Anonymous Artist*, ed. Johannes C. Moore (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 142–58. See also, Nicholas P. Lunn, "'Raised on the Third Day According to the Scripture': Resurrection Typology in the Genesis Creation Narrative," *JETS* 57 no. 3 (2014), 527.

⁷⁵Augustine may have understood this psalm as echoing the flood, observing that "'For this shall every one that is holy pray unto Thee in an acceptable time:' for this wickedness of heart shall every one that is righteous pray unto Thee. For not by their own merits will they be holy, but by that acceptable time, that is, at His coming, who redeemed us from sin. 'Nevertheless in the flood of great waters they shall not come nigh him' (v.er. 6): nevertheless, let none think, when the end has come suddenly, as in the days of Noah, that there remaineth a place of confession, whereby he may draw nigh unto God" (Augustine, *St. Augustine: Expositions on the Psalms*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* vol. 8, ed. Philip Schaff [New York: Christian Literature, 1886], 71).

every pious man pray in your presence at the time of *his* favor; indeed, *at the time when many Gentiles come like waters*, to him they will not come near *to do harm* (Ps 32:6 PST).

Following the above examination of שָׁטָף and מַיִם רַבִּים, the construct chain שָׁטָף מַיִם רַבִּים could be David's way of alluding to the overwhelming flood of mighty waters that covered the earth at the flood of Noah. As a possible echo of the flood, "the waters symbolize the life threat that besieges sinners."⁷⁶ David interprets his life event in light of the past. In which case, Yahweh's protection of those whose sins are covered would be similar to his protection of the righteous at the flood in the ark and at the Red Sea.

Paul quotes Psalm 32:1–2a in Romans 4:7–8 and putting it in an eschatological perspective in a way that reveals that God's deliverance of the righteous through the waters of judgment, while it is patterned after what he did at the flood and Red Sea, also points forward to the salvation par excellence that Yahweh will bring on those who trust in his Messiah, the Son of David (Rom 1:3). In Psalm 32, forgiveness of sins brings healing, divine guidance, and preservation from waters of judgment (32:1–11). David's justification, which shielded him from the rushing waters, sets the pattern that points to our justification in Christ. Paul follows the LXX (Ps 31:1–2) without variation. The LXX differs from the Hebrew in that changing the singular nouns (שָׁטָף and הַמַּיִם) to plurals (αἱ ἀνομιαὶ and αἱ ἁμαρτίαι), likely engendered by the Hebrew's shift to plural in the final verse (32:11). The change to plural universalizes the psalm, inviting everyone to share in David's experience.

Watery Echoes of Creation (Ps 33:7)

Psalm 33:7 closely relates creation to the Red Sea, and thus connects creation to

⁷⁶Konrad Schaefer, *Psalms*, Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry, ed. David W. Cotter (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 80.

salvation. The context of verse 7 and the terms the author uses betray that he intends to evoke creation and the exodus.

Yahweh is Creator. Among other reasons, the author praises Yahweh because his word is upright (Ps 33:4) and because by his word and breath the heavens and their host were made (vv. 6, 9). Creation by the word refers to the clauses “And God said” in the Genesis creation account (Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24) while God’s breath alludes to “the Spirit of God” which hovered over the waters in Genesis 1:2.⁷⁷ As Creator, Yahweh is sovereign over the whole earth and so all owe allegiance to him (v. 8). The creative word of Yahweh clearly echoes Genesis 1 where God spoke all things into existence.⁷⁸

Yahweh is Savior. Just as Yahweh created the world, he created a people for himself at Red Sea. The term “heap” (הַיָּבֵה) (Ps 33:7), of its six occurrences in the OT, is employed four times to describe the heaps of water Yahweh piled at the Red Sea (Exod 15:8; Ps 78:13; Josh 3:13, 16). “He divided the sea and let them pass through it, and made the waters stand like a heap” (Ps 78:13).⁷⁹ With the term “heap” (הַיָּבֵה), Psalms 33:7 alludes to the song of the Sea (Exod 15).⁸⁰ The phrases מִכּוֹן־שֹׁכֵת (Ps 33:14) and מִי הַיָּבֵה (Ps 33:7) also occur in the song of the Sea (Exod 15:17, 19) and further confirm the allusion to the

⁷⁷Wainwright suggests a Trinitarian interpretation of Ps 33 especially v. 6. See Geoffrey Wainwright, “Psalm 33 Interpreted of the Triune God,” *ExAud* 16 (2000): 101–20.

⁷⁸Similarly, Mays, *Psalms*, 150.

⁷⁹The other usage of “heap” (הַיָּבֵה) is in Isa 17:11 and talks of harvest not water as the others.

⁸⁰Some prefer to emend הַיָּבֵה (heap, pile; cf. ESV, NASB, NKJV) to הַיָּבֵה (wineskin, bottle, jar; cf. NRSV; NIV, the Message), probably influenced by the LXX ἀσάδν (wineskin). The LXX finds support in the Targum, Syriac, and Old Latin. This emendation makes a fitting parallel with “storehouse” (מִאֲצִיטָה) in the next line. Dahood argues that the emendation identifies it with the Ugaritic *knd*, and Akkadian *kandu* (Dahood, *Psalms I*, 1:201). Contra Dahood, Craigie argues, “The Ugaritic word *knd* occurs only twice in the Ugaritic texts, and both occurrences are on the same tablet (*CTA* 140:2–3 = *KTU* 4:4. 2–3). The text is an economic text, apparently an inventory of clothes or garments . . . Dahood’s translation *jar* . . . is very unlikely” (Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 270). It is best to follow the Hebrew text, which is close to Exod 15:8 and Ps 78:13.

exodus. Because of the above verbal link, the noun תְּהוֹם should also link the psalm to the song of the Sea (cf. Exod 15:8).⁸¹ These verbal connections reveal that the Yahweh's work at the Red Sea clearly bleeds into this psalm.

Verse 7 joins in with the rest of the psalm to sing in unison the chant of Yahweh's sovereignty over creation and redemption. The author utilizes two creation stories: the creation of the world and the creation of Israel at the Red Sea. Just as Yahweh gathers waters at creation for man (Gen 1:9), so he does at the Red Sea (Exod 15:8) for his covenant people. Craigie supports and justifies this line of thought, showing the close connection between God's works of creation and Israel's redemption at the exodus from Egypt. He states aptly,

The themes of God's dominion in creation and in history are intimately related. God's control of history presupposes his mastery of creation, and the great examples of divine presence in history in the OT often contain within them the divine use of the forces of nature, which in turn belong to God as the Creator of natural order. Thus, the Exodus from Egypt in the escape at the Red Sea is on the one hand a testimony to God's masterful participation in the course of the history of his chosen people. On the other hand, the event is testimony to God's control of substance and power within the order of his creation. Hence, the progression in Israel's worship from praise of God's word in its creative force to praise of God's plan in human history is a natural and necessary consequence of the fundamental Hebrew theology.⁸²

In sum, Psalm 33:4–9 rings not only the tone of Yahweh's creation of the natural world, but also the creation of a nation at the Red Sea. The nation, created by Yahweh, who have him as their covenant God, are blessed (Ps 33:12).

Watery Allusions to the Flood and to Edenic (Ps 36:7, 9)

Similar to Psalm 1, Psalm 36 refers to an edenic sanctuary (Ps 36:9), the place where Yahweh provides for the righteous. Psalm 1 and 33, the only psalms in Book 1

⁸¹The two terms “heap” (גִּד) and “deeps” (תְּהוֹם) could also point to creation (cf. Gen 1:2) and the flood (cf. Gen 7:11; 8:2).

⁸²Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 273–74.

whose water imagery is reminiscent of Eden, share similar themes: the description of the wicked (cf. Pss 1:1; 33:1–4), the flourishing of the righteous in God’s house (cf. Pss 1:2–3; 33:7–8), the condemnation of the wicked (cf. Pss 1:4–6; 33:12).⁸³

A Flood-like Judgment of the Wicked

Psalms 36:7 describes God’s judgments “the great deep,” stressing Yahweh’s unfathomable and unsearchable justice. The “great deep” may also echo the flood when the “fountains of the great deep burst forth” (Gen 7:11) or the Red Sea when “the deeps covered” Israel’s enemies (Exod 15:5). This is very likely given that the parallel line states that Yahweh saves “man and beast” (Ps 36:6c), similar to what occurred at the flood and Red Sea (cf. Exod 9:3–6; 12:37–38; 13:1–2).

While both man and beast were saved at the Red Sea and the flood, the clearest of them is the flood. The concern at the exodus is primarily on the people of God, but the salvation at the flood is the clearest that involves both man and beast, although the verb *ישׁע* is not used in that account (Gen 6–9). Considering the beast in Psalm 36:7 as a reference to the animals that were saved in the ark, *בְּחַיָּה* encompasses all non-humans that Noah brought into the ark (Gen 6:19; 7:1–2). Moreover, the phrase *רַבָּה תְּהוֹם*, although it is used in Isaiah 51:10 and Psalm 78:15 for the Red Sea, does not occur in the exodus account in the Pentateuch as it does in the flood account (Gen 7:11).⁸⁴

⁸³Pss 36:1–4, like Ps 1:1, describe the nature of human malevolence. Unlike Ps 1, before reflecting on the joys of the righteous, Ps 36 sets a contrast between the traits of the wicked and character of God. The features that reflect Yahweh’s excellence are “steadfast love,” “faithfulness,” “righteousness,” and “judgment.” Yahweh’s faithfulness guarantees the constancy of his covenant love (*חַסֵּד*) towards his own. His righteousness will effect judgment on earth so that the righteous will experience salvation but the wicked his judgment. Yahweh saves “man and beast” (Ps 36:6c), but condemns evildoers (Ps 36:12). The thematic similarities between Ps 1 and 36 bookend the water imagery in Book 1 of the Psalter. Cole notes another *inclusio* in Book 1 of the Psalter saying, “Near the conclusion of Book 1 is another expression of *delight* in God’s will and his *torah* (Ps 40:9) by an individual speaker identified as David in the superscription. This would appear to constitute another *inclusio* across the initial division of the Psalter, and also suggest that the flawless man described in Psalm 1 is given voice through Psalm 40” (Cole, *Psalms 1-2*, 61).

⁸⁴Saving or multiplying man and beast (*אָדָם וְבְּחַיָּה*) displays Yahweh’s goodness (cf. Ezek

In addition, the presence of heavens, clouds, mountains (Ps 36:6), great deeps, man, and beast (v. 7) as recipients of Yahweh's favor, makes the connection closer to the flood than the exodus. All of these elements are objects of God's favor at creation, of which the flood is the only installment that matches with it in scope. So one can conclude with some measure of confidence that the imagery in Psalm 36:7 recalls the flood.

The Redeemed in an Edenic Sanctuary

Psalm 36 portrays faint thematic and verbal similarities with the Garden of Eden. Stordalen observes several parallels between Psalms 36 and the Garden of Eden. He makes the following observation:

The composition has a few vague similarities to the Eden story. We count for instance evil words in the heart and mouth of the sinner (Ps 36:2, 4, cf. Gen 3:1–5, 12ff), his lack of fear of God (Ps 36:2, cf. Gen 2:16f; 3:9–13) and blessing in the proximity of God (Ps 36:8–10, cf. Gen 2:9, etc). Somewhat more specific is the theme of knowledge (ידע) in Ps 36:11 and Genesis 2–3. Also, the eyes of the godless play an intriguing role as an organ of apprehension in Ps 36:2f (cf. Gen 3:1–5).⁸⁵

In addition to Stordalen's observation, first, in both the Garden of Eden and Psalm 36, the water that brings blessings has its source in God (cf. Gen 2:10; Ps 36:10). In Psalm 36:10 Yahweh is the final source of the spring that gives life (מְקוֹר חַיִּים). Yahweh is not only the source of life-giving springs, he is himself the spring of living water (Jer 2:13; 9:1; 17:13). The phrase מְקוֹר חַיִּים could be a metonymic reference of the עֵץ הַחַיִּים (tree of life), which Yahweh planted in Eden.

Second, although the plural עֵדֶן in Psalm 36:9 is a homonym of the עֵדֶן in Genesis 2, the phrase נָחַל עֵדֶן is similar to נָהַר יֵצֵא עֵדֶן (Gen 2:10), which confers Yahweh's blessings. These parallels possibly, albeit faintly, recall the Garden of Eden.

In Psalm 36:8–9 David celebrates Yahweh as host for the godly. The devout

36:11; Zech 2:4). To the contrary, in judgment Yahweh cuts them off (cf. Jer 32:43; 36:29; Ezek 14:13, 17, 19, 21; 25:13; 29:8; Zeph 1:3).

⁸⁵Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 420.

have the right, based on God's covenant love towards them, to rest under the "shadow of his wings" (Ps 36:8). They alone have access to God's sanctuary where "they feast on the fatness of his house" (יִרְוֹנוּ מִדֶּשֶׁן בֵּיתֶהָ) (v. 9). The "house" (בֵּיתֶהָ) refers to the sanctuary (cf. Exod 23:19; 34:26) and "fatness" (דֶּשֶׁן) to the oleaginous portions of the sacrificial meat that normally belonged to the priest (cf. Lev 6:8–18). Ross further explains:

It is as if what God provides for his people is the best food of the sanctuary. What is in mind is the sanctuary ritual where the worshipers would actually eat the peace offering as a communal meal. It may have been an actual meal, but it was also a symbolic act signifying that they were at peace with God.⁸⁶

Jeremiah uses similar language to describe the blessings that will accompany the devout in the new covenant. Just as in Psalm 36:9 the godly are satiated with fatness (רִוּהָ דֶשֶׁן), so in Jeremiah (רִוּהָ דֶשֶׁן) (Jer 31:14). Yahweh promises, "I will satiate (רִוּהָ) the soul of the priests with fatness (דֶּשֶׁן)" (Jer 31:14). The end time blessings in Jeremiah is similar to Psalm 36:9.⁸⁷

The next line in verse 8, with the use of water imagery, pictures the godly as drinking from the rivers of delight. The word "your delight" (עֲדָנֶיךָ), as suggested above, is an allusion to Eden (עֵדֶן) and the river that flows in it (cf. Gen 2:8, 10, 15). The word עֲדָנֶיךָ parallels בֵּיתֶהָ in the first colon, suggesting an edenic sanctuary. Briggs and Briggs make the same observation and add, "it may be that the river of Eden underlies the thought, especially in the form in which it appears in Ezek 47:1, as a river of life flowing

⁸⁶Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms: 1-41*, 792. Briggs and Briggs see a similar reference to the sacrificial meals in Ps 36:8 and note that David certainly generalized it so as to include all spiritual blessings (Briggs and Briggs, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 1:319). VanGemenen explains that "the metaphor of food and drink denotes both material and spiritual blessings of God for his people. Through him, the godly have food and drink, as well as protection and the full enjoyment of their salvation" (VanGemenen, *Psalms*, 5:338–39).

⁸⁷Bellinger rightly argues that one way the worshipper in Ps 36 receives the protection and salvation he requests positively in v. 11 is with the overthrow of the enemies, "evildoers" (Ps 36:13). This destruction of the enemies which will mean salvation for the psalmist is eschatological. He notes that "The final verse almost carries an element of glee at the fall of the wicked. The perfect tense used here may well have the significance of what has been called 'prophetic perfect' and the downfall be anticipated" (W. H. Bellinger, *Psalmody and Prophecy* [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984], 50).

forth from the temple.”⁸⁸

Thus similar to the righteous in Psalm 1 who will flourish in the edenic temple precincts (Ps 1:3), the godly in Psalm 36 will drink from the waters flowing in the edenic sanctuary—where Yahweh himself will be the fountain of everlasting life (Ps 36:9a; cf. Jer 2:12; 17:13; Prov 14:27). In sum David uses water imagery to allude to Eden, which he understands to a sanctuary like place.

Conclusion

Through the lens of water imagery, we have seen the world of reality that founded Israel and shaped the authors of the Psalms. History for the authors of the Psalms is not dead; the creation, Eden, the flood, and the Red Sea are for them patterns and lenses through which they interpret their life circumstances. The past events were foundations of hope—hope that Yahweh will again create something new, judge the wicked, and save the righteous through events similar to those of old (creation, Eden, flood, and Red Sea).

⁸⁸Briggs and Briggs, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 1:319. Other scholars who see the same allusion include, Dahood, *Psalms*, 1:4, 222; Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72: An Introduction and Commentary on Books I and II of the Psalms*, TOTC, vol. 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 165; Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 257; Stuhlmueeller, *Psalms 1 (Psalms 1-72)*, 199; Mays, *Psalms*, 157.

CHAPTER 3

THE WATER MOTIF IN BOOK 2

At the beginning of Book 1, the writer points back to Eden and forward to the eschatological edenic temple precincts whose waters make the righteous flourish. Book 1 builds expectations towards the end of all things. Book 2 shows that that glorious end will not come easily. It begins with the psalmist sinking under God's wrath (Ps 44:20), rejection (Ps 44:10–17), and distance (Ps 42:1–2), depicted with water imagery (Ps 42:8). Although he recalls Yahweh's goodness in the past (Ps 42:2; 44:2–3), in the present, he suffers his wrath.¹ “Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your waves have gone over me” (Ps 42:8). The psalmist is cast down (Ps 42:6, 12; 43:5), and he longs for a renewal of Yahweh's love and restoration (Ps 42:1–2; 6b; 43:2; 11b, 43:3; 44:24–27).

Watery Echoes of the Exodus (Ps 42:2–3, 8)

The psalm-singer in Psalms 42–43² looks back to God's kindness in the past,

¹Pss 45–48 are a response to the psalmist's cry, and part of that response is the promise of an edenic city, where Yahweh will dwell with his people forever (Ps 46:4; cf. 48:1, 14).

²Similarities between Pss 42 and 43 suggests that they were originally united. Ps 43 lacks a superscription. A common refrain links the two psalms with very minor variations “Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation” (cf. Ps 42:5, 11; 43:5). These refrains seem to conclude each major section of the psalm. They share similar vocabulary, style, and thought. Moreover, each of them seem incomplete without the other. While it is apparent that the two Pss were originally one, it is unclear why they were separated. The LXX superscription on Ps 43 (LXX 42), “A Psalm of David,” which is not in the Masoretic text may have engendered the division. Schökel's observation on the placement of the names of God—8 times in the first strophe (42:1–5), 6 in the second (42:6–11), and 8 times in the third (43:1–5)—may also suggest the unity of the two Pss (Luis Alonso Schökel, “The Poetic Structure of Psalm 42-43,” *JSOT*, no. 1 [1976]: 9). In addition, Craigie notes that many Hebrew manuscripts present the Pss as a single unit (Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, WBC, vol. 19 [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983], 325). Olofsson treats the Pss as one and does

laments his wrath in the present, and hopes for a future restoration. Water imagery occurs twice: first, it describes the author's longing for God (Ps 42:1-2), and then God's present wrath (Ps 42:7).

Panting for Living Water

Poetically, the author depicts himself as a deer thirsting for water. The simile "as a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you" (Ps 42:2) is not an allusion to a historical event. Similar to Psalm 63:1, the author has in mind the agony of drought. Craigie observes, "The opening simile is converted into a metaphor in v 4, linked by the motif of water; the one who longed for a refreshing drink tasted instead the bitter water of tears."³

The verb עָרַג is rare in the OT.⁴ In Joel 1:20, the only other place where עָרַג occurs,⁵ the beasts *pant* for Yahweh as the source of life. Watson suggests that the imagery of panting after God as water may have been influenced by the "traditional imagery of a life-giving river flowing out of the abode of the deity."⁶ Likewise, for the biblical poets, man and beast ultimately find life in nothing but Yahweh who made them

very careful exposition of them from the Hebrew and Greek, with a particular focus on the metaphors. He examines the translation equivalents in the Septuagint and discusses the semantic meanings of the Hebrew and Greek words (Staffan Olofsson, *As a Deer Longs for Flowing Streams: A Study of the Septuagint of Psalm 42-43 in Its Relation to the Hebrew Text*, *De Septuaginta Investigationes* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011]). Schökel also argues for the unity of these Pss (Schökel, "The Poetic Structure of Psalm 42-43").

³Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 19:326.

⁴According to Clines emendation, the verb עָרַג also occurs in Job 24:10 (David J. A. Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew (DCH)*, [Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011], s.v. "עָרַג"). The emendation, however, is doubtful; it has no textual warrant.

⁵Joel 1 is about eschatological judgment. The prophet says, "the day of Yahweh is near" (Joel 1:15; cf. Ezek 30:2; Obad 15; Zeph 1:7; Isa 13:6) and depicts this day as a day of judgment. It will be the day of the destruction of the Almighty (Joel 1:15b). On that day there will be no food (Joel 1:16) because the ground will be unproductive (Joel 1:17-18). Yahweh will devour the land with fire (Joel 1:19, 20b) such that even the beasts shall *pant* for Yahweh (Joel 1:20).

⁶Rebecca Sally Watson, *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the Theme of "Chaos" in the Hebrew Bible* (Berlin, NY: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 94.

(cf. Gen 1:25, 27). Man who was made in the image of God finds life only in God's presence and his Word (Ps 42:2b; cf. Deut 8:3; Eccl 12:13). Thus the author of Psalm 42–43 longs for God, a refreshing stream and fountain of living water (cf. Ps 36:9; Jer 2:13).

Deep Calls to Deep

Instead of enjoying the living water of the living God, the psalmist faces the angry waves and waterfalls of God overwhelming him. Although he longs for the living God, the fountain of living water, he is under God's waters of judgment. "Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your waves have gone over me" (Ps 42:8).⁷

"The deep" (תְּהוֹם) is personified in the phrase "deep calls to deep." The term תְּהוֹם may allude to creation, flood, Red Sea, or any body of water. In a context of God's watery judgment, however, it most likely refers to either the flood or Red Sea—the major contexts that use תְּהוֹם in concert with judgment and as an instrument of divine wrath (cf. Gen 7:11; 8:2; Exod 15:5, 8).⁸ Asaph uses similar imagery to express his hope that God will bring him up again "from the deeps of the earth" (מִתְּהוֹמוֹת הָאָרֶץ תָּשׁוּב תַּעֲלֵנִי) (Ps 77:20). This means that God can use the same instrument to judge his own people and the wicked, as he did the Egyptians at the Red Sea (Exod 15:8) and sinners at the flood (Gen

⁷Delitzsch interprets the imagery in v. 8 as the author's way of portraying his surroundings as described in v. 7b (Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. 2 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952], 59; Solomon B. Freehof, *The Book of Psalms: A Commentary*, The Jewish Commentary for Bible Readers [Cincinnati, OH: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1938], 112; Martin Selman, "הַר," in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997], 47). Goldingay's argument seems most satisfying. He argues that "the imagery of breakers and waves are independent of this particular geography (e.g., 88:7 [8]) and links more directly with the idea of death as a force that overwhelms and drowns us" (John Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 42-89*, vol. 2 [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 27). This is more plausible because 2 Sam 22:5 and Jonah 2:3 uses similar language for a different geographic setting.

⁸Craigie sees a reference to the primeval waters (Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 19:327). Calvin argues that because the term תְּהוֹם can refer to any large body of water (Deut 8:7; Ezek 31:4)—צְנוֹר (waterfalls), which parallels תְּהוֹם, simply mean a water shaft or gulfs in the sea (cf. 2 Sam 5:8). See John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 2, trans. James Anderson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 139.

7:11; 8:2), but for the people of God there is hope beyond the תְּהוֹמוֹת. The flood and the Red Sea are paradigmatic events through which the psalmist interprets the present.

Allusion to the Red Sea

The water imagery of Psalm 42 appears to allude to the exodus. We will now explore the verbal and thematic links. The nouns יוֹמָם and לַיְלָה (Ps 42:4) are prevalent in the exodus. When they describe the duration of something done by Yahweh, it is often in contexts that recount the exodus⁹ or creation.¹⁰ Given the context of Psalm 42, it is most likely that the exodus is in view since the exodus fuses judgment and the constant display of Yahweh's goodness by day and by night. Equally, God as "rock" (Ps 42:9), in a context that portrays him as life-sustaining waters (Ps 42:2–3), may be reminiscent of God's provision of water through the rock in the wilderness (Num 20:8, 10, 11; Ps 78:16; 2 Sam 22:2) and of Yahweh as the rock (a סֵלֶע synonym of צוּר in Ps 42:10) who carried Israel through the wilderness (Deut 32:18).¹¹ Just as Yahweh provided life-sustaining water for Israel and was himself the rock that saved her, so he is a life-sustaining water for the psalmist and his rock.

The phrase כָּל־מִשְׁפָּרֶיךָ וְגִלְיָה עָלַי עָבְרוּ, occurs exactly in Jonah 2:3. "All your waves" (כָּל־מִשְׁפָּרֶיךָ) refer to Yahweh's wrath (cf. Ps 88:7). Jonah 2 also uses תְּהוֹמוֹת (Jon. 2:6), as Jonah describes the waters closing in over him to take his life.¹² Not only does

⁹Cf. Exod 13:21, 22; 40:38; Num 9:21; 14:14; Deut 1:33; Isa 4:5; 60:11; Ps 78:14; 91:5; Neh 9:12, 19.

¹⁰In Ps 121:6 the merisms, sun and moon, day and night, reverberate and elucidate the role of Yahweh as Creator in v. 2. The only time these terms are used outside of a context of creation and the exodus is Ps 32:4 where these terms describe the duration and constancy of Yahweh's anger. "For by day and by night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer" (Ps 32:4).

¹¹According to Paul, the rock refers to Christ (1 Cor 10:4; cf. Rom 9:33; 1 Pet 2:6ff). See chapter 2 for a treatment of the exodus motif in Ps 18 and its synoptic passage 2 Sam 22:2.

¹²Stuart observes that while Ps 42 and Jonah 2:3 share verbal links, "It must be noted, however, that Jonah's psalm, alone in the OT, uses deep-water imagery consistently and dominantly. In all other cases, such imagery constitutes only a minority of the metaphorical stock of a psalm" Douglas Stuart,

Jonah 2 share verbal links with Psalm 42, but both authors are also alienated from Yahweh and the Temple (Jon 2:4; Pss 42:3; 43:2–3) with Yahweh being the agent of their affliction.¹³ Yahweh unleashed the watery forces as weapons against Jonah and the psalmist.

The song of Jonah 2 is also replete with the exodus motif.¹⁴ The exact wording of כָּל־מִשְׁבָּרֶיהָ וְגִלְיָה עָלַי עָבְרוּ in a text that emits the exodus motif may suggest a similar function of the phrase in Psalm 42. If the exodus was in the psalmist's mind, then he sees present suffering as patterned after Yahweh's wrath poured on the Egyptian at the Red Sea. The waters of the deep are going over the psalmist as they did the Egyptian armies.

Conclusion

The psalmist laments that Yahweh himself, the source of life (42:1–2), “the God of my life” (42:8), “my rock” (42:9), “my salvation” (42:6, 11; 43:5), and “refuge” (43:2), has placed him in the sphere of judgment by water.¹⁵ However, he prays for God's

Hosea-Jonah, WBC, vol. 31 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 476.

¹³It is possible that Jonah the prophet depended on Ps 42 given the similarities in genre, words, and setting (in the sea of torrential waters) (cf. Schökel, “The Poetic Structure of Psalm 42-43,” 19; Jonathan Magonet, *Form and Meaning: Studies in Literary Techniques in the Book of Jonah*, 2nd ed. [Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983], 44). Magonet rightly argues that the psalm in Jonah 2 was composed by the author and incorporated in his work at this point (ibid., 39–44.). This argument makes the setting between Jonah 2 and Ps 42 very similar—both face Yahweh's judgment by water.

¹⁴Although one may not agree with Hunter on a fictional understanding of Jonah, he aptly argues for the exodus motif in Jonah 2 showing several verbal links. In addition to his examination of key words like יִבְשֶׁה among others, he argues that the examination of those words “are by no means the whole story, for we could note also the presence of further key terms from Jon. 2 which, while lacking the rather tightly-circumscribed occurrence pattern we have analyzed, are none-the-less significant. Thus, for example, Pharaoh's army, like Jonah, *goes down* (יָרַד) into the sea (Exod. 15:5; Jon. 2:7); the poem celebrates YHWH's *salvation* (יִשְׁעָה) from peril (Exod. 15:2; Jon. 2:10); and we learn (Exod. 15:13; Jon. 2:5, 8, 9) that the return to the realm of God's *holiness* (קֹדֶשׁ) is as a result of God's *steadfast love* (חֶסֶד). In short, there is a very strong case for the thesis that at the heart of Jonah lies a commentary—albeit a very off-beat one—on the cherished exodus myth which lies at the heart of Israel's belief in itself as a people specially covenanted to God” (Hunter, “Jonah from the Whale,” 150). Jonah is rescued from and through the waters like Israel at the Red Sea.

¹⁵Contra Craigie's who suggests that v. 8 refers to primeval waters of chaos; he states, “He had longed for the waters of refreshment, but somehow in the effort to remember God, he had unleashed the primeval waters of chaos, which seemed to depict so powerfully his terrible situation” (Craigie, *Psalms 1-*

light and truth to guide him to God's holy hill (הַר קֹדֶשׁ), his tabernacle (מִשְׁכָּן) (Ps 43:3).¹⁶ According to Psalm 46:4, the holy tabernacle of Yahweh (קֹדֶשׁ מִשְׁכָּן) is the edenic city of God (Ps 48:1, 8). The psalmist, while in the midst of a Red Sea-like watery judgment, looks back in pain to the days when he would lead the procession into God's tabernacle, and prayerfully hopes for the day when he will again dwell in the tabernacle of his God, in the city of God.

Watery Echoes of the Flood and Eden (Ps 46)

In Psalm 46 the psalmist's longing for God's presence and his holy habitation (Ps 42:2; 43:3–4) is granted, but not without hardship. Through a cosmic deluge (Ps 46:3–4), Yahweh will dwell with his covenant people in Zion (Ps 46:5–6). The Psalm points towards the last days, when a flood like Noah's will sweep the earth and God will be a refuge for his covenant people in Zion, just as he saved Noah and his family in the ark.

Present Watery Crisis Pictured as a Flood

The sons of Korah¹⁷ use flood imagery to describe Yahweh's desolation of the earth. Like the flood of Noah, the scope of the destruction is universal (Ps 46:3, 8b; cf. Gen 7:4) and foaming water is the instrument of wrath (Ps 46:3–4; cf. Gen 7:9, 18, 20).¹⁸

50, 19:327; cf. Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC, vol. 15 [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973] 184). See also Keel who sees the "breakers and waves" in v. 8 as comparative to an ANE monster with seven heads (Othmar Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*, trans. Timothy J. Hallett [New York: Seabury Press, 1978], 52).

¹⁶The plural of מִשְׁכָּן in Pss 43:3 and 46:4 is an intensive plural. It does not suggest multiple dwelling places of God.

¹⁷Ps 46 uses the plural throughout, suggesting that it is a communal psalm.

¹⁸Tsumura suggests that the foaming waters in v. 4 and the gladdening waters in v. 5 are two fold imageries of wine that foams and gladdens, which the authors use to depict the cosmic ocean (David Toshio Tsumura, "Twofold Image of Wine in Psalm 46:4-5," *JQR* 71, no. 3 [1981]: 167–175). While the wine imagery is possible, it seems that the psalmists had *more* in mind with all the thematic parallels that exist between the psalm and the Flood narrative.

The water covers the mountains (Ps 46:3, 4; cf. Gen 7:19) and destroys the godless (Ps 46: 7; cf. Gen 6:17). While this desolation is coming upon the entire world, God preserves his covenant people, as he did at the flood of Noah (Ps 46:2, 5–6; Gen 7:16, 23).¹⁹ Although there are no clear verbal links, the thematic links show a close affinity between Genesis 6–9 and Psalm 46. If this is correct, then the cosmic ruin in Psalm 46:1–3 reflects the archetypal pattern of the Flood, albeit lacking any verbal associations.²⁰

Peter Craigie, however, takes a different position on Psalm 46:2–4, arguing that the allusion is to the creation account of Genesis 1:1–2, where God conquered chaos. He notes:

The language is reminiscent of other contexts, in which the Hebrew poets employed language evocative of the shaking earth (Isa 24:19–20), the trembling mountains (Isa 54:10), and the disruption of land and sea alike (Hag 2:6). But at a deeper level, the poet is alluding to forces of chaos, never quite subdued and always threatening the order of creation; even in the face of chaotic powers, there would be no fear, for God had conquered chaos in creation. Thus the language of confidence here is rooted in creation, for God's order emerged from primeval chaos (Gen 1:1–2).²¹

I argued in Chapter 2 that the flood is presented as a re-creation in the Pentateuch, which makes Craigie's argument possible. Taking a closer look, however, it seems unconvincing that the authors of Psalm 46 are alluding to Genesis 1:1–2. As argued above, waters overflowing mountains and the earth giving way are more

¹⁹The phrase “the God of Jacob” evokes the covenant God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The phrase could be a short form of “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob” which is so prevalent in covenant contexts (cf. Ex 3:6, 15; 4:5; 2 Sam 23:1; Pss 20:1; 24:6; 75:9; 81:1, 4; 94:7; 114:7; 146:5; Is 2:3; Mic 4:2; Matt 22:32; Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37; Acts 3:13; 7:46).

²⁰Some scholars have discerned a reference to a combat with chaos in Ps 46:3–4 (See Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, vol. 1 [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962]:87; S. J. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I: 1–50*, vol. 1 [Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1966], 279). Others suggest an earthquake that resulted in tidal waves. See Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000), 498; Dahood, *Psalms I*, 1:280. Brettler observes that the earthquake in Ps 46:3–4 is a theophany (Marc Zvi Brettler, “Images of YHWH the Warrior in Psalms,” *Semeia*, no. 61 [1993]: 144). Ollenburger sees a primordial conquest of the powers of chaos (Ben C. Ollenburger, *Zion, The City of the Great King: A Theological Symbol of the Jerusalem Cult* [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987], 74).

²¹Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 19:344.

reminiscent of the flood than creation; Genesis 1–2 does not insinuate this kind of chaos the psalmists depict. The flood is the closest candidate for the allusion in Psalm 46.

If it is right that Psalm 46:1–4 alludes to the Flood, then the city of refuge in verses 5–6, although a clear reference to Eden as will be argued later, may also be associated with Noah’s ark, where God preserved his people.²² Gunkel also sees allusions to the flood and supports this connection of the city and the ark. He states, “As in the first deluge the ark of Noah outrode the waters, so will Yahweh’s people be saved on Mount Zion. Yahweh Sabbaoth is the name of the God of Moses’ Ark of the Covenant, as well as of the God of the Temple on Mount Zion. In his name the congregation rebukes the wild waters; against mount Zion the new chaos will be dashed to pieces.”²³

The phrase לַפְּנוֹת בֶּקָר (Ps 46:6) occurs once in the OT in Exodus 14:27 and may echo the greatest act of rescue in Israel’s history, the exodus, when “at the turn of the morning” Yahweh drowned Israel’s enemies in the Red Sea.²⁴ Moreover, the first time Yahweh is described as “my strength” (עֹזִי) is in the song of the sea (Exod 15:2). Isaiah alludes to the song of the sea in an eschatological context saying, “You will say in that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא), a phrase Isaiah commonly uses in eschatological contexts (cf. Is 2:11, 17,

²²Ollenburger argues that Zion theology developed to a great extent out of a tradition previously linked with the Ark of the Covenant. “The development of Zion as a symbol of refuge is most likely associated, tradition-historically, with the Ark sanctuary as a place of refuge—i.e., the site of the Ark was a sanctuary in the true sense of the term” (Ben C. Ollenburger, *Zion, The City of the Great King: A Theological Symbol of the Jerusalem Cult* [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987], 75). This is not contrary to the suggestion that the city also could allude to Noah’s ark since both Noah’s ark and the Ark were God’s way of preserving his people or giving them rest (Gen 5:29; Num 10:33). Although one may not agree with Gunkel that Ps 46 builds on the prophets who spoke about the last days, he rightly observes a similar function to Noah’s ark, the Ark of the Covenant, the Edenic city of refuge (Hermann Gunkel, “Psalm 46: An Interpretation,” *TBW* 21, no. 1 [1903]: 29).

²³Gunkel, “Psalm 46,” 29.

²⁴Kidner similarly observes, “Also the words *right early* (lit. ‘at break of day’; cf. NEB) set up an echo of the greatest deliverance of all, the moment when ‘at break of day’ the Red Sea turned back to engulf the armies of Egypt (Exod. 14:27)” (Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, 193). Gunkel suggests an allusion to the Gen 1:2 based on this phrase (Gunkel, “Psalm 46,” 30).

20; 4:1–2; 11:10–11), . . . עָזִי וְזַמְרָת יְהוָה וְיִהְיֶה לִישׁוּעָה (Isaiah 12:2b).²⁵ The almost exact wording of Psalm 46:6 found in Exodus 15:2 (עָזִי וְזַמְרָת יְהוָה וְיִהְיֶה לִישׁוּעָה) may suggest that Yahweh as עָזִי in Psalm 46 may be a faint whisper of the Red Sea. Verse 7 shows that the chaotic waters in verses 2–4 refer to human nations and kingdoms, which are threatening God’s people, like Egypt against Israel at the Red Sea. Craigie also observes similarities between the rescue in Psalm 46 and the rescue at the Red Sea, saying, “God’s creation (Exod 15:17) of Israel had also been a consequence of his control of the chaotic waters, by which he conquered Pharaoh and redeemed his people (Exod 15:1–10); hence the psalmist now turns from confidence in the face of natural chaotic forces, to confidence in the face of national threats.”²⁶ While this line of argument for an allusion to the exodus is

²⁵Isa 12:5 with a tilted finger also points to the song of the Sea. “Sing to Yahweh for he has done gloriously” (Isa 12:5a; cf. Exod 15:1). Isaiah shares a lot of other similarities with Ps 46, for example, the concept of God *with us*. These similarities have led some scholars to argue that the psalm must have been written in Isaiah’s time and that Isaiah and the author of the psalm used a common tradition (see Carroll Stuhlmueller, *Psalms 1 [Psalms 1–72]*, OTM [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990], 21:241). Earwood says that any attempt to be dogmatic on the date of the psalm is unwise because of the lack of specific references within the psalm (Greg C. Earwood, “Psalm 46,” *RevExp* 86, no. 1 [1989]: 80). Although one may not agree with Toy that the psalms of the sons of Korah were post-exilic, he rightly observes that the verbal similarities between the psalms of the sons of Korah and Isa 33, which seems to have been written during an Assyrian invasion are not striking enough and cannot be used to decide whether we are dealing with just one author, or two authors independent of each other, or one copying from or imitating the other; nor does the general situation in Isaiah closely resemble that in the psalms; though this might be explained in part from the difference between prophetic and lyrical thought” (Crawford Howell Toy, “The Date of the Korah-Psalms,” *JSBLE* 4, no. 1/2 [1884]: 89–90). Faint similarities with Isaiah cannot be a basis for seeing a late date for the psalms. It seems best to date the psalm based on the authorship “the sons of Korah,” descendants of Levi (cf. Exod 6:21, 24; Num 16; 1 Chr 6:7ff [22ff], 18–23 [33–38]). The Korahites are designated soldiers (1 Chr 12:6), temple doorkeepers (1 Chr 26:1–19), porters (1 Chr 9:19), those charged with baked things (1 Chr 9:31), and singers (2 Chr 20:19). Only the Psalms and Chronicles call them singers. If the sons of Korah sang in the days of Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20:19), it is possible that some of them were singers sometime before then, possibly in David’s reign, and thus their songs probably span several generations: possibly from David to the postexilic period (see Jeff H. McCrory, “Korah,” *EDB* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000]).

²⁶Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 19:344. He further argues, “Psalm 46 contains one of the clearest elaborations in the Bible of the theological implications of the faith in *creation*. The two versions of the fourth commandment provide the dimensions of Israel’s creation faith. The primary faith in creation concerned God’s creation of the world as such (Exod 20:11; cf. Gen 1); the secondary faith, given expression in the second form of the commandment, was rooted in God’s redemption and creation of the nation Israel from Egyptian bondage (Deut 5:15; cf. Exod 15:1–18). In each case, creation represents the establishment of order where formerly there was chaos, either the chaotic primeval waters (Gen 1:1–2), or the bondage of Egypt which was crushed and ended by the waters of the Reed Sea. The first focus of

a possibility, it is too faint a whisper to consider it as the authors' way of echoing the past; it is a very slight point of contact. That faint echoes of the Red Sea are here should not, however, surprise us given the close links between the flood and the Red Sea.

Thus, we conclude that Psalm 46:1–4 thematically alludes to the flood of Noah and uses language that could evoke the exodus narrative. The authors picture God's anger with whispers of the flood story. Although the cosmos is drowning under God's marine judgment, there is a stream whose rivers gladden the city of God.

Eden, the City of God

In direct contrast to the chaotic waters (Ps 46:1–4), there is “a river, its streams make glad the city of God.”²⁷ The idea of nutritious streams and the beneficent presence of God are reminiscent of the Garden of Eden where a nourishing river (נָהָר) flowed and God's presence was tangible to bless (Gen 2:10–14).²⁸ Lawson suggests, “This river may be the river that flows from the throne of God (Ezek 47:1–12; Zech 14:8; Rev 22:1–2).”²⁹ Eden and the city in our psalm have similar features: (1) God's beneficent presence (cf. Gen 2:10, 18; Ps 46:5); (2) a river (note singular נָהָר) that divides into streams (note plural in Ps 46:5 [its streams] פְּלִגִּי (cf. Gen 2:10–14; Ps 46:5, 6);³⁰ (3) life given through

creation faith established God's kingship and rule in the realm of nature; the second focus of creation faith established God's kingship in the realm of history (Exod 15:18)” (ibid., 19:345).

²⁷נָהָר is placed in an emphatic position and hones the contrast between vv. 1–4 and v. 5.

²⁸The argument for an allusion to the Garden of Eden slightly differs from Craigie who argues, “The reference to the “river” and its “streams” describes the city in language reminiscent of Canaanite mythology. The throne of the high god El, at the head of two streams (CTA 17.vi.47), is localized in a particular place. But in the psalm, the ancient cult of El Elyon (“God Most High”), traditionally associated with King Melchizedek (Gen 14:18–19), is identified as the same true tradition as that associated with *Yahweh of Hosts*, the “God of Jacob” (v. 8)” (Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 19:344).

²⁹Steven J. Lawson, *Psalms 1–75*, HOTC, vol. 11 (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2003), 245.

³⁰Watson rightly makes the following observation “The symbolic nature of this image is underscored by the reality that Jerusalem has only one modest stream, the Gihon: thus, the picture is fundamentally a theological one. The implicit message seems to be that even if all is in tumult, either in neighboring states or in Judah itself, God may still be trusted to protect his holy mountain, the streams

water (cf. Gen 2:10; Ps 46: 4, 5); (4) habitation by a covenant people (cf. Gen 2:15; Ps 46:1, 7).³¹

The description of the edenic city is similar to that of Jerusalem in other texts. Jerusalem is described as the city of God (cf. Pss 48:1, 8; 87:3; 101:8; Isa 60:4) and the habitation of God (cf. Pss 84:1ff.; 132:5).³² Throughout the OT, Jerusalem is associated with the Garden of Eden. The association of Zion and Eden points forward to the future Zion, the new Eden (cf. Isa 8:6; 33:2; Rev 22:1, 2). Psalm 46 also strikes an eschatological note when it describes the demolition of war ammunitions—lasting peace (cf. Isa 2:2–4).³³

Conclusion

Psalm 46, with clear sentiment yet indefinite language, alludes to the flood, as the psalmist describes Yahweh's vexing wrath and pictures the restoration of God's people as a re-establishment of the Garden of Eden. Those in the new Eden will have no reason to fear because the protective presence of God will be with them (cf. Rev 22:1–5) and God will help them at the break of dawn (cf. Exod 14:27; cf. Ps 30:6). The river (נָהָר) breaking out into life-giving streams and flowing through Zion assures fertility and riches

providing assurance of his presence and blessings (Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 136).

³¹Gentry and Wellum rightly argue that God made a covenant with Adam (Peter John Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012], 177–221).

³²Rohland identifies the city in Ps 46 as Zion and enumerates four motifs that are typical of Zion in the Psalms: Zion is the peak of Zaphon, the highest mountain (Ps 48:3–4), the river of paradise flows from it (Ps 46:5), there Yahweh triumphs over the flood of chaos waters (Ps 46:3), and there Yahweh triumphed over the kings and their nations (Pss 46:7; 48: 5–7; 76:4, 6–7) (Edzard Rohland, “Die Bedeutung der Erwaehlungstraditionen Israels fuer die Eschatologie der alttestamentlichen Propheten” [Muenchen: Fotodr. Mikrokopie, 1956], 142). Zion psalms, as identified by Gunkel are Pss 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122, celebrate the greatness of Jerusalem and its future eschatological significance (Hermann Gunkel, *An Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*, [Mercer Island, WA: Mercer, 1998], 42).

³³Compare Earwood, “Psalm 46,” 83; John E. McFadyen, “The Messages of the Psalms: Psalm 46,” *TBW* 27, no. 2 (1906): 99–103. Gunkel rightly argues that Ps 46 is a hymn of the last things and sees the psalm as similar to the words of the prophets concerning the last days (Gunkel, “Psalm 46”).

(cf. Gen 2:10–14; Ezek 47:1–12; Joel 3:18; Zech 14:8). It will be the boast of its inhabitants so that all the nations drawing near to mount Zion will sing, “all my springs are in you” (Ps 87:7).

God as a Life-giving Spring (Ps 63)

Psalm 63 is associated with David during his stay in the wilderness, either during his escape from Saul (1 Sam 23) or from Absalom (2 Sam 15:13–30). In the spirit of Psalm 42:1–2, David yearns for a close fellowship with God, as life-sustaining waters. “O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water” (Ps 63:1–2).

The Psalmist does not apply a straightforward metaphor to say that “God is living water,” as one would expect. While David does not straightforwardly designate God as living water or life-sustaining water, that simile lies very close at hand when he says “my soul thirsts (צמא) for you.” Literally the verb צמא signifies a thirst for water.³⁴

Israel suffered thirst in the wilderness (Exod 17:3), and Isaiah applies this thirst to the return from Babylon, which he portrays as the new Exodus (Isa 48:21; 49:10).³⁵ That is the historical theme of thirst in the OT. Figuratively the verb צמא describes the intense longing of the righteous for God. Thirst for God is likened to thirst of water (cf. Ps 42:3). In Psalm 63:2 David uses “thirst” in figuratively for his thirst. In the wilderness, David thirsts for God (Ps 63:2). Unlike Israel who grumbled for water when they were thirsty in the wilderness and rejected God, David thirsts for God in the wilderness. David

³⁴Exod 17:3; Judg 4:19; 15:18; Isa 48:21; 49:10; 65:13; Job 24:11; Ruth 2:9.

³⁵Enns aptly argues for a typological understanding of Isaiah’s use of the צמא. “Isaiah also links the provision of water for the returning exiles to the provision of water in the desert for the exodus generation (Isa 43: 14–19; 48: 20–21), thereby establishing a typological connection between the two events. The theological significance of this typology appears to be in the fact that the redemption of God’s people at two of the more prominent junctures of redemptive-historical significance in the OT (exodus and exile) is closely tied to the ‘quenching of thirst,’ a theme that applies also to personal deliverance” (Peter Enns, “צמא,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997]).

also looks to the day when his soul will be satisfied with God as with rich food (Ps 63:6).

Conclusion

In both the literal and figurative sense of צמא, God is the one who satisfies the thirst of his people. In this psalm, David shows himself to be part of the righteous remnant of Israel, as he looks to God for more than physical provision in the wilderness; David seeks God in the wilderness to satisfy the spiritual needs of his soul, God's power, glory, and steadfast love.

Watery Echoes of Creation, Exodus, and Eden (Ps 65)

In Psalm 65 David highlights God's redemptive purposes in both nature and history. David foresees the day when Yahweh will visit the earth with rain and the land will produce abundantly. In this day, Yahweh will be the center of worldwide attention and awe, as all flesh will come to him in his temple because he atones for the sins of his people.

God's Work in Creation

Allusions to creation in this Psalm may be faint but they are present. David's understanding of creation irradiates God's work in redemption as well.

David shows God as ruler over all creation. Because of the awesome deeds of God, he is the hope of all the ends of the earth; the distant seas (Ps 65:6) and all the dwellers of the ends of the earth fear him (Ps 65:9). The two phrases כָּל־קְצוֹי־אָרֶץ and יָם וְיַרְדֵּן are synonymous, describing the jurisdiction of God's rule. The trust of all nations in God presupposes his control over them.

In verses 7–8 David, using two participial phrases, describes God's sovereignty over the created order.³⁶ God is the establisher of mountains (מְבַנֵּן הָהָרִים) and

³⁶The use of participles insinuates that these things are characteristic of God; it is the nature of

the stiller of the seas (מִשְׁכִּיחַ שְׁאוֹן יָמִים) and its waves, that is, the tumult of the people. The words כֹּון and הָר only occur together five times. Micah says, “It shall come to pass in the latter days that the *mountain* of the house of Yahweh shall be *established* as the highest of the *mountains*, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it” (Mic 4:1; cf. Isa 2:2; Exod 15:17). The only times when the two terms (כֹּון and הָר) are used together with plural הָר have reference to God’s work at creation (Ps 147:8). Selman notes, “Explicit mention of Yahweh’s creation of the mountains is rare (Amos 4:13; Ps 65:6[7]; Prov 8:25) . . . such descriptions are notable for their similarity to Gen 1:9–10, where the mountains were revealed as the water that originally covered the world receded.”³⁷ Consequently, we may conclude that in Psalm 65:7 David has creation in mind.

In verse 8 מִשְׁכִּיחַ שְׁאוֹן גְּלִיָּהָם adopts the participle מִשְׁכִּיחַ and parallels מִשְׁכִּיחַ שְׁאוֹן יָמִים. The two phrases are linked to וְהָמוֹן לְאֻמִּים, which also assumes the participle מִשְׁכִּיחַ. Another possible way of reading this verse understands מִשְׁכִּיחַ שְׁאוֹן יָמִים שְׁאוֹן גְּלִיָּהָם as a figurative description of וְהָמוֹן לְאֻמִּים, in which case, the conjunction וְ functions epexegetically. The latter would mean that Yahweh has power over the peoples of the earth.³⁸ Following the first approach, the first part of the verse asserts Yahweh’s rule over

God to establish mountains and to still waters and peoples. He did these things at creation and will do them again.

³⁷Selman, “הָר,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997).

³⁸Following this reading, the stilling of the sea, which means the destruction of God’s enemies (the peoples) could refer to the Red Sea where God stilled the raging waters, Pharaoh and his host. The sea and roaring waves depict the tumult of the peoples, enemies of Yahweh (cf. Is 17:12, 13). When his enemies rise like the waves of the sea, Yahweh stills them by his sovereign power. “Yahweh’s stilling of the waves is reminiscent of his dividing the waters at the Red Sea when Israel departed from their ‘exile’ in Egypt and describes Yahweh’s promised regathering of his covenant people from a worldwide exile (Zech 10:11)” (Mark Anthony Phelps, “וְהָב,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997]). It should not be surprising that it is difficult to distinguish between a reference to creation and the Red Sea, because, as it was stated earlier, those two events mirror each other; Moses pictures God’s work at the Red Sea as a mini installment of his work at the creation of the world. Ps 89:10 uses similar language, but in that instance the reference seems to be to the Red Sea because of its context (Discussion of Ps 89 below). Although Ps 65 has references to redemption, it has a seminal focus on God as Creator.

the sea and its waves, while the second part spotlights Yahweh's dominion over the nations; Yahweh, as Creator of all, rules the mountains (v. 6), the seas (v. 8a) he made, and the peoples (v. 8b). "The roaring turmoil among the nations is controlled by God (Yahweh) along with the raging powers of the natural world,"³⁹ Yahweh is Lord over all.

The seas allude to Genesis 1, where God demonstrates his control over them (cf. Gen 1:6; Jer 5:22). Also, the phrase מוֹצֵאֵי-בֹקֶר וְעֶרֶב תְּרַנֵּן (v. 9), while the meaning of בֹּקֶר and עֶרֶב are different in this Psalm,⁴⁰ they could also echo the creation account in Genesis (cf. Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31).⁴¹ The verb רָנַן is used in contexts that describe Yahweh as Creator (cf. Job 38:7; Ps 95:1).⁴² Furthermore, "the dependence of 'all flesh' on Yahweh (v. 3, cf. vv. 6–9) perhaps derives from the concern for God as the beneficent Creator, who provides all good things for his creatures (vv. 10–14, cf. Ps 104)."⁴³

Based on these observations, one may safely conclude that the water in verse 8 points to creation. Plummer observes that the imagery in verse 8 builds on God's work of creation; God stills the waters of creation, and he stills the nations for cosmic peace.⁴⁴ All the above in concert chant the song of creation; God is to be praised as Creator, as all the

³⁹Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, WBC, vol. 20 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990), 142.

⁴⁰The terms could have a spatial meaning, from east (where the sun rises to bring the morning) to west (where the sun sets, signifying evening); the regions of the rising and setting of the sun. The terms could also have temporal meanings (from morning till evening). However, the spatial meaning is best in this context because it insinuates the cosmic effect of Yahweh's work in concert with other phrases in the psalm like, "all the ends of the earth" and "distant seas" (Ps 65:7).

⁴¹The major difference between the psalm and Genesis with regards to the use of the terms (בֹּקֶר and עֶרֶב) is the change of order; in Genesis evening comes before morning whereas in Ps 65 morning comes first.

⁴²The overwhelming use of this verb is in context of redemption (cf. Isa 44:23; 49:13; 52:9). So Tremper Longman, "רָנַן," in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997).

⁴³Rebecca Sally Watson, *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the Theme of "Chaos" in the Hebrew Bible* (Berlin, NY: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 140.

⁴⁴William S. Plumer, *Psalms: A Critical and Expository Commentary with Doctrinal and Practical Remarks* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1975), 643.

ends of the earth hope in him.

God's Work in Redemption

The Psalmist displays a redemptive understanding of God's work in nature. From his perspective, it is as though his work in nature engenders his work in redemption. We will examine his allusions to God's redemptive work.

When the *niphal* participle נִרְאָה is used for God's deeds, it constantly refers to his redemptive work at the exodus. The plagues, the rescue of Israel from Egypt, the division of the Red Sea, the quaking of Sinai,⁴⁵ and the annihilation of the nations in the Promised Land (1 Chr 17:21) are God's awesome redemptive works which he exhibited before the nations (Exod 34:10) to make a name for himself (2 Sam 7:23; 1 Chr 17:21) and gain cosmic praise (Ps 66:3–5). In addition to this, the phrases “God in Zion” (Ps 65:2), “all flesh shall come to you” (Ps 65:4), “you atone⁴⁶ for our transgressions” (Ps 65:4), “blessed is the one you choose and bring near” (Ps 65:5), and the “God of our salvation” (Ps 65:6) together highlight the idea of redemption. Israel's experience of God's redemption makes their God “the hope of the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas” (Ps 65:6), accomplishing the promise to Abraham that through his seed God will bless all the nations (Gen 12:1–3).

God Visits the Earth

In verses 10–13 David paints a picture of God's blessings on the earth, which may echo the blessings that man enjoyed in the Garden of Eden. It is as though Yahweh, by the work of redemption—covering our transgressions—obliterates the curse on the

⁴⁵Exod 15:11; Deut 10:21; 2 Sam 7:23; Isa 64:3; Pss 106:22; 145:6. The only occurrence of this participle, without a clear reference to the exodus, is in Ps 45:5.

⁴⁶The Hebrew can also mean to cover, signifying that Yahweh's work of atonement for sin is a covering of the nakedness of man as a result of the fall (Gen 3:7, 10, 11).

ground so that now the land can enjoy edenic fruitfulness. God visits the earth and enriches it greatly although it once languished under the curse (Ps 65:11a; Gen 3:17; 5:29).

“The river of God” that is “full of water” will engender the fruitfulness of the earth. The description of the “stream of God” (פֶּלֶא אֶלֶּהִים) in a context that portrays God in Zion (Ps 65:3) with his chosen people dwelling “in [God’s] courts,” satisfied with his goodness in his “house,” “the holiness of [his] temple” (Ps 65:6) suggests that the stream issues from God’s presence in the temple precincts (cf. Pss 1:3; 46:4).⁴⁷ At creation, God prepared the land for man by watering it (Gen 2:6); the watering in Psalm 65 is also for man. In Genesis 2:10–14 a river flows from Eden to fertilize the earth.

Ezekiel 47, alluding to Genesis, shares similarities with Psalm 65:10–14, which further supports a probable reference to Eden in Psalm 65. In Ezekiel the water is issuing from the threshold of the temple (Ezek 47:1–6; cf. Ps 65:11), fertilizing the earth (Ezek 47:7; cf. Ps 65:11–12), bringing fruitfulness (Ezek 47:7, 10, 12; cf. Ps 65:11) and sustaining life (Ezek 47:9; Ps 65:11). As it was argued in Psalm 1, Ezekiel 47 alludes to Eden. Thus, the close thematic connections with Psalm 65 suggest the same link.

When God visits the earth by saturating it with his stream, there is abundant growth and rich produce (Ps 65:10–11). God promised Israel the blessing of rain and produce for obedience (Deut 28:12), but in the context of Psalm 65 God does not give rain based on the obedience of his people but his atonement (Ps 65:1–5).

God crowns the harvest season with his goodness—the rich produce of the land (Ps 65:13). The phrase “you crown the year with your goodness” obviously refers to the harvest season, but upon reading it Israel most likely anticipated the rich supply God

⁴⁷See discussion under Ps 1 in chapter 2. Delitzsch say “The fountain (אֵלֶּהִים) of God is the name given here to His inexhaustible stores of blessing, and more particularly the fullness of the waters of the heavens from which He showers down fertilizing rain” Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 229.

would bring in the new earth. Ross rightly notes, “Every provision of water for life reminded the people that in the new earth there would be an abundant provision of life from God.”⁴⁸ The singing and rejoicing of nature (Ps 65:12–13) is common in passages that envision the new earth. In the new age when Yahweh will reign and judge the people with equity (Ps 96:10, 13), the heavens shall be glad, the earth shall rejoice (Ps 96:11), the field shall exult, all the trees shall sing for joy (Ps 96:12; cf. Ps 98:8; Isa 55:12). Thus while the Psalm does not clearly display eschatological understanding of Yahweh’s blessings, such an understanding possibly undergirded the yearly celebration of harvest.⁴⁹

Conclusion

In Psalm 65 we observe that the psalmist uses the water motif to allude to both creation and redemption. God’s work in creation and redemption and his blessings on Israel insinuate his blessings that he will bring at the end of the age, which will result in all flesh coming to him in recognition of his sovereignty and rendering eternal praises to his name.

Watery Echoes of the Exodus (Ps 66)

In Psalm 66 the use of the water motif focuses primarily on the exodus, but it also has cosmic effects—the earth is called to praise God for his awesome deeds in Israel. The author invites the God-fearers of the earth to praise God (Ps 66:1, 2, 8, 16) because of God’s awe-inspiring deeds in delivering his covenant people (Ps 66:3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 17–20) and his sovereignty over Israel’s trials (Ps 66:7, 10–12). At the conclusion of the

⁴⁸Allen Ross, *Commentary on the Psalms: 42-89*. (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2013), 422.

⁴⁹Ross notes, “It is God who enables the ground to produce its growth, and so the harvest is God’s gift, his enrichment for life (s.v. Ps 5:12). This he did year after year, so that the Israelites could come to celebrate his provisions at the harvest festivals. But they also knew that there was coming a time when the earth would be free of all its adverse characteristics and would produce its growth in abundance” (ibid).

psalm, the author resolves to offer sacrifices to God because he rescued him (Ps 66:13–15).

Water Exodus Allusions

In the first half of Psalm 66, the ground for universal admiration is principally Yahweh's work at the exodus, with a particular focus on the crossing of the sea on dry ground. God's awesome deed (Ps 66:3, 5), the basis for worldwide praise (Ps 66:1–2), is that “he turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot” (Ps 66:6). Although God sovereignly ordained Israel's affliction (Ps 66:10–12), he delivered them and brought them through waters to a place of abundance (Ps 66:12).

The phrase “פָּאָנוּ-בְּאֵשׁ וּבַמַּיִם” (Ps 66:12) is a poetic description of Israel's trials; their trials had the purifying effect of water or fire. Isaiah uses similar language to describe trials that God's people will face in the new exodus (Isa 43:2). The major difference between the two passages is that, in Isaiah, Yahweh is promising that he will be with his covenant people when they go through fire and water—“when you pass through the waters, I will be with you . . . when you walk through fire you shall not be burned”(Isa 43:2)—whereas in Psalm 66 the psalmist recounts what God has already done for Israel. Thus, what God did in Israel past he will do again in the new exodus (cf. Isa 43:2, 4, 5).

Psalm 66:6 “הִפָּךְ יָם לַיַּבֵּשׁ בְּנֹהַר יַעֲבְרוּ בְּרִגְלָם” is a clear reference to the Red Sea crossing since there is no other incident in Israel's history of a people going through water on dry ground. The verb הִפָּךְ gives the sense of transformation. God thus transformed the sea into dry ground (יַבֵּשׁ). In the narrative of Israel's journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, יַבֵּשׁ is used for both the dry ground of the Red Sea and Jordan (cf. Ex 14:16, 22, 29; 15:19; Josh 4:22; Neh 9:11), but the psalmist is most likely referring to the crossing of the Red Sea because of the term “the river” (נָהָר), which is

never used of Jordan.⁵⁰ When God did this awesome deed (Ps 66:3, 5), transforming the sea into dry land for Israel’s redemption, “there we rejoiced in him” (שָׁם נִשְׂמְחָהּ בּוֹ). With the use of the adverb שָׁם and the switch to first person plural נִשְׂמְחָהּ (we rejoiced), the Psalmist identifies with the historic Israel who experienced the crossing of the Red Sea and shares in their deliverance and joy. He understands his own deliverance in verses 13–20 in light of the historic deliverance at the Red Sea.

Israel’s deliverance at the Red Sea and the psalmist’s own personal rescue have cosmic effects. Because of the exodus deliverance and the psalmist’s own similar rescue, he invites “all the earth” (Ps 66:1, 5, 8) and God-fearers (Ps 66:16) to come and see, sing, shout, and praise God, who has acted for Israel and now rules over the nations (Ps 66:7). God’s great words towards the “sons of Adam” (בְּנֵי אָדָם), Israel, are for the good of all the earth. Therefore, “Shout for joy to God, all the earth; sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise” (Ps 66:1–2). Although the psalmist is inviting all the earth to worship Israel’s God, he is so sure that it must happen that he speaks confidently to God, saying, “All the earth shall worship you and shall sing praises to you; they shall sing praises to your name” (Ps 66:4). At the end of the age, all the earth shall worship Israel’s God who rules by his might forever and who is sovereign over all the nations.

Echoes of the Exodus: A Restoration of Enemies from the Sea (Ps 68)

The verse of interest here is verse 23: “The Lord said ‘I will bring from Bashan, I will bring from the depths of the Sea.’” According to verse 22, those whom Yahweh will bring from the sea are his enemies, those who walk in guilty ways (Ps

⁵⁰Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 20:149. Davidson argues that there is probably a reference to both Jordan and the Red Sea. “In the second part of v. 6 ‘they passed through the river on foot,’ there is probably a reference to the crossing of the Jordan to enter the land of promise (cf. Josh 3), or the whole verse may be celebrating the events recorded in Exod 14–15, the crossing of the Reed Sea, the words ‘sea’ and ‘river’ sometimes being used interchangeably” (Robert Davidson, *The Vitality of Worship: A Commentary on the Book of Psalms* [Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1998], 207).

68:22). In the context of the psalm, these enemies most likely refer to those God swept away at the Red Sea. This is supported by the many close references to the exodus.

Exodus Allusions

Psalm 68 shares several verbal links with the exodus narrative, Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan. Numbers 10:35 shares close verbal connections with Psalm 68:2.⁵¹

Ps 68:2 יְקוֹם אֱלֹהִים יַפְּצוּ אוֹיְבָיו וַיָּנוּסוּ מִשְׁנֶאֱיֹר מִפָּנָיו

Num 10:35 קוֹמָה יְהוָה וַיַּפְּצוּ אוֹיְבָיו וַיָּנוּסוּ מִשְׁנֶאֱיֹר מִפָּנָיו

There are minor differences between Psalm 68:2 and Numbers 10:35. First, in Numbers 10 Moses addresses these words to God, but in Psalm 68:2 David writes in the third person, showing that he intended the quote to comfort and assure God's people that God will act towards them just like he did in the wilderness. John Calvin also observes the change in person and argues, "There can be little doubt that in dictating the form of prayer there referred to, he had an eye to the instruction and comfort of all succeeding ages, and would teach the Lord's people confidently to rely for safety upon the ark of the covenant, which was the visible symbol of the Divine presence."⁵²

Psalm 68:2 uses the imperfect, יְקוֹם and אֱלֹהִים in place of the perfect קוֹמָה and יְהוָה in Numbers 10. The tense change may suggest that the Psalmist, while alluding to the past, hopes that Yahweh will do a similar thing in the future—God shall arise again as at the journey to Canaan. In Psalm 66:6–7, the psalmist reflects on God's deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea, in Psalm 67:1, he prays that Yahweh will give them the same

⁵¹In Numbers Moses addresses God, asking him to arise and fight for his people in the exodus. But in Ps 68 David, looking into the future, envisions a time when Yahweh will rise and all his enemies shall flee before him. This picture is eschatological.

⁵²John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, Vol. 2, Trans. James Anderson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 7.

blessings that he one bestowed on Israel on their journey (Num 6:24–26), and in Psalm 68:2 he hopes that Yahweh will arise and fight for his people just like he did in the past.⁵³

When Yahweh brought Israel out of slavery in Egypt, he went before them (Ps 68:7; cf. Exod 13:21). He marched with them through the wilderness (Ps 68:4b; Exod 16:32; 17:1; Ps 78:41[40]), he brought them out from prison, under the burden of Egypt (Ps 68:7; Exod 6:7), and he led them to a sanctuary-like home (Ps 68:7; Exod 15:17). The earth quaked (Ps 68:9; Exod 19:18; Judg 5:4–5) before the One of Sinai, the God of Israel (Ps 68:9; Exod 19:11; Judg 5:5), and the women announced the good news of Yahweh’s salvation (Ps 68:12; Exod 15:20).

These echoes of Israel journey throughout the psalm, suggest that Psalm 68:23 should also be read in light of that event. The psalm’s opening of an almost word-for-word quotation from the wilderness narrative in Numbers 10:35, sets verse Psalm 68:23 in that context. David is clearly ruminating over Yahweh’s work for Israel on their journey to Canaan and envisioning that Yahweh will perform similar wonders in the future. However, in that future, instead of sweeping his foes away in the sea, Yahweh says, מִבְּשָׁן אָשִׁיב אֶשְׁיֵב מִמְצָלוֹת יָם (Ps 68:23). Yahweh will bring back his enemies from Bashan and from the sea for judgment. The construction שׁוֹב with the preposition מִן denotes the restoration of something or someone to a former state or location from which they were dislocated. The location or state from which they are returning is often not permanent, but temporal.⁵⁴ This means that “Bashan” and the “depth of the sea” are not the permanent locales of these enemies; they once were not there and were dislodged to “Bashan” and the “depth of the sea.” They will be brought back from there.

⁵³This is contra Dahood who argues that the theophany that David is praying for here is celestial (S. J. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II: 51-100*, vol. 2 [Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1968], 134).

⁵⁴Compare Deut 13:18; Josh 7:26; 1 Sam 18:6; 23:28; 24:2; 2 Sam 10:14; 1 Kgs 13:33; 2 Kgs 23:26; Jer 26:3; 36:3, 7; Jonah 3:8; Ps 68:23; Job 33:25; 2 Chr 10:2; 25:13

While there are diverse methods of interpreting Psalm 68:23,⁵⁵ it seems best to construe it in light of Israel's history, recognizing the verse's exodus overtones. First, Bashan and her king, Og, was the last enemy that Yahweh annihilated beyond the Jordan (cf. Num 21:33; 32:33; Deut 1:4; 3:1)⁵⁶ as a response to Moses' prayer, "Arise, Yahweh, and let your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate you flee before you" (Num 10:35). The fact that David also quotes Moses' prayer, which he prayed whenever the ark of the covenant set out, makes this connection more probable. David, looking back to Moses' prayer and at what God did in the wilderness, envisions a day when Yahweh will arise in victory for his people. There will be no hiding place for the enemies; Yahweh will restore them and destroy them.

Enemies of Yahweh

A key question here is the identity of the "enemies" of Yahweh. Who are they?

⁵⁵Some scholars argue that "Bashan" and "the depth of the sea" refer to the north and the west, the heights and the depths (see Ross, *Psalms 42–89*, 477; Keel, *Symbolism*, 23; Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 2:264; Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 42–89*, 2:327; James Luther Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation [Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994], 227). In a similar way, Davidson argues, "Bashan probably indicates the far mountain range on the eastern horizon. The 'depths of the sea' refers to the Mediterranean marking the western horizon" (Robert Davidson, *The Vitality of Worship: A Commentary on the Book of Psalms* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 215). VanGemeren leaves these locations undefined and observes, "Though the enemy might trouble Israel on land or at sea, though they might escape to the escarpments of the rocks or try to hide at sea, the Lord will bring them down" (Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, rev. ed., in vol. 5 of *EBC*, ed. Tremper Longman and David E. Garland [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008], 526). The Amplified Bible identifies the sea with the Red Sea (The Lord said, I will bring back your enemies from Bashan; I will bring them back from the depths of the Red Sea). Buttenwieser takes "Bashan" for a fiery furnace and argues, "by 'the depths of the sea' (and also by 'the fiery furnace') Babylonia or, more accurately, Chaldea is meant" (Moses Buttenwieser, *The Psalms: Chronologically Treated With a New Translation* [Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1938], 259). Dahood personifies "Bashan" and "the depth of the sea" and sets the passage in mythological context—"I stifled the Serpent, muzzled the Deep Sea" (Dahood, *Psalms II*, 2:131, 145). Based on cognate languages, Charlesworth also argues that the noun should be construed as "dragon-snake or serpent" (James H. Charlesworth, "Bashan, Symbolism, Haplography, and Theology in Psalm 68," in *David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J. J. M. Roberts*, ed. Bernard F. Batto and Kathryn L. Roberts [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004], 352–356). Fensham argues that "Bashan" and "Yam" should be taken as proper names—"From the hole of snake (*or* Bashan) I will bring back, I will bring back from the depths of the sea (*or* Yam)" (F. Charles Fensham, "Ps. 68:23 in the Light of the Recently Discovered Ugaritic Tablets," *JNES* 19, no. 4 [1960]: 293).

⁵⁶Deut 4:47; 29:7; Josh 9:10; 12:4, 5; 13:12; Pss 135:11; 136:20; Neh 9:22.

The foes could refer to the Israelites who are scattered in areas far from their home.⁵⁷ While this line of thought is possible, it seems best in context to consider the “enemies” the adversaries of Yahweh who cannot escape his judgment, no matter where they are located (cf. Amos 9:2–4).⁵⁸ The purpose in verse 24 (לְמַעַן תִּמְחֹץ רַגְלְךָ בְּדָם לְשׁוֹן כְּלָכִיד), which contains the same verb מָחַץ as verse 22, makes it clear that the enemies of God are the object in verse 23—God will bring the enemies back so that “you may strike your feet in their blood.” Delitzsch makes a similar argument, saying, “The clause expressing a purpose, v. 24, and the paraphrase in Amos 9:2f., show that the foes of Israel are conceived of as its object. Even if these have hidden themselves in the most out-of-the-way places, God will fetch them back and make His own people the executioners of His justice upon them.”⁵⁹

Moreover, the fact that Israel is rarely called enemies of Yahweh further support the idea that the reference here is to foreign enemies of Yahweh, who are also enemies of Israel. “The poetic language conveys a sense of the power of God to

⁵⁷Mowinckel takes the object of God’s action in this verse as Israelites who are scattered all over (Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, 1:174). Calvin argues, “That the Israelites might not be led to take an irreligious and self-glorious view of their victories; that they might look to God as the author of them; and rest assured of his protection in time to come, David sends them back to the first periods of their history, and reminds them how their fathers had been originally brought by the victorious hand of God out of the lowest depths of trouble. He would have them argue that if God rescued his people at first from giants, and from the depths of the Red Sea, it was not to be imagined that he would desert them in similar dangers, but certain that he would defend them upon every emergency which might occur. The prophets are in the constant habit, as is well known, of illustrating the mercy of God by reference to the history of Israel’s redemption, that the Lord’s people, by looking back to their great original deliverance, might find an argument for expecting interpositions of a future kind. To make the deeper impression, God is introduced speaking himself. In what he says he may be considered as asserting his Divine prerogative of raising the dead to life again, for his people’s passage through the Red Sea, and victory over warlike giants, was a species of resurrection” (John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 3, trans. James Anderson [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949], 30).

⁵⁸Similarly, Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, WBC, vol. 20 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990), 182.

⁵⁹Frank Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans, 1952), 263–64.

overcome any foe, cosmic or historical.”⁶⁰ In addition, the second person singular in verse 24 most likely refers to the people to whom David addressed the psalm. Yahweh will accomplish the shattering of the head of his enemies with Israel; Israel will exact vengeance on their foes. Lawson comes to a similar conclusion:

Surely God would crush the heads of his enemies, utterly defeating them, David declared, just as he had done in the past. The Lord said, “I will bring them from Bashan,” the place where they fled to hide at the victorious march of God into Jerusalem with the ark of the covenant. God would cause Israel to be victorious, and the nation would plunge its feet in the blood of its foes.⁶¹

The reference to Bashan in verse 16 also confirms that the enemies of the second verse are foreign enemies. The ruin of Bashan became a legendary event in Israel and was celebrated as an important work of Yahweh during the wilderness wandering. David seems to contemplate that Yahweh will triumph over Bashan again (cf. Ps 135:11; 136:20). In scripture, Bashan is used metaphorically for proud and sinful enemies of Yahweh, against whom he will arise (Isa 33:10) to judge at the end of the age (cf. Isa 2:13; 33:9; Amos 4:1; Nah 1:4; Zech 11:2).

Moses uses the noun מְצִוֶּלָה, the place from which Yahweh will bring back his enemies (Ps 68:24), to describe the location where Yahweh placed Israel’s enemies at the Red Sea.⁶² “The floods covered them; they went down into the *depths* like a stone” (Ex 15:5; cf. Neh 9:11; Jonah 2:9—alluding to the Exodus). Also, the term “ים” is often used of the Red Sea (Exod 14:21–23, 26–30; 15:1, 4, 8, 10, 19, 21,22). This intimates that “the depth of the sea” is a reference to the Red Sea.⁶³

⁶⁰Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 20:182.

⁶¹Steve J. Lawson, *Psalms 1–75*, HOTC, vol. 11 (Nashville, B & H, 3003), 340. For a similar argument, see John Phillips, *Exploring Psalms, Volume One: An Expository Commentary*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 549.

⁶²The noun occurs twelve times in the OT often in contexts with exodus overtones (cf. Jonah 2:4[3]; Zech 10:11; Ps 107:24; Neh 9:11).

⁶³Calvin rightly understood this verse as an allusion to the exodus and took it as also pointing to the eschatological resurrection of the wicked unto judgment (Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of*

If it is correct that David is alluding to the exodus, how then is he doing so? David places the spotlight on the first, most outstanding victory Yahweh worked for Israel at the Red Sea and the last battle and king he conquered for them before they entered the Promised Land—victories that all became legendary in Israel and were regularly celebrated. David foresees that God will raise his enemies from the depths of the sea that swallowed them and from the lands that drank their blood “so that you may strike your feet in their blood, that the tongues of your dogs may have their portion from the foe” (Ps 68:24).

According to Psalm 68:22, Yahweh is the one who will strike the head of his enemies (אַדְ-אֲלֹהִים יַמְחֶץ רֹאשׁ אֲיָבָיו), but verse 24 shows us that this triumph will be shared with God’s covenant people. God will bring the enemies back from the depths of the sea and from Bashan so that his people will strike their feet in the enemies’ blood (לְמַעַן תִּמְחֶץ (רַגְלְךָ בַּדָּם). David uses the same term (מַחֵץ) for God’s victory over the foes and that of his people to show that God’s covenant people will share in his eschatological victory.

The NT echoes this theme. According to Paul, Jesus is the one who accomplishes this victory and leads his people out of captivity, giving them gifts (Eph 4:8). Jesus has crushed the enemies of God, and God’s people will share eschatological victory over the enemies of the gospel. “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you” (Rom 16:20).⁶⁴

Conclusion

In Psalm 68 we have observed that David alludes to the exodus in a way that point to the future. What God did in answer to Moses’ prayer (Num 10:35), he will do

Psalms, 3:27).

⁶⁴Other hints of eschatology in this psalm include “Holy habitation” (Deut 26:15; Jer 25:30; Zech 2:17; 2 Chr 30:27), God dwelling in Zion forever (Pss 68:17; 123:13, 14; 78:54; 87:1, 2; Deut 12:2), and Sinai merged with the Sanctuary (Ps 68:18; Isa 2:3b).

again. God will again reenact the exodus and the journey to the Promised Land. In that day, God will reign in Zion forever with his people, after his enemies are utterly destroyed.

Watery Allusions to the Red Sea (Ps 69)

As we study Psalm 69, the limelight will be on verses 2–3 and 15–16. David employs water imagery in these verses to describe his distress. He parallels human foes with abysmal waters under which he is sinking. In verses 2–3 David describes his plight, and in verses 15–16, which contain the same imagery, he pleads to Yahweh for rescue from the quandary.⁶⁵

The Water Ordeal and Pleas for Rescue

David's predicament is not literal water, flood, or the pit; the visual symbolism describes human adversaries. David faces those who hate him without cause (v. 5), those who destroy him and attack him with lies, forcing him to retribute what he never stole (v. 5), and drunkards who make songs about him (v. 13). He is surrounded by those who seek his death with poisonous food (v. 21). He is persecuted (v. 27). David is despicable to all around him; even his family and close friends are unsympathetic to his plight.

⁶⁵In this psalm, even Dahood who, more than most commentators, frequently argues for the theme of water chaos in the Psalms as allusions to ANE myths does not come to that conclusion (Dahood, *Psalms II 51–100*, 2:156). Kraus conjectures that the language of “pit” and water to distress finds support in an Akkadian text. “There is support for the conjecture that a ‘prison’ could be referred to in an Akkadian text in which we read: ‘Take him by the hand, release his sin, let his sick headache sleeplessness leave him! Your servant has been cast into a catastrophe; take away his punishment, pull him out of the morass! (Break) his chain, loose his bonds; clear up (his hallucinations), deliver him to the God who created him! Grant life to your servant, that he may again and again praise your exploits in war, may glorify your great deeds to all abodes!’” (Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150: A Commentary* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2000], 61). Kraus does not explain how the psalm relates to the quote from the Akkadian text. Even if he did, it seems difficult to see in Ps 69 an actual pit in which David was. In actuality, only Joseph (Gen 37:20–29) and Jeremiah (Jer 38) are imprisoned in a pit in the OT (Jer 38:6). Instead of assuming that David was in an actual pit, it is best to read vv. 2–3 as illustrative of the foes that surrounded him. Keel rightly argues “Cisterns frequently served as prisons, and one need not think of actual cistern in every case where there is mention of miry darkness The cistern as symbol merges with symbol of Chaos dragon, which seeks to drown the suppliant in its masses of water and mire and to enclose him in its monstrous maw (Pss 69:14–15; 81; cf. 43–45)” (Keel, *Symbolism*, 70–71).

While his rivals are human beings, ultimately he attributes his trouble to his God (v. 27), but he also acknowledges that he suffers for God’s sake (v. 8). His only recourse is to turn to God for rescue, redemption, and ransom on account of God’s steadfast love (v. 16).⁶⁶

If David’s trouble is not literal water, flood, or deep waters, then why does he epitomize it with water imagery? In verses 2–3 he describes his ordeal with figurative language that may point to Noah’s flood and the Red Sea, through which God saved Noah and Israel respectively. David, conversant with God’s rescue of Noah and Moses (with Israel) from water,⁶⁷ uses water imagery to communicate momentous danger. Albeit without a direct allusion, David hopes that God will deliver him, from the waters of judgment, in a deliverance similar to that of Noah and Moses and Israel.

In verse 2 David conveys the gravity of his ordeal, saying that the waters have reached his soul (הַיָּסֵדִי אֶל־הַמָּיִם עַד־נַפְשִׁי). The noun נֶפֶשׁ signifies that the author’s life is near death—the waters are about to sweep his soul away.⁶⁸ Because the waters surge against his soul, he cries out to God to draw near to his soul and rescue it (קְרֹבָה אֵלַי) (Ps 69:19). David captures the enormity of the peril in his heartfelt pleas: save me (v. 2), answer me (v. 13), deliver me (v. 15), answer me (v. 17), make haste to answer me (v. 18), draw near to my soul, redeem me, and ransom me (v. 19). David, the

⁶⁶David pictures himself as suffering unjustly as a righteous man. He has not committed any sins; he suffers because zeal for God’s house has consumed him (v.10). This does not mean that David was sinless because he acknowledges he knows his folly and wrongs (v. 6). “The psalmist was indeed suffering without a cause in this case, but he acknowledges his folly and sin” (Ross, *Psalms 42–89*, 488).

⁶⁷Compare our studies of Pss 18 and 29. In these psalms David clearly allude to the flood of Noah and the Red Sea, interpreting his life’s events in light of the past.

⁶⁸Conversely, some argue that the term should be translated as “neck” (cf. ESV, NEB, NIV11, NKJV, NRSV, Dahood, *Psalms II*, 2:136; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 478; VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 5:528). For the fact that this noun is not commonly translated this way, it seems best to render it as “life” or “soul” (cf. KJV, NASB, Goldingay, *Psalms*, *Psalms 42-89*, 2:339; Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 2:272). Moreover, the translation “life” or “soul” captures the psalmist’s distress better; he is faced with a life-threatening situation.

righteous sufferer, prays that Yahweh would deliver him for the sake of those who hope in Yahweh (Ps 69:7) and hopes that at the time of favor (עֵת רִצּוֹן) he will answer (Ps 69:14).

The phrase עֵת רִצּוֹן and the verb עָנָה occur together once in Isaiah 49:8.

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה בְּעֵת רִצּוֹן עֲנִיתִיךָ וּבְיוֹם יִשׁוּעָה עֲזָרְתִּיךָ (Is. 49:8)

יְהוָה עֵת רִצּוֹן אֱלֹהִים בְּרַב־חַסְדֶּךָ עֲנֵנִי בְּאַמֶּת יִשְׁעֶךָ (Ps 69:14)

In Psalm 69:14 David is hoping that God will answer him at a time of favor, but in Isaiah Yahweh promises his Servant that he will answer him in a time of favor. In Isaiah עֵת רִצּוֹן is defined as the יוֹם יִשׁוּעָה, which Paul interprets eschatologically (1 Cor 6:2). For Paul the Servant of Isaiah 49 is Christ and the church period, the time of Yahweh's favor.⁶⁹ The righteous sufferer calls himself God's servant in verse Psalm 69:18. Not only does David identify himself with Noah and Moses who passed through the waters before God rescued them from judgment, but he also identifies himself with the servant of Isaiah 49, Christ, whose "baptism" (submergence in water) symbolized the suffering that he would endure on the cross (Mark 10:38–39; Luke 12:50).⁷⁰

⁶⁹Balla notes that "for Paul it may be a pointer to how he saw his ministry: he probably regarded Jesus as the "Servant" and saw himself called into the ministry of this Servant. His message of reconciliation was a fulfillment of the OT promises" (Peter Balla, "2 Corinthians," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 768).

⁷⁰For a support of this understanding of "baptism" in these verses as symbolic of suffering, see Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, WBC, vol. 34B (Dallas: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 117. For a contrary position, see France who argues that the baptism in Mark 10 and Luke 12 does not in itself suggest suffering. He argues, "Secular Greek offers examples of βαπτίζομαι as a metaphor for being 'overwhelmed, or 'swamped' by misfortune, sorrow, etc. (see BAGD, 132, 3.c), and LXX Is. 21:4 has ἡ ἀνομία με βαπτίζει. This is not, however, like the cup, a use which would be likely to be immediately familiar in a Jewish context, and in Mark there is a much more obvious antecedent in the baptism of John. That did not in itself suggest suffering, though Christian theology soon developed baptism into Christ as a symbol of death leading to new life, as the baptized believer shares in Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3–4). It is unlikely that Jesus used the term in that Pauline sense" (R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 416–17).

Echoes of the Past

Psalm 69:3, 15, 16 share similar terms with Exodus 15: 4–5. Exodus 15:4–5 reads, “Pharaoh’s . . . chosen officers were sunk (טבע) in the Red Sea . . . they went down into the depths (מְצוֹלָה) like a stone.” In Exodus 15 the phrase “officers were sunk in the Red Sea” parallels “they went down into the depths,” the depths referring to that of the Red Sea. Like the Egyptians the psalmist also sinks into deep waters, which he describes as מְצוֹלָה. The terms טבע and מְצוֹלָה in Psalm 69:3, 16 convey a figurative counterpart to the literal submersion in water at the Red Sea.⁷¹

The phrase מִצְמַקְי־מַיִם in verses 3, 15, is also used in Ezekiel 27:34 where it describes the location of the merchants of Tyre had sunk. Isaiah uses a similar description for the crossing of the Red Sea. Isaiah envisions a day when Yahweh will comfort Zion; he will make her wilderness like Eden (Isa 51:3), the law will go out from Zion (Isa 51:4; cf. 2:1–4), and it will be in the heart of God’s people (Isa 51:7). Isaiah pleads that Yahweh would stretch out his arm as in the days of old, when he dried up the Red Sea and made a way in הַמְתַּרְבֶּת יָם (the depth of the sea) for the redeemed (Isa 51:10; cf. Exod 14:21) so that the ransomed of Yahweh would experience the new exodus (Isa 51:11). Isaiah is speaking figuratively; he does not mean that Yahweh will lead people again through an actual sea. The symbolism builds on actual history. Thus we may say that the use of the figurative use of “deep-water” for distress is informed by the language from the Red Sea, given the verbal similarities noted above. If this is right, then David is echoing the Red Sea.

Psalm 69 in the New Testament

The NT writers clearly draw the conclusion that David typifies Christ, with the

⁷¹Similarly, Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 42-89*, 2:340; Andrew E. Hill, “טָבַע,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997).

many quotations from this psalm.⁷² John and the rest of Jesus' disciples typologically read Psalm 69, linking Jesus to David who is suffering because he is consumed by a zeal for God's house (Ps 69:10; John 2:19).⁷³ Jesus like David is hated without cause so that what is written in the Law might be fulfilled (John 15:25).⁷⁴ In Matthew 27:34, Luke 23:36, and John 19:28–30, Jesus is given gall and sour wine—bitter and poisonous substances—like David in Psalm 69:22. As a righteous sufferer, Jesus, like his father David (cf. Rom 1:3), looks for sympathy but only finds unreserved rejection.⁷⁵

The pain of the righteous servant in Psalm 69, who symbolizes his distress with water, establishes a pattern that, for Paul, finds installments in Jesus' suffering and the suffering of believers in Christ (Rom 15:3).⁷⁶

The Outcome of God's Rescue

David, in the midst of his trials symbolized with water, hopes that God will bring judgment on his foes (Ps 69:23–28) and rescue him. This deliverance will result in David praising the name of God and giving him thanks (Ps 69:31–32). The humble will also see his salvation and rejoice (Ps 69:33–34). David hopes that God will restore Zion, which the offspring of his servants who love Yahweh's name will inherit. Ross observes, “Because of his zeal for the house of the LORD, the psalmist laments the reproach and

⁷²Matt 27:34 (Ps 69:22); Luke 23:36 (Ps 69:22); John 2:17 (Ps 69:10); John 15:25 (Ps 69:5); John 19:28–30 (Ps 69:22); Rom 15:3 (Ps 69:10b).

⁷³Jesus shows his zeal for the Temple as he cleanses it (John 2:13–17). Carson observes that “for John, the manner by which Jesus will be ‘consumed’ is doubtless his death” (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990], 180).

⁷⁴The Law in this usage stands for the OT. See Beasley-Murray's explanation of John's allusion to Ps 69:5: George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, WBC, vol. 36 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 276.

⁷⁵Similarly, D. A. Carson, *Matthew, Vol. 2 (Ch. 13–28)*, EBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 575; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, vol. 2, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 1853.

⁷⁶Compare, Mark A. Seifrid, “Romans,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 686; Leon Morris, *Epistle to the Romans*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 498–99.

antagonism of his enemies, as well as the indifference of his family and friends, and prays for the utter devastation of his enemies, confident that the LORD will answer his prayer and restore the fortunes of the nation.”⁷⁷ Based on this restoration, David calls on all creation, the “heaven and earth . . . the sea and everything that move in them,” to praise Yahweh (Ps 69:35). This cosmic praise because of Yahweh’s deliverance is a pattern that we have seen in other Davidic psalms (cf. Ps 18, 29).

Conclusion

The metaphorical use of water in Psalm 69, which shares similarities with the literal events at the flood and Red Sea deliverance, suggests that David consciously uses a concept (salvation through water) and language from Israel’s history to describe his ordeal. His suffering is like the suffering of Moses (with Israel) at the Red Sea, but more clearly his suffering is like that of Christ. The pattern of the righteous suffering in judgment waters finds its final installment in Christ’s death, symbolized as baptism (immersion into water). Jesus’ death on the cross is a form of baptism or immersion into waters of judgment from which God also rescues him. David’s suffering for the sake of righteousness, foreshadows the suffering of Christ, who would be hated and rejected by his own people.⁷⁸

From Sea to Sea (Ps 72:7–8)

Book 2 of the Psalms closes with Psalm 72, which is generally considered a messianic psalm.⁷⁹ It contains David’s prayer for his son. There are a wealth of allusions

⁷⁷ Ross, *Psalms 42–89*, 489.

⁷⁸ Similarly, Lawson, *Psalms 1–75*, 11:343.

⁷⁹ See Murphy who argues for a messianic understanding of Ps 72 (Roland Edmund Murphy, *A Study of Psalm 72* [71] [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1948]). Similarly, Walter C. Kaiser, “Psalm 72: An Historical and Messianic Current Example of Antiochene Hermeneutical Theoria,” *JETS* 52, no. 2 (2009): 257–70; Gerald H. Wilson, “The Use of Royal Psalms at the ‘Seams’ of

in this psalm to earlier Scriptures, but primarily the psalm focuses on the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7), which finds its ultimate fulfillment in the Messiah Jesus, the Son of David par-excellence (cf. Ps 2).⁸⁰

David prays that God would endow his son with justice and righteousness (Ps 72:2), while expressing hope that his son will reign in righteousness and justice (Ps 72:2–4; 13–15) and that his reign shall be eternal in length and cosmic in scope (Ps 72:6–12, 16–18). David’s son, in his reign, will fulfill the promise to Abraham that all the nations will be blessed in his seed (Ps 72:18; cf. Gen 22:18). “In his days the righteous will flourish, and peace abound until the moon is no more. His reign shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth” (Ps 72:7–8).

The Scope of the Reign of David’s Son

Our focus is on verse 8, which depicts the scope of the reign of the Davidic King as *וְיָרֵךְ מִיָּם עַד-יָם וּמִנְהָר עַד-אַפְסֵי-אֶרֶץ*. This symbol refers to all of creation; it is not an allusion to a particular Scripture. Although it does not allude to any specific Scripture, the theme of God’s sovereignty over creation is obvious in verse 8.

The phrase “מִיָּם עַד-יָם” occurs two other times in the OT. In Amos it is used in an eschatological milieu (note the phrase “in that day” in Amos 8:3, 13, and “the end has

the Hebrew Psalter,” *JSOT*, no. 35 (1986): 85–94; H. B. Swete, “St. Jerome on the Psalms,” *Exp* (1895): 425–26; George Dahl, “The Messianic Expectation in the Psalter,” *JBL* 57, no. 1 (1938): 1–12; John I. Durham, “The King as ‘Messiah’ in the Psalms,” *RevExp* 81, no. 3 (1984): 425–35. Conversely, Seiple argues for a late date of our psalm and erroneously attributes the kingship in the psalm to a foreign king. “The late date of our psalm, the fact that the king mentioned therein is [not] king but a foreigner, who is favorable to them, and the extent of his kingdom—all unite in confirming our conviction that the psalm must refer to Ptolemy Philadelphus” (William George Seiple, “The Seventy-Second Psalm,” *JBL* 33, no. 3 [1914]: 179). Because Seiple wrongly dates the psalm to a post-exilic period, he has to force the psalm to refer to someone other than Solomon. The psalm, however, does not support such a reading; it is a prayer “for Solomon” (Ps 72:1) by David his father (Ps 72:20) and should be dated at the time of David and Solomon, who prefigures the Messianic King, taken as the king in our psalm.

⁸⁰VanGemen observes, “While the community of God’s people prospered under the descendants of David, God’s theocratically appointed leaders (Ps 2), the benefits of the rule of Christ, the son of David, are so much greater” (VanGemen, *Psalms*, 5:548).

come” in Amos 8:2) to depict the areas where the people will wander in search for Yahweh’s Law (Amos 8:12). In Amos the phrase מִיָּם עַד-יָם means the “south to west,” as it is complemented by “from north to east” (מִצָּפוֹן וְעַד-מִזְרָח).⁸¹ In Zechariah 9:10 it is used in an eschatological setting, quoting Psalm 72:8.⁸² In these two passages מִיָּם עַד-יָם is supplemented by מִן-הַיָּם עַד-אַפְסֵי-אָרֶץ. “From sea to sea, from river to the ends of the earth” shows that the reign of David’s son will be over both sea and land. In scope he will reign over all the ends of the earth—north, south, east, and west.⁸³

John Calvin arrives at a similar conclusion, but he restricts the territory “from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth” to the region extending from the Red Sea to the sea of Syria, from the river Euphrates to the great wilderness. He only sees cosmic dominion in verse 10ff. He argues:

As the Lord, when he promised his people the land of Canaan for an inheritance, assigned to it these four boundaries, (Genesis 15:18,) David intimates, that so long as the kingdom shall continue to exist, the possession of the promised land will be entire, to teach the faithful that the blessing of God cannot be fully realised, except whilst this kingdom shall flourish. He therefore declares that he will exercise dominion from the Red Sea, or from that arm of the Egyptian sea to the sea of Syria, which is called the Sea of the Philistines, and also from the river Euphrates to the great wilderness. If it is objected that such narrow bounds do not correspond with the kingdom of Christ, which was to be extended from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, we reply, that David obviously accommodates his language to his own time, the amplitude of the kingdom of Christ not having been, as yet, fully unfolded. He has therefore begun his description in phraseology well known, and in familiar use under the law and the prophets; and even Christ himself commenced his reign within the limits here marked out before he penetrated to the uttermost boundaries of the earth; as it is said in Psalm 110:2, “The Lord shall send the rod of

⁸¹Similarly, Jeffrey Niehaus, “Amos,” in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, vol. 1, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 475.

⁸²Wenham observes, “The date of the last few chapters of Zechariah is uncertain; they could come from the early fifth century BC and be roughly contemporary with the period in which the psalms were being gathered into a book. But whatever the exact date of Zechariah and the editing of the psalms, this quotation clearly shows that messianic interpretation of some psalms occurred long before the Christian era, because Zechariah is clearly prophesying a future ruler, not commenting on a past one” (Gordon Wenham, *The Psalter Reclaimed: Praying and Praising with the Psalms* [Chicago: Crossway, 2013], 83).

⁸³Likewise, Charles Augustus Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 2, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1907), 131.

thy strength out of Zion.” But, soon after, the Psalmist proceeds to speak of the enlarged extent of the empire of this king, declaring that the kings beyond the sea shall also be tributaries to him; and also that the inhabitants of the desert shall receive his yoke.⁸⁴

Calvin is probably correct in seeing limits to the region in Psalm 72:8 based on Genesis 15:18. Briggs and Briggs make a similar argument, but conclude that the region extends “from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean . . . from the Euphrates unto the extreme west coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Cf. Ps 2:8, where the extremities of the earth are the inheritance of the Messiah. There can be no doubt that this verse sets forth a universal reign of the Messianic king.”⁸⁵

Calvin’s argument that David “accommodates his language according to his own time” and limits the description in Psalm 72:8 to Canaan is not fully convincing for at least two reasons. First, David proves in verses 10–20 that he conceives of a cosmic reign of the Davidic king. Second, the phrase “אַפְסֵי־אֲרֶזֶץ” consistently refer to the four corners of the entire created world (cf. Deut 33:17; 1 Sam 2:10; Isa 45:22; 52:10; Jer 16:19; Mic 5:3; Zech 9:10; Pss 2:8; 22:28; 67:8; 72:8; 98:3; Prov 30:4). The plural construct אַפְסֵי shows that David has more than one “end” in mind; like in Psalm 2:8, David speaks of all “the ends of the earth.” Yahweh says to the Davidic king, “Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth [אַפְסֵי־אֲרֶזֶץ] your possession” (Ps 2:8).

The water imagery in Psalm 72:8 does not specifically refer to a verse from earlier Scripture. Rather, the imagery poetically depicts the extent of the reign of the Son of David (the entire world). The description is similar to that of Genesis 1:28, “God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens

⁸⁴Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:109–10.

⁸⁵Briggs and Briggs, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:134.

and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” “Because man is created in God’s image, he is king over nature. He rules the world on God’s behalf.”⁸⁶ Genesis 1:28 and Psalm 72:8 share the concept of cosmic dominion and a rare verb, רדה. God created Adam for cosmic dominion (רדה) (Gen 1:26), commanded him to have it (Gen 1:28), but he failed when sin, through the serpent, reigned over him (Gen 3).

Balaam prophesizes that in the latter days “a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth. Edom shall be dispossessed; Seir also, his enemies, shall be dispossessed . . . And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion (רדה) and destroy the survivors of cities” (Num 24:17–19). Allen correctly makes the following observation that David partially fulfilled this prophecy but that its ultimate fulfillment awaits the end times:

David became a victor over Edom (2 Sam 8:14). But after the division of the kingdom, Edom became independent (2 Kings 8:20-22) and remained an implacable foe of Israel, awaiting the final wrath of God (Isa 63:1-6). In the eschaton, words such as Edom and Seir stand for any enemies of the people of God and of their Messiah. The contrasting words to the ultimate downfall of Edom at the end of v.18 are to be stressed: Israel will grow strong while her enemies languish. This is also the point of v.19: Jacob will provide the ruler who will destroy all survivors of the enemies of the people of God.⁸⁷

David, who fulfills, albeit partially, Balaam’s prophesy, hopes that his son will completely realize it. David prays for his son that Yahweh will “let him have dominion [רדה] from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth” (Ps 72:8).⁸⁸ Yahweh, in answer to David’s prayer, raises Solomon, who rules and exercises dominion (רדה) over Israel, Gentile kingdoms and enemies of Israel. “He [Solomon] had dominion over

⁸⁶Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, WBC, vol. 1 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 33.

⁸⁷Ronald B. Allen, “Numbers,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary with New International Version: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*, EBC, vol. 2, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein and J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 910.

⁸⁸Johnson says that “the reference, far from being an allusion to the Euphrates, is really an allusion to the current of the great cosmic sea which nourishes the holy city” (Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006], 9). This may be possible but it is hard to see it in either Zechariah or Ps 72.

all the region west of the Euphrates from Tiphseh to Gaza, over all the kings west of the Euphrates. And he had peace on all sides around him” (1 Kgs 4:24).

One thing that is common with all of these passages is that the dominion extends beyond the borders of Israel. The cosmic dominion that was once lost at the fall will be regained when David’s son reigns. David’s son will fulfill God’s demand to Adam, the prophecy of Balaam, and the prayers of David. At that time, David hopes, “the whole earth [will] be filled with his [Yahweh] glory” (Ps 72:19), suggesting that the cosmic reign of David’s son ushers in the spread of God’s glory throughout the earth. Under his cosmic reign, the king’s enemies “lick the dust” (v. 9) like the serpent in Genesis 3:14, and “all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him” (v. 11).

Conclusion

The evidence above inclines one to read Psalm 72:8 as a reference to the entire cosmos. Certainly, David had the Promised Land in mind, but he conceived of something universal in scope. David’s son will have dominion over the whole world (Ps 72:8), and the glory of God shall fill the earth as the waters cover the seas (Ps 72:19). Kirkpatrick correctly says, “Extension, not limit, is the idea conveyed. The world belongs to God: may He confer upon His representative a world-wide dominion! a hope to be realised only in the universal kingdom of Christ.”⁸⁹ Yahweh will extend the reign of Christ, David’s Son, to all the ends of the earth. Even though we may not see it now, we must, with David in Psalm 72, pray and hope for it. We must labor to see that the nations be blessed in David’s Son for the glory of God (Ps 72:17; cf. Gen 22:18) so that the whole earth may be filled with his glory and his name may be praised forever (Ps 72:18–19).

⁸⁹Alexander Francis Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms: With Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891), 420.

Conclusion

Our investigation in this chapter has yielded slightly different results than the previous chapter. In chapter 2, every occurrence of the water figuratively alluded to some event in Israel's history, as presented in the Pentateuch. However, in this chapter, the following psalms contain water imagery that does not clearly echo any of those events.

Psalm 69 makes no well-defined allusion to earlier Scriptures. David describes his distress using water imagery. The water imagery makes his deliverance similar to rescues from water in the Pentateuch (flood and the Red Sea). David, we suggested, was likely influenced by this background knowledge, although he does not directly refer to them.

In Psalm 72:8 we saw that the water imagery is not an echo of a specific event in the Pentateuch, although the language still seems clearly informed by earlier Scriptures. Rather, the description of the reign of the Davidic king resonates with God's command to man to have dominion over the earth (Gen 1:28) and Balaam's oracle that a star will rise out of Jacob and exercise dominion (Num 24:19). Psalm 72, I recommended, fulfills Genesis 1:28 and Numbers 24:14; the Davidic Son fulfills the mandate to Adam and the prophecy of Balaam—he is the star and the scepter who has risen out of Jacob.

Psalm 63 does not make any allusion to the past; the use of the water imagery, which pictures God as a life-giving Spring, likely originates with the psalmist's own reflection on nature.

We saw that Psalm 42 also employs language that could lead one to conclude that there are echoes of the Red Sea crossing, but the links are too faint to draw this connection.

Apart from Psalms 42, 63, 69, and 72, however, the rest contain water imagery that is reminiscent of creation, the flood, and/or the Red Sea crossing. Thus we can conclude that the metaphorical use of water in Book 2 of the Psalms is fundamentally

informed by earlier Scripture, except for the few instances mentioned above. We have also observed that, unlike Book 1 where all the instances of the figurative use of water connect to earlier Scripture predominantly through verbal associations, psalms in Book 2 only thematically allude to earlier events, without any philological links. This reveals that the authors of Scriptures were not limited to only one way of echoing earlier Scriptures; thematic and verbal connections as all valid for inner-biblical exegesis.

CHAPTER 4

THE WATER MOTIF IN BOOK 3

The water motif in Book 3, with the exception of two instances, all build upon the exodus tradition. In contrast to Book 2, all the occurrences of water imagery in Book 3 are metaphorical depictions of historical realities, mainly the exodus and creation. The psalmists depict history poetically to establish hope for the future; the authors believe that God will do in the future what he did in history. Historical actualities, for them, are reasons for praying and singing in the present and grounds for future hope.

Watery Allusions to Creation and Exodus (Ps 74:13–15)

Psalm 74:13–15 will receive the spotlight here. This section of the Psalm uses water to point to God's historical work of redemption at the Red Sea. In examining these verses, we will pay close attention to “תַּנִּין,” “רֶהֱב” and “לִוְיָתָן” and argue that these serpentine creatures may be reminiscent of the seed of the serpent in Genesis 3:15. Since the serpentine creatures are offspring of the seed of the serpent, Pharaoh and his army, which God crushed at the Red Sea, are a corporate offspring of the serpent.

The Exodus, and Creation: Grounds for Future Hope

In verses 12–17 Asaph alludes to Yahweh's salvation of Israel at the Red Sea and his work of creation as the basis for his plea to Yahweh and trust in him. He calls on Yahweh to remember the redemption of his people from Egypt and remember Zion where Yahweh had dwelled (Ps 74:2). He asks Yahweh to observe the destruction of Zion by the enemy (Ps 74:3, 18, 22), have regard for the covenant (Ps 74:20), and stretch out his hand to deliver (Ps 74:11). The salvation of Yahweh in the past is a reference to

the exodus. Asaph prays, “Remember your congregation, which you have purchased of old, which you redeemed to be the tribe of your heritage, Mount Zion, where you have dwelt” (Ps 74:2). The first instance of עֵדָה occurs in the exodus context (Exod 12:3), and the term is a technical term for Israel at the exodus.¹ The two verbs “קנה” and “גאל” in Psalm 74:2 with Yahweh as the subject are charged with exodus overtones. The verb קנה is used of God four times in the Pentateuch; the participial form describes God as the “acquirer” of heaven and earth (Gen 14:19, 22), and the perfect talks of his purchase of Israel (Exod 15:16; Deut 32:6). Moses’ use of the same term for God’s work of creation and redemption insinuates a link between these two acts. Deuteronomy 32:6 (cf. Ps 74:15) supports this when, in conjunction with קנה, Moses uses two terms (עשה and כון), which he commonly employs to describe God’s work in creating the world² and redeeming Israel. In Psalm 74:2 גאל, with God as subject, also points to God’s work at the exodus from Egypt (cf. Ps 77:16; 78:35; 106:10). God promised that he would *redeem* (גאל) Israel with an outstretched arm (Exod 6:6), the promise that he accomplished at the

¹Of the approximately 140 instance of עֵדָה in the OT, 102 of them occur in the Pentateuch for Israel on the exodus. In the exodus and conquest narratives it is often used in construct with “Israel” and “sons of Israel” and “Yahweh” to identify Israel as a people. When it is not in construct with “Israel,” “sons of Israel,” or “Yahweh” it occurs with an anaphoric or well-known article (cf. Exod 16:22; 34:31; 38:25; Lev 4:15; 8:3–5; 9:5; 10:6, 17; 24:14, 16; Num 1:16, 18; 3:7; 4:34; 10:2, 3; 13:26; 14:1, 2; 10, 27, 35–36; 15:24, 33, 35–36; 16:2–3, 5–6, 9, 19, 21–22, 24, 26; 17:7, 10–11; 20:1–2, 8, 11, 22, 27, 29; 25:7; 26:9, 10; 27:2, 3, 14, 16, 19, 21–22; 31:13, 26–27, 43; 32:2; 35:12, 24–25; Josh 9:15, 18–19, 21, 27; 18:1; 20:6, 9; 22:12, 30). Without the definite article it can also refer to a group from within the congregation of Israel (cf. Num 16:11, 16; 17:5; 26:9; 27:3). Outside the exodus and conquest narratives, it is also used in construct with “Israel” (1 Kgs 8:5; 2 Chr 5:5). When it is not in construct, it also occurs with “well-known article” a pronoun (Judg 20:1; 21:10, 13, 16; 1 Kgs 12:20; Hos 7:12), or anarthrous (Prov 5:15), referring to Israel. It is used in construct with other terms as well “congregation of bees” (Judg 14:8), restored people (Jer 30:20). Its occurrence in Jer 6:18 is dubious. In Job it refers to “congregation of godless” (Job 15:34) and a generic assembly (Job 16:7). In the Psalms it is used variedly: “congregation of the righteous” (Ps 1:5), “congregation of peoples” (Ps 7:8), “congregation of evildoers” (Ps 22:17; cf. 84:14), “congregation of bulls” figuratively referring to Israel’s enemies (Ps 68:31), “congregation of God” (Ps 82:1), “company of Abiram” (Ps 106:17, 18). Despite its varied connotations in the Psalms, in Ps 74 it clearly refers to Israel because the only “congregation” that God ever saved is Israel, as the above analysis of עֵדָה demonstrates.

²עשה is used for creating work (cf. Gen 1:7, 16, 25, 26, 31; 2:2, 3, 4, 18; 3:1; 5:1; 6:6, 7; 7:4; 9:6; Exod 20:11; 31:17; Deut 26:19[God creating the nations]). The verb כון with God as subject concerning the hunger he brought on the land (Gen 41:32), and of God’s establishment of Zion for Israel at the end of the exodus (Exod 15:17; 23:20). The use of these two terms link creation and the exodus.

Red Sea (Exod 15:13).³ Isaiah uses this term in the context of the new exodus, a second and better installment of God's work of redemption.⁴ The many occurrences of גאל that have Yahweh as the subject in exodus contexts fortify the argument that Psalm 74:2 is a reference to the exodus.

In Psalm 74:12–17 Asaph refers to God's work in the past as motivation for pleading for Yahweh to act. Despite the adverse circumstances, God is still king, working salvation in the midst of the earth (Ps 74:12). The salvation that God works in the midst of the earth is precisely the division of the Red Sea in two. Moreover, the phrase “of old” sets the context for interpreting these verses in Israel's history.

The clause אַתָּה פִּירְרַת בְּעֶזְדֶּךָ יָם is a reference to the Red Sea (cf. Exod 14:21). It was by the יָם of Yahweh that he guided Israel (Exod 15:13; cf. Isa 51:9). At the Red Sea God destroyed the enemy, which Asaph describes in terms that connote the crushing of the head of the serpent in Genesis 3:15 (Ps 74:13b–15).

Ps 74:13 אַתָּה פִּירְרַת בְּעֶזְדֶּךָ יָם שִׁבְרַת רָאשֵׁי תַנִּינִים עַל־הַמָּיִם

Ps 74:14 אַתָּה רָצַצְתָּ רָאשֵׁי לִוְיָתָן תִּתְּנֶנּוּ מֵאֵכֶל לָעַם לְצִיִּים

Ps 74:15 אַתָּה בָּקַעְתָּ מַעֲיָן וְנָחַל אַתָּה הוֹבִשְׁתָּ נְהָרוֹת אֵיתָן

The clauses “אַתָּה פִּירְרַת בְּעֶזְדֶּךָ יָם,” “אַתָּה בָּקַעְתָּ מַעֲיָן וְנָחַל,” and “אַתָּה הוֹבִשְׁתָּ נְהָרוֹת אֵיתָן” allude to

³These are the only two instances in the Pentateuch where Yahweh is the subject of the verb גאל (Ex 6:6; 15:13).

⁴Isaiah uses גאל to refer to the exodus of old (Isa 51:10; 63:9). Often in contexts where the new exodus is in view, Isaiah addresses Yahweh as Redeemer, using the participial form (Isa 41:14; 43:14; 44:6, 24; 47:4; 49:7, 26; 54:5, 8; 60:16; 63:16; cf. Jer 50:34), which intimates that it is Yahweh's nature and character to redeem; he redeemed in the past and will do it again. Yahweh will redeem Israel (Isa 52:3; Mic 4:10); Israel is not to live in fear because Yahweh has blotted out her sins and redeemed her (Isa 43:1; 44:22). This redemption should be joyfully proclaimed in all the earth saying, “Yahweh has redeemed his servant Jacob” (Isa 48:20). All creation is called to sing to Yahweh because he has redeemed Jacob and will be glorified in Israel (Isa 44:23; 52:9). The redeemed of Yahweh shall dwell in the new Eden (Isa 35:9) and shall be called the redeemed of Yahweh (Isa 62:12). While Yahweh is the Redeemer par excellence, Isaiah prophesied that at the *eschaton* a Redeemer would come from Zion (Isa 59:20; cf. Jer 31:11; Job 19:25). In the Wisdom books Yahweh is the Redeemer (Pss 19:15; 119:154; Prov 23:11; Lam 3:58), who redeems from enemies (Ps 69:19), from oppression (Ps 72:14), from the pit (Ps 103:4), from the lands in the return from exile, the new exodus (Ps 107:2). The meaning of גאל in Hos 13:14 is dubious.

the exodus journey. Although פָּרַר is never used to describe God's breaking of the Red Sea in two, עָז is used together with זְרוּעַ for God's power revealed at the Red Sea (Isa 51:9–10). It was by the עָז of Yahweh that he led Israel at the exodus (Exod 15:13). Moreover, when Israel experienced Yahweh's "salvation in the midst of the earth" (Ps 74:12; cf. Exod 14:13), they asserted "Yahweh reigns" (Exod 15:18). For Israel, Yahweh's reign was evident in their deliverance. Thus, when the psalmist talks of Yahweh's kingship exhibited in a salvation he worked of old, he has the Red Sea in mind.

In addition, the verb בָּקַע is often used to refer to the separation of the Red Sea (Exod 14:16, 21; Neh 9:11; Isa 63:12). In the Psalms בָּקַע appears twice, apart from the instance in Psalm 74, accompanied also by water imagery and references the journey of Israel from Egypt to Canaan. Yahweh splits the rock to give Israel drink (Ps 78:15) after he splits up the Red Sea (Ps 78:13).⁵ The verb יָבֵשׁ is also used for the drying up of the Red Sea (Josh 2:10; 4:23; 5:1; Nah 1:4)⁶ and Jordan (Josh 4:23; 5:1).⁷ These verbal links

⁵Emerton argues that the splitting of springs and brooks does not refer to the Yahweh's provision of water from the rock for Israel at the exodus but to creation (J. A. Emerton, "'Spring and Torrent' in Psalm 74:15," *VTSup* 15 [1966]: 122–33). This is possible given the allusions to creation in Psalm 74:16–17, but the echo of Yahweh's provision in the wilderness seems obvious.

⁶Although one could argue that because יָבֵשׁ is used of both the Red Sea and Jordan, the reference in Ps 74 could be to Jordan not the Red Sea that would be unlikely since the overwhelming verbal connections point to the Red Sea. The reference to Red Sea in Josh 4:23–24 may suggest its centrality and indicate that the miracle at the Jordan for the new generation was so the Red Sea could be remembered, or they could share in an experience with the first generation. Calvin commenting on Josh 4 says, "The same account is to be given of the drying up of the Red Sea, though the event was not very ancient. It is certain that of those who had come out of Egypt, Caleb and Joshua were the only survivors, and yet he addresses the whole people as if they had been eyewitnesses of the miracle. God dried up the Red Sea before our face; in other words, it was done in virtue of the adoption which passed without interruption from the fathers to the children. Moreover, it was worth while to call the passage of the Red Sea to remembrance, not only that the similarity of the miracle might cause belief, but that on hearing the story of the Jordan, that former miracle might be at the same time renewed, although no visible symbol of it was present to the eye" (John Calvin, *Commentary on Joshua*, trans. Beveridge Henry [Grand Rapids: Christian Classical Ethereal Library, 1847], 58). Ross suggests that a reference to the creation could be in these verses too (Allen Ross, *Commentary on the Psalms: 42–89*, vol. 2 [Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2013], 586).

⁷The same term is used in Gen 8:7, 14 to show how God dried up the earth for the habitation of his covenant people, Noah and his family. בָּקַע is also used for God splitting the heavens to rain waters on the earth. That Moses uses these two terms for both the flood and the Red Sea, suggests that he sees a connection between these two events; the Red Sea crossing is an installment of flood in a smaller scale.

echo the Red Sea event, Yahweh's salvation, which he worked of old.

The assertion that Psalm 74:13–15 refers to the crossing of the Red Sea (Exod 14) is contrary to Marvin Tate's interpretation of these verses. He associates these verses with cosmic authorities in ancient Near East. Commenting on verse 13, he makes the following argument:

The verb (פָּרַר) carries ideas of shattering or breaking rather than of splitting or dividing. This combined with the creation language and the lack of explicit reference to the exodus makes it reasonable to conclude that the primary referents are the cosmic forces commonly treated as gods in ancient Near Eastern thought. For example, in the Ugaritic literature there is a struggle for cosmic kingship between the god Baal (thunder-storms and fertility) and Yam or Yamm (sea) and with the sea-monsters associated with Yamm.⁸

Tate comes to this conclusion based on his definition of the verb פָּרַר in verse 13 and its allusions to creation. While most of the occurrences of פָּרַר connote to “break,” Tate's argument is not convincing because the verb in the *qal*, *hothpaal*, and *poel* stems can denote “to split” or “to crack through” (cf. Isa 24:19).⁹ The spitting of the sea can be pictured as a “breaking,” which would actually make the action more graphic and vivid. Moreover, even if the verb only means “to break” or “to shatter,” that is not a strong enough case to counter the argument for Red Sea symbolism.

Just as the verb does not counter the case for an echo of the Red Sea, neither

⁸Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, WBC, vol. 20 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990), 251. Hamilton comes to the same conclusion like Tate, but says the reference is to creation. He states, “Only in Ps 74:13 do we find a reference to פָּרַר and strength: ‘You have ‘broken’ the sea by your strength,’ a reference not to the exodus events (14:21) but to the primeval actions of Gen” (Victor P. Hamilton, “פָּרַר,” in *TWOT*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke [Chicago: Moody, 1981]). Williams follows the same line of understanding, but he does not argue against a reference to the Red Sea or for a reference to creation. Williams says, “The proposed occurrences of פָּרַר (Job 16:12; Ps 74:13; Isa 24:19) do not require specialized meanings. For example, the parallelism of פָּרַר and שָׁבַר, break, in Ps 74:13 commends a translation like break apart, or put down; this is the one place where פָּרַר is used with the physical act of breaking in mind; in contrast to the vb. שָׁבַר, break, break apart, which is used predominantly with that sense” (Tyler F. Williams, “פָּרַר,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997]). See also William A. Young, “Psalm 74: A Methodological and Exegetical Study” (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1974), 179–227.

⁹David J. A. Clines, *DCH*, vol. 6 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007) s. v. “פָּרַר”; Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *BDB* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906) s.v. “פָּרַר.”

does creation language (Ps 74:16–17).¹⁰ The language of creation in this psalm shows the close connection that the psalmist sees between the creation of the world and the creation of a covenant people at the Red Sea.¹¹ The Targumic Psalms reinforces this reading by adding the phrase “and drowned the Egyptians.” “You cut off *the waters of the sea* by your power; you broke the heads of the sea serpents, *and drowned the Egyptians at the sea*” (Ps 74:13 PST)—the drowning of the Egyptians refers to the victory of Yahweh at the Red Sea. God who is King from of old (Ps 74:12) has worked salvation in the earth by dividing the sea by his might and breaking the heads of the snakelike sea monsters, Leviathans (Ps 74:13–14).

The Offspring of the Serpent: Rahab, Dragon, and Leviathan

Asaph says, “You [Yahweh] broke the heads of the sea monsters (רָאשֵׁי תַנִּינִים) on the waters. You crushed the heads of Leviathan (רָאשֵׁי לִוְיָתָן)” (Ps 74:13b–14a). The key question is, what are the ‘sea monster’ and the ‘Leviathan’? If Psalm 74:12–15 is a reference to the crossing of the Red Sea, as I have argued, then רָאשֵׁי תַנִּינִים and רָאשֵׁי לִוְיָתָן must be interpreted in light of the Red Sea event. The phrase “of old” (Ps 74:12) sets verses 13–17 in the context of actual historical works of Yahweh, the exodus. Yahweh’s “working salvation in the midst of the earth” in the same verse is a reference to the exodus deliverance. Because the psalmist is recounting the exodus, the crushing of the heads of monsters and heads of the Leviathan should refer to the destruction of the

¹⁰The reference to creation in Ps 74:16–17 should also be interpreted as one of the acts of God “of old” (Ps 74:12) on which the psalmist bases his hope and prayers. Yahweh’s establishment of heavenly lights and the sun to mark days and nights refers to Gen 1:14–16. Fixing of the boundaries of the earth and setting season at creation (cf. Gen 8:22). This is opposed to Tate’s assertion that Ps 74:16–17 echoes the Babylonian creation account (Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 20:251).

¹¹For more on the way that creation relates to the exodus, particularly the crossing of the Red Sea, see the introduction to chapter two of this work.

Egyptians host at the Red Sea, with the plural “heads” and “monsters” as intensive.¹²

Although Kidner sees allusions to the exodus in Psalm 74:12–15, he turns his eyes from that historic event to the ancient Near East, as he considers the “monster” and “Leviathan.” He makes the following statement:

The parting of the Red Sea and the crushing blow to Egypt, that dragon of the deep (cf. Ezek. 32:2ff.), invite comparison with the Canaanite boast of Baal’s victories over the personified Sea and River, over the Dragon (*tnn*; cf. the plural *tannînim*, *dragons*, here) and over the seven-headed serpent Lotan (the equivalent word to *Leviathan*). The point here is that what Baal had claimed in the realm of myth, God had done in the realm of history – and done for his people, *working salvation*.¹³

Goldingay follows the same line of thought. He asserts that verse 12 alludes to the Red Sea in the following argument:

But through vv. 13–14 the language becomes less and less like language used of the Red Sea event and more like language used elsewhere in connection with the conquest of resistant supernatural powers of old. Other Middle Eastern stories spoke of a deity’s victory over turbulent waters, the embodiment of anarchic dynamic force. These could then be personified as a sea monster with seven heads; in the Ugaritic story of Baal and Anat, Leviathan/Lotan has seven heads, which corresponds to the sevenfold “you are the one who . . .” in vv. 13–17.¹⁴

It is possible that the psalmist was aware of those ancient Near Eastern myths and utilized language from them, but a plain reading of the psalm does not provide grounds for interpreting it in light of the ANE mythologies. As noted earlier, the phrases “of old” and “salvation in the midst of the earth” set Psalm 74:12–15 in the context of Israel’s history (compare Isaiah’s use of “מִקֵּדָם” in Isaiah 45:21; 46:10). Kidner’s comparison of Baal’s work in the realm of myth to God’s work in history is not evident

¹²James D. Martin, *Davidson’s Introductory Hebrew Grammar*, 4th ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 20; Bruce K. Waltke and Michael P. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, (Winona, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 122; Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 2nd ed. (Roma: Gregorian & Biblical, 2009), 470.

¹³Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC, vol. 16 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 297.

¹⁴Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 42-89*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 431. Similarly, Dahood, *Psalms II: 51–100*, vol. 2 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1968), 205; Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*, trans. Timothy J. Hallert (New York: Seabury, 1978), 54.

in Psalm 74:13–15. The psalmist focuses on God’s work in history, without any indication that he is comparing Yahweh and Baal (Ps 74:18ff). The language of verses 13–14 does not logically lead us to conclude that the author is referring to Middle Eastern stories. It is more reasonable to interpret the terms in light of the immediate and broader context—scripture interprets scripture. In addition, contra Goldingay’s argument, nothing in Psalm 74 suggests that the author intends to use seven reiterations of “you are the one who . . .” in order to match the “seven heads of the Leviathan,” a description which is recorded in ANE myths but not even mentioned in this psalm.¹⁵

As argued above, because of the immediate context, we should interpret רָאשֵׁי תַנִּינִים and לְוִיָּתָן as referring to the Egyptian armies whom Yahweh crushed at the Red Sea. In its broader context, the OT, the word תַּנִּינִים in Genesis 1:21 refers to sea creatures God created, which are summoned to praise their Creator in Psalm 148:7. The singular תַּנִּין is used of serpents (Exod 7:9, 10, 12). Figuratively, the term is used for Pharaoh (Ezek 29:3; 32:2) and Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 51:34), God’s and Israel’s archenemies.

According to Isaiah, God pierced the תַּנִּין at the Red Sea (Isa 51:9–10).¹⁶ The

¹⁵John talks about a seven-headed creature, which most likely refers to Leviathan (Rev 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 9), but the fact that the psalmist does not describe the creature as seven-headed, leaves us with no grounds to read it into the psalm and base our interpretation on it. Day also rejects the assertion that the sevenfold “you are the one who . . .” or “אַתָּה” is meant to match the seven heads of the Leviathan (John Day, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament*, [New York: Cambridge, 1985], 24).

¹⁶Isaiah calls on God to act as he did in the days of old, the generations from long ago (Isa 51:9). The exodus is at the center of Isaiah’s thoughts in vv. 9–10. *Rahab* is a reference to Egypt (cf. Isa 30:7) and, as shown above, the dragon is a term for Pharaoh (Ezek 29:3). Moreover, the drying up of the Sea in v. 10 is a clear reference to the exodus (cf. Isa 43:16; Exod 14:21; Ps 106:9). Oswalt argues that the terms *Rahab* and *monster* (or dragon) cannot be limited to the exodus. He says “As is known from Ugaritic studies, *the twisting monster* is a figure in the struggles of Baal with the god of the sea, Yam, as is “Leviathan,” which is equated with the monster in Isa 27:1. Given these facts, and the evidence that the myth of the struggle of the gods with the sea monster was known in one form or another all over the ancient Near East, one has reason to believe that Isaiah is here, as in 27:1, utilizing this acquaintance among the people for his own purposes.” He notes that Isaiah uses a well-known story as a polemic (John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998], 341–42). McKenzie gives a helpful caution on interpreting the supposedly mythological language in the poetry of the

fact that תַּנִּינִיךְ is used of Pharaoh and for serpents suggests that the Egyptian host are the monsters in Psalm 74:13. With this understanding, the plural is intensive. Similarly, Ross suggests, “In applying the idea of the Exodus, the psalmist may have used the word “heads” with the leaders of the Egyptian army in mind, as well as the spiritual forces of Egypt behind them.”¹⁷ Explaining Isaiah 51:9–11, Motyer also points out, “The reference to the *monster* is reminiscent of the cultic credo in Psalm 74:12f., and Ezekiel 29:3 and 32:2 are explicit in connecting ‘the monster’ with the exodus.”¹⁸ The “רָאשֵׁי לִוְיָתָן” (Ps 74:14) is a reiteration of and parallels “רָאשֵׁי תַנִּינִים” and thus refers to the same enemies of Israel at the Red Sea, Pharaoh and his host.¹⁹

OT. He examines a number of passages and observes, “The passages thus collected may not appear to define the allusions of Ps. 74:13-15 beyond all doubt. Nevertheless, they offer some very clear indications. It does not seem possible any longer to deny the presence of mythological allusions in the Old Testament. They appear almost entirely, as far as present research has shown, in poetic passages, where they add vividness and color to the imagery and the language. They do not, on the other hand, permit one to affirm the existence of creation myths among the Hebrews, corresponding to those of Mesopotamia and Canaan. Gunkel’s brilliant attempt to do this was a conspicuous failure. The creation accounts of the Bible are studiously composed to exclude mythological elements. The fact that such allusions were freely admitted in poetry indicates no more than this, that the Hebrews were acquainted with Semitic myths. Where these are cosmogonic myths, the work of the creative deity, or his victory over chaos, is simply transferred to Yahweh; other deities involved in the myths are ignored. In no sense can it be said that the Hebrews incorporated “mythopoeic thought” (to borrow a word from Frankfort) into their own religious conceptions; they did, however, assimilate mythopoeic imagery and language” (John L. McKenzie, “A Note on Psalm 73[74]:13-15,” *TS* 11, no. 2 [1950]: 281–82). Following McKenzie’s argument, one may agree with Oswalt that there was awareness on Isaiah’s part about stories of surrounding cultures. However, the context of the verses in the book of the Isaiah and the clear allusions to the exodus, as mentioned above, seems to confine the allusions to the Red Sea. Motyer also acknowledges influences from Canaanite myths and advances four arguments for allusions to the exodus in Isa 51:9–11: “(i) the making of a *road in the depths* echoes the Red Sea experience, (ii) *the redeemed*, when it refers to a past experience, describes those who came out of Egypt; (iii) the only historical event which prefigures eschatological redemption is the exodus (Ezek 20:33f.); (iv) *Rahab* is used as a code-name for Egypt” (J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993], 408).

¹⁷Ross, *Psalms 42–89*, 587.

¹⁸Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 408.

¹⁹The term לִוְיָתָן occurs five times in the OT. It was created by God (Ps 104:26) and is untamable by man (Job 3:8; 41:1). At the end of the age, “in that day Yahweh with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea” (Isa 27:1). On the origin of the vocalization of לִוְיָתָן, see J. A. Emerton, “Leviathan and Ltn: The Vocalization of the Ugaritic Word for the Dragon,” *VT* 32, no. 3 (1982): 327–31; Stanley V. Udd, “More on the Vocalization of Ltn,” *VT* 33, no. 4 (1983): 509–10.

The serpentine description of the enemies of Yahweh, which he crushed at the Red Sea, thematically echoes Genesis 3:15. God said, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head (הוא יִשְׁפֹּךְ רֹאשׁ), and you shall bruise his heel (אַתָּה תִּשְׁפֹּכְנוּ עֶקֶב)” (Gen 3:15). Psalm 74 depicts Yahweh accomplishing this at the Red Sea. Note the use of ראש twice in Psalm 74:13, 14: *at the Red Sea You, God* תִּנְיִיִם רָאשֵׁי תִּנְיִיִם and לִוְיָתָן רָאשֵׁי לִוְיָתָן רִצְצָתָהּ אֶתְּךָ.²⁰ This insinuates that Pharaoh and his host represent the offspring of the serpent while Israel on God’s side represents the seed of the woman. At the Red Sea God crushed the head of the seed of the serpent and thus worked salvation for Israel.

The use of רָהַב: The same thematic echo of Genesis 3:15 in Psalm 74:13–14 may also be found in Psalm 89:11.²¹ Yahweh crushes Rahab and scatters his enemies. Isaiah identifies “Rahab who sits still” as Egypt (Isa 30:7; cf. Ps 87:4) that parallels תִּנְיִן as a serpentine creature, which Yahweh pierced at the Red Sea (Isa 51:9). Thus, Rahab (רָהַב) is identical to the dragon (תִּנְיִן) and Leviathan (לִוְיָתָן) and figuratively describes Pharaoh and his host,²² which Yahweh shattered at the Red Sea (cf. Exod 14:15).²³

Genesis 3:15 echoes in other psalms. The psalmists also identify Egypt as

²⁰The *piel* intensifies the action: God crushed, ground to pieces the heads of the serpentine creatures

²¹We address this here because Rahab is identical to Leviathan and the monsters in Ps 74.

²²Day observes that Rahab is not mentioned in any extra-biblical text and notes that the term may simply be an alternative name for Leviathan (Day, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 6). Tate argues, “Rahab is a name for the chaos monster in ancient stories; referred to several times in the Hebrew scriptures (Ps 87:4; Isa 30:7; 51:9–10; Job 9:13; 26:12). The name is used of Egypt in Isa 30:7 and Ps 87:4, but its primary referent is the story of the conquest of the raging sea and the forces it represents, as in the myth of Baal’s establishment of his kingship by overcoming Yam (Sea)” (Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 20:421). Tate’s assertion that the primary reference of Rahab is the story of the conquest of the raging sea and the forces in the Babylonian myths cannot be established from an inner-biblical reading of the term or extra-biblical since the term does not even occur in any Babylonian stories as Day shows.

²³The fact that Pss 74:13, 14; 89: 11 use different verbs (שבר, רצץ, and דכא) from what Moses used (שׁוּף) should not sever the link to Gen 3:15 because thematic connections do not always have verbal links.

Rahab in Psalm 87:4 and 89:11. In Psalm 87 the sons of Korah make proclamations of the day when all nations will acknowledge the glory of Zion and enumerate Egypt among the nations. They say, “Among those who know me I mention Rahab and Babylon; behold, Philistia and Tyre, with Cush.”²⁴ This may indicate that Rahab in Psalm 89:11 is symbolic of Egypt as well,²⁵ suggesting that Egypt is also the seed of the serpent.²⁶

Conclusion

In Psalm 74 the backward look to the exodus during the exile, when Zion is in ruins (Ps 74:3–10), suggests that the author hopes that God will reenact history, bringing them back from exile like he brought Israel from Egypt, destroying their enemies. God has conquered Pharaoh and his host, the vice-regents of the serpent, and will again defeat and crush the seed of the serpent, through the offspring of David who reigns over all things. At that point, Yahweh will be the highest of all kings (Ps 89:26–28). History will be repeated in the future. Biblically, therefore, we know the future from history.

Watery Depiction of the Exodus (Ps 77:17–20)

The focus here will be on verses 17 and 20, but other allusions to the exodus will be surveyed to strengthen the argument for these verses as references to the Red Sea. I will suggested that phrases like “the days of old” (6) and “of old” (12), along with mentions of the deeds, work, and wonders of Yahweh (12–13) refer to God’s work at the

²⁴Similarly Phelps, “רַהַב.”

²⁵Likewise, Ross, *Psalms 42–89*, 830.

²⁶While Yahweh defeated Egypt, the seed of the serpent at the Red sea, the ultimate defeat of the seed of the serpent is an end time reality that finds fulfillment in Christ’s death and resurrection (cf. Rev 12). Because of Christ’s victory, God’s people will share in the final victory as well when Satan is ultimately crushed and banished just as Israel shared in Yahweh’s victory over Pharaoh and his host at the Red Sea (cf. Rom 16:20). Similarly on Rom 16:20, Douglas J Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 932–33; James Hamilton, “The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15,” *SBJT* 10 (2006): 30–54.

exodus, which serves as the source of hope for the exiles.²⁷

Waters Fear and Create a Path for Yahweh

In verse 17 the author personifies water saying, “The waters saw you, the waters saw you and were afraid, indeed the deeps trembled.” “The waters” do not have to refer to the Red Sea, but the deep (תְּהוֹם) suggests the allusion. While תְּהוֹם is used with diverse connotations, in this context it possibly echoes the Red Sea (cf. Ex 15:5, 8; Is 51:10; 63:13). The “waters being afraid” is probably a metaphorical depiction of waters standing in heaps after being driven by the wind of Yahweh (Exod 14:21–22).

Dahood follows a similar line of thought, but he says that verse 17 is “an ancient poem . . . which glorifies the Creator whose victory over Tehom, the primeval flood, and sea is a prototype of his victory over the enemies of Israel.”²⁸ Because the exodus bears close links to creation, one may sympathize with Dahood’s argument. It must, however, be said that the creation account in Genesis, if that is what Dahood is referring to, does not suggest a battle between the water and its Creator. Such a battle is often argued based on ancient Near Eastern mythologies. Tate confirms this reliance on myths, observing, “The language of v 17 reflects the ancient motif of a divine struggle with chaotic forces in bringing forth creation. The turbulent waters of the great primeval seas writhed before the presence of God and the deeps roiled, so great was his power.”²⁹ It is possible that the language reflects such an ancient motif, but the psalmist is clearly not pointing us there; he recalls Yahweh’s wonders “of old,” a work in the psalmist’s

²⁷Contra Day, the defeat in these verses (Ps 77:17, 20) are allusions to actual history not a mythological thought that was widespread in pre-exilic Israel (Day, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 22).

²⁸Dahood, *Psalms II*, 2:231. On how the creation account of Gen 1–2 relates to the exodus and the crossing of the Red Sea, see the introduction to chapter 2 of this work.

²⁹Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 20:275.

history—the exodus.

Psalms 77:20 and the surrounding context indicate that verse 17 is about the Red Sea. Although without any clear verbal links, “בַּיָּם דָּרַכָּה וּשְׁבִילֶיהָ בְּמִים רַבִּים” (Ps 77:20) point to the path Yahweh created in the Red Sea for Israel.³⁰ When Yahweh’s wind blew the sea back, the waters divided, and a dry land was formed in the midst of the sea, on which Israel crossed (Exod 14:21–22). Although “דָּרַךְ” and “שְׁבִיל” do not occur in Exodus 14, the dry land on which Israel crossed is what Asaph calls “path” and “way.” Gregory Stevenson convincingly shows that in the first part of Psalm 77 the author describes his distress in terms similar to the ordeal of Israel at the exodus and that, in the second part, the exodus gives the author hope that God will deliver him as well.

Stevenson notes:

The combination of retrojective and projective typology allows the psalmist to employ the exodus tradition in dual fashion. The suffering and doubt of the Israelite slaves provide the framework within which the psalmist retrojectively depicts his own suffering and doubt. On the other hand, God’s eventual deliverance of those slaves allows for a projective hope in God’s future deliverance of the psalmist . . . Whereas retrojective typology permeates the lament (77:1-10), projective typology permeates the hymn (77:11-20), thereby accounting for the divergent employment of the exodus tradition.³¹

In addition, in verse 21 Asaph mentions Moses and Aaron, who were the central leaders of Israel during the exodus. They gathered the elders of Israel and spoke to them about the exodus (Exod 4:29), went in before Pharaoh to speak for Yahweh (Exod 5:1; 6:27), performed signs and wonders before Pharaoh and all Egypt (Exod 7–11), led them out of Egypt (Exod 12:33ff) and through the wilderness until their deaths (Num 21:22–29; Deut 32:48–52). Given their centrality, their appearance at the end of our

³⁰The singular *Q^{re}*’ שְׁבִילֶיהָ is preferable in place of the plural *K^ethiv* שְׁבִילֵיהָ.

³¹Gregory M. Stevenson, “Communal Imagery and the Individual Lament: Exodus Typology in Psalm 77,” *ResQ* 39 no 4 (1997): 227.

psalm further strengthens the allusions to the exodus journey.³²

Moreover, the verb נָחָה with Yahweh as subject and עַם as the object only occurs in Exodus 15:13. “You [Yahweh] have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed” (Exod 15:13). Exodus 15 is Moses’ song during the exodus. That Asaph picks up language from the song of Moses (Exod 15) and also mentions Aaron with Moses as the means by which God led Israel unequivocally shows that the exodus is a theme in our psalm.

These arguments demonstrate that verses 17 and 20 are about the Red Sea.³³ The Targum implies the same understanding; in it, the sea is identified as “Sea of *Suph*.” “In the sea of *Suph* was your path, and your highway in the many waters; and the track of your steps were not discerned” (Ps 77:20 PST). The sea of *Suph* in the Targum is the Red Sea (cf. Exod 13:18; 15:4, 22; 23:31; Ps 106:7 OKE).

The interpretation of the water imagery in Psalm 77 as an allusion to the Red Sea garners credible support from its context. The almost parallel clauses “נָחִיתָ כְּצֹאן עֶמְקֵי” (Ps 77: 21) and “נָחִיתָ בְּחֶסֶדְךָ עִם־זֵוֹ” (Exod 15:13), גָּאֲלָתָ בְּזֵרוּעַ עֶמְקֵי (Ps 77:16) and גָּאֲלָתִי אֶתְכֶם (Exod 6:6) disclose a conscious dependence on the exodus narrative. Israel as “flock” (צֹאן) has exodus overtones (cf. Ps 80:1ff).³⁴ Yahweh’s leading by the hand of Moses and Aaron (v. 21) also resonates the exodus (cf. Ex 12:31, 43), making verses 17 and 20 a reference to the Red Sea, since Moses and Aaron were not with Israel at the Jordan. The psalmist’s appeal to the right hand of God (יְמִינִי) (v. 11) is an appeal for God to exercise his right hand as he did at the exodus (Exod 15:6,12).³⁵ Other allusions

³²Similarly, John S. Kselman, “Psalm 77 and the Book of Exodus,” *JNES* 15 (1983): 51–52.

³³Day is sympathetic to this conclusion although he only sees the allusion to the exodus as a historicization of a myth (Day, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 97; cf. Keel, *Symbolism*, 22, 101).

³⁴See discussion of Yahweh as Shepherd in Ps 23 (Chapter 2).

³⁵The psalmist is not experiencing God’s power, his right hand; for him God has discontinued

include theophanic natural phenomena: clouds (v. 18; cf. Exod 14:20; 19:9; Judg 5:4), thunder (vv. 18, 19; cf. Exod 19:16), lightening (19; cf. Exod 19:16), and earthquake (v. 19; cf. Exod 19:18), which were present at and after the Red Sea.³⁶ “The days of old” (v. 6) describes the era of the Exodus (cf. Ps 74:12; 78:2; 44:1),³⁷ and “your wonders” possibly refers to the miracles in Egypt (cf. Ps 78:12, 43).³⁸ Likewise the ensuing terms may describe God’s work at the exodus: מַעַלְלֵי־יָדָיו (v. 12; cf. Ps 78:7), עֲלִילֹתָיו (v. 13; cf. Ps 103:7), כָּל־פְּעָלָיו (v. 13; cf. Exod 15:11). Moreover, “הַסֹּד,” “חֲנָה,” and “רַחֲמִים” (vv. 9–10) are at the heart of God’s redemption of Israel from Egypt; Yahweh redeemed Israel

the use of his right hand for the deliverance of his people. When the psalmist states that God has suspended the use of the power of his right hand, he lays out the source of his suffering (that God no longer acts as he has always acted) and questions the primary assertion of the exodus tradition that God always delivers his people with the power of his right hand. The psalmist thus expresses the startling discontinuity between God’s reputation and the present situation (Stevenson, “Communal Imagery,” 222).

³⁶Ross rightly observes that vv. 17–21 are about the deliverance from Egypt, but he argues that rain, thunder, and lighting were not mentioned in the book of Exodus (Ross, *Psalms 42–89*, 638). To the contrary, the only thing in those verses that is not mentioned in the exodus narrative is “rain” or “clouds dropping water.” Kraus argues that while there are exodus allusions, “without any doubt, in vv. 16–19 we are dealing with a special, independent element, with a description of a theophany. In a history-of-religions manner the conceptual elements of the description of the theophany are to be traced back to the essential and active characteristics of Baal that emerge in Canaanite mythology” (Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150: A Commentary* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2000], 116). Kraus following Schmidt argues, “The description of a God who on the one hand rides along on clouds in heavy weather and thunderstorms and wields lightening as a weapon and on the other hand is victorious over the sea is easily explained by the adoption of essential characteristics of Baal: The God of weather at the same time weathered the battle against the sea” (Werner H. Schmidt, *Alttestamentlicher Glaube in seiner Geschichte* [Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1987], 166). Compare the English edition, Werner H. Schmidt, *The Faith of the Old Testament: A History* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983]). Conversely, from an inner-biblical perspective, it is easier to explain the imagery in these verses in light of the exodus event. As stated earlier, the psalmist does not give any indications that he intends to be read in light of the Baal mythologies. The faithful Israelites who knew the Scripture were more likely to hear echoes of the exodus in these verses than Babylonian myths.

³⁷Ross also takes the days of old as a reference to the deliverance from Egypt. “In his grief the psalmist resolved to recall the history of God, the days of old, the years of antiquity. He decided: ‘I will remember my song in the night.’ He would strengthen his faith by bringing to memory a glorious and happier past when God protected and provided for his people” (Ross, *Psalms 42–89*, 638.).

³⁸Instead of פְּלָא in Ps 77:12 and 78:12, Ps 78:43 uses the synonym מוֹפֵת, which is often used especially of the plagues connected with the exodus from Egypt (cf. Exod 7:3; Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; Ps 105:27; 135:9; Isa 8:18; Jer 32:20–21). For a discussion on the function of the plagues in Ps 78, see: Archie C. C. Lee, “The Context and Function of the Plagues Tradition in Psalm 78,” *JSOT*, no. 48 (1990): 83–89.

because of his steadfast love, graciousness, and compassion (cf. Exod 15:13).³⁹

In addition, verses 14–16 show remarkable similarities with Exodus 15:11, 13–14, 16:

Table 1: Psalm 77:14–16 and Exodus 15:11, 13–14, 16

| Psalm 77:14–16 | Exodus 15:11, 13–14, 16 |
|--|--|
| Your way, <u>O God, is holy. What god is great like our God?</u> You are the God who works wonders; <u>you have made known your might among the peoples.</u> You with your arm <u>redeemed your people</u> , the children of Jacob and Joseph. | <u>Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods?</u> Who is like you, majestic <u>in holiness</u> , awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? . . . You have led in your steadfast love <u>the people whom you have redeemed</u> . . . <u>The peoples have heard; they tremble</u> . . . because of the greatness of <u>your arm.</u> |

The two passages share parallel concepts. In both passages, God’s holiness is praised, along with the power of his arm, the same question is raised (what god is like our God?), and God is described as a wonder worker who redeemed his people and made known his might to all peoples.⁴⁰ All of these parallels and allusions uphold the case that verses 17 and 20 are references to the Red Sea.

Conclusion

The exodus is a source of hope for the psalmist. In distress he remembers God’s past redemption (Ps 77:12–13) and trusts him for future redemption. He finds

³⁹The psalmist experiences the reverse of these things that were the bases of the exodus. “The Exodus narrative affirms that God hears his people (Exod 2:24; 3:7, 9; 14:10, 15), remembers his promise to them (2:24; 3:7; 4:31), has compassion on them (2:25; 3:7; 4:31), and delivers them with power (7:4; 9:16; 14:31). Ps 77:7–9 attacks these assertions by questioning whether God has rejected his people (v. 7), his promise has vanished (v. 8), his love has failed (v. 8), and his compassion has been withheld (v. 9)” (Stevenson, “Communal Imagery,” 220).

⁴⁰Similarly, Jefferson argues that the relationship between Ps 77 and Exod 15 is more than vocabulary. The passages share similar ideas (Helen G. Jefferson, “Psalm LXXVII,” *VT* 13, no. 1 [1963]: 89).

comfort in meditating on God's unparalleled deliverance of Israel at the exodus. After the description of the exodus, "the psalm comes to an abrupt halt. It may be that the psalmist's memory of the greatest deliverance of his people was all that he could cling to since he was left waiting for another day of deliverance."⁴¹ The psalmist recites God's deed of old (the exodus) through water imagery to illustrate that he is a God who has constantly dealt trustworthily with his covenant people. Accordingly the psalmist is confident that God will also deal faithfully with him.

Watery Echoes of the Exodus and Eden (Pss 78; 80; 81)

Like Psalm 77, Psalms 78, 80, and 81 refer to the exodus, in particular the crossing of the Red Sea, God's provision in the wilderness, and the conquest of Canaan. Psalm 78 is one of the lengthiest historical psalms, recounting Israel's history for the next generation.⁴² Psalms 78:13–16, 20, 53, 80:11, and 81:8 are of interest here because of their use of water to portray Yahweh's past work.⁴³ I will study key words and phrases in these verses to establish an argument for the psalmist's deliberate reliance on the exodus narrative.

Salvation and Judgment at the Red Sea

Echoes of the exodus abound in Psalm 78. When Israel left Egypt Moses directed them to instruct their children about the great work of Yahweh's salvation (Exod 13:8–15). Moses warned that generation not to forget the exodus, but to declare it to their children and their children's children (Deut 4:9). The psalmists now in obedience to

⁴¹Ross, *Psalms 42–89*, 639.

⁴²Anderson lists Pss 78, 105, 106, 135, and 136 as narrative psalms. See Bernhard W. Anderson, *Out of the Depths: The Psalms Speak for Us Today* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 235.

⁴³Contra Campbell who argues that Ps 78 is not in its original form, but is loaded with additions (see Antony F. Campbell, "Psalm 78: A Contribution to the Theology of Tenth Century Israel," *CBQ* 41, no. 1 [1979]: 51–79), we will treat this psalm unified, its form as original.

Moses recount sayings from old (Ps 78:2), which their fathers told them (v. 3). They themselves will tell it to the next generation (Ps 78:4), as Moses charged (Deut 4:9).⁴⁴ The psalmist describes what they will declare as “glorious deeds of Yahweh, and his might, and the wonders that he has done” (Ps 78:4), amassing synonyms to make it graphic. These astounding deeds of Yahweh are, at least, the wonders he performed in the sight of all Egyptians (Ps 78:12), referring to the plagues (Exod 7–12). While the entire psalm recounts the journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, we will focus on verses Psalm 78:12–16.

Psalm 78:12–16 brims with signals that the author is depending on the Pentateuch. The expression “עֲשֵׂה פֶלֶא” (Ps 78:12) also occurs in Exodus 15:11, the phrase “שִׁדְּה־צֶעַן” appears only in Psalm 78:12 and צֶעַן in Numbers 13:22 (cf. Num 13:22; Isa 19:11, 13; 30:4; 33:20; Ezek 30:14; Ps 78:12, 43).⁴⁵ The verb נָהַג “to lead” (Ps 78:14) appears in Exodus 15:13 for a general expression of Yahweh’s leadership of Israel and in Exodus 13:21 in relation to Yahweh’s leading of Israel in the pillar of cloud and fire. In addition, the clause וַיִּצְבּוּ־מַיִם כְּמוֹ־יָד finds its strongest parallel in Exodus 15:8 (מַיִם נִצְבּוּ כְּמוֹ־יָד), which depicts Yahweh’s miraculous rescue of Israel at the Red Sea.

The usage of the verb בָּקַע to describe the dividing of the sea only surfaces in exodus contexts. In Psalm 78:13, one of the wonders of Yahweh the psalmist recounts is that “he divided the sea and let them pass through it, and made the waters stand like a

⁴⁴Phillip E. McMillion, “Psalm 78: Teaching the next Generation,” *ResQ* 43, no. 4 (2001): 219–28; Edward L. Greenstein, “Mixing Memory and Design: Reading Psalm 78,” *Proof* 10, no. 2 (1990): 197–218.

⁴⁵The rest of the verse reads “in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.” The “שִׁדְּה־צֶעַן” does not occur in the exodus account in the Pentateuch neither the LXX’s *Távwes*. Num 13:22 claims that the Zoan was built seven years before Hebron, but does not give any details about the city. It is unclear which city is Zoan, but it suffices to say it was a city in Egypt on whose fields Yahweh performed wonders. See Kitchen dictionary entry on Zoan, K. A. Kitchen, “Zoan,” *NBD* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1962). Dahood claims that Zoan was the capital of Egypt at the time of the exodus, but without a clear reason (Dahood, *Psalms II*, 2:240).

heap.” The verb בקע occurs approximately fifty times in the OT. In three instances, יָם is its object, and it relates to the parting of the Red Sea.⁴⁶ Yahweh directed Moses, “Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea (יָם) and divide (בקע) it” (Ex 14:16), and when Moses stretched his hand over the sea (יָם), God drove the sea (יָם), and the waters (מֵיִם) divided (בקע) (Exod 14:21; cf. Isa 63:12). In Nehemiah 9 Israel sanctifies Yahweh as their emancipator from slavery in the eyes of Pharaoh (vv. 9–11). Nehemiah notes that Yahweh divided the sea (וַהֲיָם בְּקַעַתָּהּ) for them to cross (v. 11). The fact that בקע with יָם as object regularly refer to the Red Sea suggests that Psalm 78:13 should be understood in the same way.

The *hiphil* in the clause וַיַּעֲבִירֵם (Ps 78:13) places the emphasis on God as the one who brought Israel to cross the sea.⁴⁷ Yahweh brought Israel across the sea in safety, in that he made the water stand like a heap (וַיַּצְבֵּב מַיִם כְּמוֹ-הֵד) as Israel passed through. The *hiphil* (וַיַּצְבֵּב) again places the spotlight on God as the main actor at the sea. The close verbal link reveals the psalmist’s conscious dependence on the exodus narrative, confirming that the sea in Psalm 78:13 is the Red Sea.

When God made the Red Sea stand like a heap, he brought Israel through it in safety (Ps 78:53a), and he brought judgment on their enemies, as the sea engulfed them (וַאֲתֵּי-אֹיְבֵיהֶם כָּסָה הַיָּם) (Ps 78:53). The conjunction ו (but) contrasts the last part of the verse with the first and the *piel* כָּסָה intensifies the action of the verb. Yahweh drowned the Egyptians in the heart of the sea. Because the only instance where God destroys Israel’s opponents in the sea is at the Red Sea during the exodus, the extinction of the adversaries in Psalm 78 in the sea alludes to that event. Moreover, the clause כָּסָה הַיָּם also establishes

⁴⁶Ludwig Köhler and Walter Baumgartner, *HALOT*, rev. ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2001), s.v. “בקע.”

⁴⁷Often when Yahweh is the subject of עָבַר, the stress is usually on him as causing the action not simply allowing it (cf. Ps 119:37; cf. Gen 8:1; Exod 33:19; Josh 7:7; 2 Sam 3:9–10; 12:13; Jer 15:14; Ezek 20:36–37; 37:1–2; 46:20–21; 47:3, 4; Zech 3:4; 13:2; Pss 119:39; 136:14; Job 7:21; 1 Chr 21:8).

an allusions to the Red Sea in that Exodus 15:10 uses a similar clause (כָּסְמוּ יָם) to depict the utter ruin of Israel’s enemies at the Red Sea (cf. Exod 14:28; cf. Josh 24:7). “You [Yahweh] blew with your wind, the sea engulfed them (כָּסְמוּ יָם [note the *piel* of intensification כָּסְמוּ]); they sank like lead in the mighty waters” (Exod 15:10).

The above arguments demonstrate that the psalmist is undoubtedly depending on and alluding to the exodus narrative. The Targum adds a description of Moses and his staff showing that the translators understood the verse as reference to the Red Sea. “He split the sea with the staff of Moses their leader, and made them to pass through, and he made the water stand up, fastened like a skin bottle” (Ps 78:13 PST).⁴⁸

Provision in the Wilderness

Psalm 78:14–16, 20 is reminiscent of Yahweh’s protection and provision for Israel in the wilderness. Throughout the exodus journey, Yahweh “led [Israel] with a cloud by day (בְּעֶנָן יוֹמָם) and with a light of fire all night (וְכָל־הַלַּיְלָה בָּאֹר)” (Ps 78:14). These expressions parallel Moses’ account of the exodus journey. Moses describes Yahweh’s protection as, “The pillar of the cloud by day (בְּעֶנָן יוֹמָם) and the pillar of the fire by night (בְּאֵשׁ לַיְלָה) did not depart from before the people” (Ex 13:22).⁴⁹

⁴⁸The reference to the exodus in the psalm is so clear and the echoes scream so loud, that there are hardly any debates whether it recounts Israel’s history or not. Most scholars agree on this conclusion (see Dahood, *Psalms II*, 2:234–48; Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, vol. 2 [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962], 112; John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 3, trans. James Anderson, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949], 225–41; Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. 2 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952], 361; William S. Plumer, *Psalms: A Critical and Expository Commentary with Doctrinal and Practical Remarks*, [Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1975], 747). Although Goldingay compares v. 13 with ANE myths, he concludes that the passage recounts and clearly point to Israel’s deliverance from Egypt (Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 42-89*, 2:490–91). Kraus argues, “The singer does not present a ‘new teaching’; he takes up what has been received from the fathers but obviously—as is clear from vv. 1–2—wants to address the traditional materials in the direction of a very definite secret and expose a hidden aspect of the historical traditions” (Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 125). Curtis states that “Ps 78 could be described as a history lesson or, perhaps more accurately, a lesson from history. The bulk of the psalm contains an outline of the story of Israel from the exodus to the time of David” (Adrian Curtis, *Psalms* [Peterborough: Epworth, 2004], 163). One disputed issue with this psalm is its unity, which Campbell compellingly argues for. See Campbell, “Psalm 78,” 52–62.

⁴⁹Isaiah recalls the same provision, but sees it as paradigm that predicts the future. “In that

Anthony Campbell wrongly argues against a dependence on the Pentateuch in Psalm 78:14–16, suggesting, “The expression in Psalm 78 is terse, simply בענן, ‘with a cloud’; the formulation באור אש, ‘with a fiery light,’ is without parallel.”⁵⁰ However, the phrase “באור אש” (Ps 78:14) finds its closest parallel (אש להאיר) in Exodus 13:21, with the terms transposed in Psalm 78:14 and the preposition ל changed to ב as result of the transposition. Correspondingly, the expression “יָצִיֵּנוּ יוֹמָם” appears in Deuteronomy 1:33, where Moses reiterates Yahweh’s leadership of Israel at the exodus from Egypt.

The psalmist, thus, depends on the Pentateuch and retells Yahweh’s protective presence with Israel at the exodus. He recollects the wonders that Yahweh performed in Egypt—the plagues, which were witnessed by the ancestors of Israel (v. 12), the crossing of the Red Sea (v. 13), and Yahweh’s miraculous and gracious provision in the wilderness.

Not only did Yahweh protect and lead his people with cloud and fire, he also miraculously provided for them in the wilderness (Ps 78:15–16, 20). Although with different vocabulary, Psalm 78:15–16, 20 conceptualizes what Yahweh did for Israel in the wilderness. In the exodus from Egypt, Israel’s leader strikes the rock (Ps 78:20; cf. Exod 16:6), Yahweh splits the rocks in the wilderness (Ps 78:15; cf. Exod 17:6;), makes streams flow from the rock (Ps 78:15; cf. Deut 8:15), in order to provide for Israel (Ps 78:19–20; cf. Exod 16:3; Num 11:4; 20:3; 21:5). The plural “rocks” in Psalm 78:15 combines the two instances Yahweh provides water from rocks for Israel (Ex 17:6; Num 20:11).

day,” the *eschaton*, “Yahweh will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day (עָנָן יוֹמָם), and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night (אֵשׁ לְהִבֵּה לַיְלָה); for over all the glory there will be a canopy” (Isa 4:5). Hamilton observes, “paradigm of Israel’s past to predict Israel’s future.” Hamilton makes this remark concerning the way that all the prophets use Israel’s history, not only Isaiah. See James M. Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology?: A Guide to the Bible’s Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 38.

⁵⁰Campbell, “Psalm 78,” 64.

According to Psalm 81:8 the context of provision was also the context of Yahweh's test, "In distress you called, and I delivered you . . . I tested you at the waters of Meribah" (Ps 81:8). The waters of Meribah refer to the place where Yahweh provided water through the rock (cf. Exod 17:7; Num 20:13; Ps 95:8). At the waters of Meribah, Israel grumbled against God, but he graciously provided for them, testing them whether they would trust him.⁵¹

Although the desert was like the Valley of Baca, it became for Israel a place of springs because of Yahweh's miraculous provision (Ps 84:7). Goldingay observes, "The language of splitting the great deep was used in a quite different connection in Gen 7:11; we might also compare the references to the deeps in Exod 15:5, 8. Here it has become a symbol for extravagant provision. God can split waters and make them like a cliff or split a cliff and make it produce waters; it is all the same to God."⁵² The Targum supports this conclusion, adding Moses and his staff. "He split *mountains with the staff of Moses their leader* in the wilderness; and he gave drink as if from the great deeps" (Ps 78:15 PST).

Conversely, after examining Psalm 78: 15–16, Campbell makes the following assertion:

The treatment of the abundant provision of water (vv. 15–16) is quite different from that of Exodus 17 and Numbers 20. There the demand for water is a further instance of the people's rebellion; here it is presented as a gracious gift. It has been argued that the motif of water out of the rock is originally a positive one, only secondarily associated with the murmuring tradition. However, the particularity of the treatment here is mirrored in the vocabulary to which there are not precise parallels. The upshot of this discussion is a weighty impression of overall independence in the formulation of vv. 12–16. The only contacts that seem noteworthy are with Exodus 15. There is nothing here to justify assuming a late date or dependence on the Pentateuch.⁵³

⁵¹For an inner-biblical study of the entire Psalm 81, see David Emanuel, "An Unrecognized Voice: Intra-Textual and Intertextual Perspective on Psalm 81" *HS* 50 (2009): 85–120.

⁵²Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 42-89*, 2:491.

⁵³Campbell, "Psalm 78," 64–65.

Campbell correctly observes that there are differences between the two accounts of water from the rock in the Pentateuch (Exod 17; Num 20), but his assertion that these divergences means that there is no reliance on the Pentateuchal material is not persuasive. First, an author's dependence on another cannot be restricted to similar lexeme. Clear conceptualization like what we find in Psalm 78:15–16 makes an indisputable case for dependency. This is especially so because the early part of the psalm (vv. 3–14), as shown above, has very clear verbal connections with the accounts in the Pentateuch. Moreover, the psalmist's omission of the rebellion that led to Yahweh's provision is not a ground for arguing against his reliance on the historical account. It seems that the psalmist intends to emphasize Yahweh's grace, not the sins of the people. Tate aptly observes, "There is no indication in vv. 12–16 of the murmuring of the people recorded in Exod 17:1–7 and Num 20:2–13; the miracles in Ps 78 are of God's initiative and of pure grace."⁵⁴

Because of Yahweh's provision, Israel flourishes from strength to strength (Ps 84:8), as God leads her to the holy land (Ps 78:54)⁵⁵ and plants her in that land, where she sprout with her roots nourished by the River (Ps 80:11),⁵⁶ just as God did to the trees in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:8–9).

Based on the afore demonstrated allusions, Asaph leaves us with no doubts that

⁵⁴Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 20:290.

⁵⁵The conclusion of Ps 78 focuses on Zion and its king, David. Carroll argues that the "present form [of Ps 78] is Judean and its conclusion was designed to show how the election of David and the foundation of the Zion sanctuary represented a new creation, a revitalising of the *Heilsgeschichte* in favour of a new bearer of the divine election" (Robert P. Carroll, "Psalm 78: Vestiges of a Tribal Polemic," *VT* 21, no. 2 [1971]: 144). By divine election, he means the election of Israel at the exodus from Egypt.

⁵⁶Hamilton discussing the imagery of tree, root, and branch in the Bible observes, "God's work in creation is related to his work in redemption. So at creation, we read: "God planted a garden in Eden . . . and out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food" (Gen 2:8–9). Then to help us understand that the nation Israel, redeemed from Egypt, is like a new creation, Asaph talks about Israel as though the nation is a vine planted by the Lord: 'You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it' (Ps 80:8)" (Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology?*, 67).

he is depending on Israel's recorded past, the Pentateuch, in crafting his psalms. Psalms 78 and 80, particularly the sections with water imagery, are replete with Pentateuchal influences, and to reject such influences is to fail to read Asaph as he aimed to be read. God's work in Israel's past is not dormant; it has been retold and must be retold as a source of hope for his people.⁵⁷

Watery Allusions to the Flood (Ps 88)

Pertinent to our study is the water imagery in Psalm 88:8, 17–18. The key terms and phrases that I will examine here are: עֲבַר, מַיִם, כָּל־מַשְׁפָּרֵיךָ.

Yahweh's Judgment by Water

The author names Yahweh as the source of his adversity. Although God is the “God of my salvation” (Ps 88:2), in this instance, the author faces God as judge.⁵⁸ In concert with other depictions,⁵⁹ he says כָּל־מַשְׁפָּרֵיךָ עָנִיתָ. This line כָּל־מַשְׁפָּרֵיךָ עָנִיתָ parallels עָלֵי סִמְכָה הָמָּה⁶⁰ and explicates it. Thus “all your waves” (כָּל־מַשְׁפָּרֵיךָ) is the phrase that the

⁵⁷Similarly, Greenstein, “Mixing Memory and Design,” 209.

⁵⁸He says, “you have put me in the depths of the pit” (v. 7), “your wrath lies heavy upon me” (v. 8), “you overwhelm me with all your waves” (v. 8), “you have caused my companions to shun me” (v. 9), “you have made me a horror to them” (v. 8), “I suffer your terrors” (v. 16), “your wrath has swept over me” (v. 17), and “you have caused my beloved and my friend to shun me” (v. 19). He questions Yahweh “why do you cast my soul away?” (v. 15), “why do you hide your face from me?” (v. 15).

⁵⁹Sheol (4), pit (vv. 5, 7), dead, death (vv. 6, 11, 16), grave (vv. 5, 12), dark, darkness (vv. 6, 13, 18), deep (v. 7), shades (v. 11), in Abaddon (v. 12), and “in the land of forgetfulness” (v. 13) describe the author's misery. McCann observes that “noteworthy . . . are the chronological references—‘at night’ (v. 1); ‘every day’ (or ‘all day,’ v. 9); ‘in the morning’ (v. 13)—each associated with one of the psalmist's cries. Every possible approach, at every possible moment, has been tried, and the result is ‘darkness,’ literally the final word of the psalm. The word *darkness* (*hōšek*, v. 12) or *dark places* (*maḥšāk*, vv. 6, 18) occurs in each section of the psalm; darkness pervades the psalm and the psalmist's experience. It is darkness all day long” (J. Clinton McCann, *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993], 98–99).

⁶⁰In contexts of divine wrath, transgressors lay (סִמַּךְ) their hands on sacrificial animals to transfer their sins so that the animal would endure God's wrath for them. It describes such actions in burnt offering, fellowship offering, sin offering passages, and the ritual of the Day of Atonement (Exod 29:10, 15, 19; Lev 1:4; 3:2, 8, 13; 4:4, 15, 24, 29, 33; 8:14, 18, 22; 16:21; Num 8:10, 12). In Ps 88 it is as though the author's sins have not been transferred so he is enduring wrath himself. Although God upholds (סִמַּךְ)

author uses to metaphorically define Yahweh's wrath.⁶¹ The psalmist in Psalm 88:8 states that it is with his waves (מִשְׁפָּר) that Yahweh "afflicts" him (עֲנָה). The term עֲנָה applies to the discipline or chastisement of Yahweh, as experienced in hardship and oppression.⁶² Yahweh afflicted (עֲנָה) Israel in the wilderness (Deut 8:2, 3, 16), and, while in the Promised Land, he afflicted (עֲנָה) them by exiling them (Lam 3:33; Nah 1:12; 2 Kings 17:20). The use of the term מִשְׁפָּר (waves), as Yahweh's tool of affliction, may vaguely echo the flood. Goldingay sees unquestionable flood imagery here. He says, "There is no doubt of the presence of flood imagery here. Experiencing the outpouring of Yhwh's fury is like being drowned by Yhwh's huge waves of trouble, which also suggests the deep waters of death."⁶³

In verses 17–18 the psalmist employs striking verbal combinations, interlinked imagery to capture God's wrath. In verse 17, the phrase "Your wrath sweep over me" parallels "your terrors exterminates me." In verse 18 the third plural perfect סָבַוּ with the first singular suffix assumes "wrath" and "terror" (v. 17) as subjects. Thus the comparative phrase כַּמַּיִם (as a flood) likens Yahweh's wrath and dreadful assaults to waters surrounding the author. He thus portrays Yahweh's wrath as a flood surrounding him and closing in (הִקְיִפוּ עָלַי יָחַד) all the day (כָּל-הַיּוֹם) (v. 18).

The following details highlight the remarkable similarity between the imagery of Yahweh's wrath here and at the flood of Noah. Yahweh is the source of the

the righteous (Ps 3:6; 37:17, 24; 54:6), all who have fallen (Pss 51:14; 145:14) for good, the psalmist faces the complete opposite, the sustained (סָמַךְ) anger of God (Ps 88:8).

⁶¹The phrase כָּל-מִשְׁפָּרֶיךָ occurs two other times—one figurative (Ps 42:8) and the other actual (Jon 2:4)—and depicts God's wrath as overwhelming waters over a supplicant. The term מִשְׁפָּר occurs two other times (2 Sam 22:5; Ps 93:4) one of which has exodus overtones because of the surrounding contexts (2 Sam 22:5 [see discussion above on Ps 18]).

⁶²Rebecca Sally Watson, *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the Theme of "Chaos" in the Hebrew Bible* (Berlin, NY: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 104.

⁶³Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 42-89*, 2:650.

overwhelming flood (Ps 88:8, 17) as at the flood of Noah (Gen 7:4). The instrument of Yahweh's wrath overwhelms the one against whom it is directed in both passages (Ps 88:8, 17–18), and only God saves from God's wrath (Ps 88:2; Gen 8:1–2). The imagery in verse 18 is about the natural world and could dimly reflect the natural instrument of Yahweh's wrath, water, at Noah's flood (Gen 6–9).

There are two major differences between the two texts. First, In Genesis 6–9 the targets of Yahweh's wrath are not trusting him or calling on him, unlike the psalmist. Second, the flood was cosmic in scope, but the imagery here is restricted to one individual. These differences blur possible conjectures for echoes of the flood; thus, one may be hard-pressed to conjure a full-blown allusion here. At best, allusions to the flood in Psalm 88, if they exist, are extremely hazy.⁶⁴

The *piel* of עָנָה (v. 8) with God as subject is not very common. In the Psalms it is employed when God afflicts because of sin (Ps 119:75; cf. Pss 119: 71, 107). In Deuteronomy He afflicts Israel in the wilderness (Deut 8:2, 3, 16) and vows in 1 Kings that he would afflict the house of David (1 Kgs 11:39), which he does at the Babylonian exile (2 Kgs 17:20; Is 64:12; Ps 102:24; Lam 3:33; Nah 1:12). It is possible that when Psalm 88:8 says “you afflict me with all your waves” the author refers to Yahweh's judgment on Judah by his waves, the nations sweeping Jerusalem (2 Kgs 17:20).⁶⁵ The fact that Yahweh, not the psalmist's enemies, is the origin of the distress⁶⁶ may support the proposal that the psalm reflects Judah in exile, since it was Yahweh's judgment on Judah that resulted in the exile (cf. 2 Kgs 17).⁶⁷

⁶⁴Apart from Goldingay who argues for allusions to the flood in Ps 88:8, as shown above, no commentator consulted for this work does. Neither is the use of the water imagery highly disputed.

⁶⁵Hamilton also sees in Ps 88 the destruction of Jerusalem (James M. Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010], 285).

⁶⁶Marvin Tate, “Psalm 88,” *RevExp* 87, no. 1 (1990): 94.

⁶⁷In Ps 90 the author cries, on behalf of all Israel in exile that God would gladden their hearts

Conclusion

The author of Psalm 88 uses water imagery to depict his personal experience of God's wrath and subtly illustrate the unfavorable situation of God's people in exile. The psalmist calls on Yahweh as the God of his salvation, we can imagine, with the hope that he will restore them to their land (cf. 1 Kgs 8:46, 50). Can God's saving wonders (נִסֵּי) and righteousness (צְדָקָה) be known while his people are languishing under the dominion of foreign nations similar to Egypt (Ps 88: 13)? His cry to the "God of my salvation" indicates that the psalmist has hope that God will rescue him. Childs notes, "The final form of the Psalter is highly eschatological in nature. It looks toward the future and passionately yearns for its arrival."⁶⁸

Yahweh Rules the Raging Sea (Ps 89:10)

Psalm 89:10 was briefly discussed above, but here we will further establish the argument that verse 10 is a reference to the crossing of the Red Sea. I will also show that this psalm combines creation and redemption, revealing that the author had a redemptive understanding of God's work at creation.

for as many days as he has afflicted (נָעַם) them (Ps 90:15), referring, in the context of the Psalter, to the affliction of the exile, as pictured in Ps 88. If this is correct, this dark psalm expresses the darkest time in Judah's history, the exile. Scholars identify Ps 88 as the darkest of all the Psalms: David M. Howard, "Psalm 88 and the Rhetoric of Lament," in *My Words Are Lovely: Studies in the Rhetoric of the Psalms*, ed. Robert L. Foster and David M. Howard (New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 132–46; Carleen Mandolfo, "Psalm 88 and the Holocaust: Lament in Search of a Divine Response," *BibInt* 15, no. 2 (2007): 151–70; Tate, "Psalm 88"; Irene Nowell, "Psalm 88: A Lesson in Lament," in *Imagery and Imagination in Biblical Literature: Essays in Honor of Aloysius Fitzgerald, F.S.C.*, ed. Lawrence Boadt and Mark S. Smith (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 2001), 105–18. Finally the place of Ps 88 in the Psalter in Book 3, a Book mainly about the time between Solomon and the beginning of the exile, suggests that the lament be read as the mourning of Yahweh's covenant people (cf. v 1) under his wrath.

Similarly Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 285–286; Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 265; Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 196.

⁶⁸Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 518.

Creation and Redemption Intermingled

Verse 10 falls in the context of allusions to both the creation in Genesis 1–2, redemption (the crossing of the Red Sea), and the Davidic covenant. Yahweh’s covenant with David receives the spotlight in the entire psalm, while creation and the crossing of the Red Sea serve as a backdrops and prototypes.

The davidic covenant mirrors creation: The way that Ethan the Ezrahite presents the Davidic covenant insinuates that it is another installment of the pattern established at the creation of the world.⁶⁹ Ethan uses the same verb for the establishment of heaven, David’s throne, and his offspring. Yahweh established (כִּין) the heavens (v. 3), promised he will establish (כִּין) David’s offspring (v. 5), and will establish (כִּין) his covenant with him forever (v. 22). Just as Yahweh established the sun and the moon, so shall he establish (כִּין) David’s throne (vv. 37–38). The comparative particles “as the moon” (כִּי־הַיָּרֵחַ) and “as the sun” (כִּי־הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ) clearly intimate that what Yahweh is doing with David takes its cue from the creation of the sun and the moon. Yahweh’s work in creation and the Davidic covenant are the twofold basis of the psalmist’s security. Goldingay draws a similar conclusion in the following selection:

David’s successors are to be established and built up as securely as Yhwh’s commitment and truthfulness are established and built up in the cosmos . . . Yhwh’s commitment is established and built up in the heavens (expressed and manifested there) as it is also built up and established (expressed and manifested) in connection with David’s throne. In effect, Yhwh thus accepts the force of the analogy between these: the commitment and truthfulness embodied in the heavens and in Yhwh’s relationship with David’s offspring and throne will mirror each other.⁷⁰

In addition, Yahweh promises that his אֱמֻנָה and חֶסֶד shall be with David forever (v. 25). Yahweh’s faithfulness and steadfast love, like the sun and the moon, will

⁶⁹Hamilton has a succinct and very helpful discussion on the ways that biblical authors make installments in typological patterns. See James M. Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology?: A Guide to the Bible’s Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 77–85.

⁷⁰ Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 42-89*, 2:669.

never be moved. According to Ethan, God created the sun and the moon to display his אֲמִינָה and חֶסֶד, which now undergird his covenant commitment to David his servant.⁷¹ From the perspective of the psalmist, Yahweh's works in creation and in history are one; they reflect each other.

Yahweh also promised David that he would exercise Adamic dominion. He said, שְׁמִתִּי בָיָם יָדוֹ וּבְנִהְרוֹת יָמִינוֹ (v. 26). The יָם and נָהָר symbolically refer to the edges of the earth's mainland (cf. Ps 72:8). In verse 14 it is Yahweh's יָד and יָמִין that rule the created order, but in verse 26 it is David's hand that rules. Like Adam, David's reign reifies Yahweh's rule on earth; it is the viceroyalty by which Yahweh will rule the sea and the rivers—all of creation (cf. Gen 1:26, 28). However, David's reign is not enjoyed at the moment. David is not yet crushing the head of his enemies; instead, the enemies mock his heels (עֲקֵב) (v. 52; cf. Gen 3:15).⁷²

David is a new Israel: Ethan also presents David as a new Israel. David is Yahweh's firstborn like Israel (v. 28; cf. Exod 4:22). Eschatologically, Jesus is the “firstborn” who stands in David and Israel's stead; he is the new David (son of David) and the new Israel, God's firstborn Son (cf. Matt 1:1; Col 1:16; Rev 1:5). Israel and David are both God's chosen ones (v. 4; cf. Deut 7:6ff.; Is 45:4; 65:9; Ps 105:6, 43).⁷³

⁷¹The challenge, however, that the people of God in exile face is that God's covenant faithfulness and steadfast love are not being experienced (cf. Ps 88:12). Book 4 of the Psalms answers this dilemma. Yahweh is still King and will bring about a new exodus, return from exile.

⁷²Like in Ps 88, the troubles faced in Ps 89 are from Yahweh: Ethan cries to Yahweh, “you have cast off and rejected,” “you are full of wrath against your messiah” (v. 39), “you have renounced your covenant with your servant,” “you have defiled his crown” (v. 40), “you have breached his walls; you have laid his strongholds in ruins” (v. 41), “you have exalted the right hand of his enemies, you have made all his enemies rejoice” (v. 43), “you have also turned back the edge of his sword, and you have made him stand in battle” (v. 44), “you have made his splendor cease, and cast his crown to the ground” (v. 45), “you have cut short the days of his youth, you have covered him with shame” (v. 46).

⁷³The fact that the noun בְּחִיר is used of David (Ps 89:4), Israel (Ps 105:6, 43; Is 45:4; 65:9; 1 Chr 16:13), Moses (Ps 106:23), and the end time chosen one of Yahweh (Is 42:1), in whom the corporate chosen ones will enjoy the new Eden (Isa 65:22), may further support the argument that David is a new Israel.

Yahweh makes a covenant (כרת ברית) with both of them (v. 4; cf. Exod 34:10).⁷⁴ David is a king-priest, just as Israel was a kingdom of priests (v. 28; cf. Exod 19:6). Both David and Israel enjoy Yahweh's covenant steadfast love (v. 29; cf. Exod 15:13). Yahweh expects David's descendants, like Israel, to keep (שמר) the same Torah (תורה), rules (משפטים), statutes (חקים), and commandments (מצוות) (vv. 31–32; cf. Deut 11:1; 17:19), and David's offspring receive the same threat for disobedience to Yahweh's Torah (vv. 32–33; cf. Deut 8:11–20) and the same promise of mercy based on Yahweh's faithfulness and covenant steadfast love (vv. 34–36; cf. Deut 4:24–31). Yahweh promises both David and Israel that he will not forsake his covenant with them (vv. 35; cf. Deut 4:31). Israel thus typologically mirrors David.

These typological associations of David and Israel support the suggestion that verse 10–11 are about God's work at the Red Sea. Psalm 65 uses similar language to picture God's work.

Ps 65:8 מִשְׁבֵּיתָ שְׁאוֹן יָמִים שְׁאוֹן גְּלִיָּהֶם וְהִמּוֹן לְאֲמִים

Ps 89:10 אֶתָּה מוֹשִׁיל בְּגֵאוֹת הַיָּם בְּשׂוֹא גְלִיֹּא אֶתָּה תִּשְׁבַּחֵם

In Psalm 65:8, as suggested above, David alludes to Yahweh's reign over the waters of creation. The use of the same language in Psalm 89:10 depicts Yahweh's creation of a people at the crossing of the Red Sea.⁷⁵ Thus, creation mirrors not only David's covenant, but also the Red Sea event, where God created a people for himself. Yahweh exercised

⁷⁴Although the term ברית it is not used in 2 Sam 7, Ethan implores its to stress Yahweh's responsibility and makes him responsible for the survival of David's dynasty (Knut M. Heim, "The [God-]forsaken King of Psalm 89: A Historical and Intertextual Enquiry," in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East* [Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1998], 300).

⁷⁵Goldingay argues based on Ps 89:5 that "in the heavens the wonders and truthfulness promised and put into effect for Israel are also recognized. Yet further, wonders (*pele*) made their first appearance in Scripture in the Song of Moses (Exod 15:11), so that it is possible here to think of Yhwh's act at the Red Sea (cf. Pss 77:11, 14 [12, 15]; 78:12)" (Goldingay, *Psalms*, *Psalms* 42-89, 2:670).

his control over the sea, stilling its waves for the redemption of his people.⁷⁶ Yahweh's control over the sea and its waves are poetic references to his dominion at the Red Sea.⁷⁷

The question "who is mighty like you" (Ps 78:9) finds its close correspondent in Exodus 15:2, 11. Goldingay also observes links to the Red Sea in the following excerpt:

Both the name Yah and the question 'who is like you?' correspond to Exod 15:2, 11 . . . verse 9[10] develops the point, further underlining the incomparability of Yhwh, like the phrases that follow in Exod 15:11. On the one side in this line is the tumultuous 'rising' and 'lifting' of the sea's waves, pretending to majesty such as belongs only to Yhwh (cf. 93:1; and the related verb in Exod 15:1, 21). The dynamic surging of the sea is a regular symbol for power asserted against God, but here the sea's dynamic is understated, and over against it is not a rebuke or a taming, as if the sea had real power and demanded the expenditure of serious energy by Yhwh, but simply regular 'ruling' and gentle 'quieting'.⁷⁸

The crushing of Rahab in Psalm 89:10 further supports that argument that verse 9 recalls the Red Sea.⁷⁹ Rahab figuratively refers to Pharaoh and his host whom Yahweh crushed at the Red Sea (cf. Is 30:7). The Targum supports this reading by adding "wicked Pharaoh" in verse 11. "You have crushed Rahab, *that is, wicked Pharaoh*, like one slain *by the sword*; with the *might* of your strong arm you have scattered your enemies" (Ps 89:11 PST). Note that the same arm (יָדוֹ) of Yahweh that crushes Rahab

⁷⁶Contra Kraus and Briggs, Ethan does not seem to hint a conflict between Yahweh and the sea. He states unequivocally that Yahweh is king over all and David will be his viceroy on earth. For those who argue for a conflict between Yahweh and the sea, see: Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 204; Charles Augustus Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. 2, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1907), 256; Dahood, *Psalms II*, 2:314; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 20:421.

⁷⁷Yahweh's stilling of the sea, as suggested in the discussion on Ps 65, could also refer to the primordial sea for which Yahweh set boundaries (cf. Gen 1:9-10). Cf. "Who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed'?" (Job 38:8-11).

⁷⁸Goldingay, *Psalms*, *Psalms 42-89*, 2:672. Ross draws a similar conclusion. See Ross, *Psalms 42-89*, 830.

⁷⁹V. 10 should not be construed to recall Baal's opponent, prince Yam and 'judge of the river,' as Day suggests (Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 7). Neither should it be read as an ANE myth according to Keel (Keel, *Symbolism*, 50). The context, the Targum, and other allusions listed above argue against the suggestion that the verse is reminiscent of Baal's opponent. From an inner-biblical perspective, the allusion is to the deliverance at the Red Sea.

(v. 11) will also crush David's foes (v. 24)—the exodus sees another installment in David.

In the context of Book 3 of Psalms, Psalm 89 is a prayerful response to the exile. Thus, when Ethan portrays the Davidic covenant in terms of a new creation and paints David as a new Israel, he is expressing hope that Yahweh will again create and save his people through a king who will sit on David's throne to rule over all (v. 26). Psalm 89 focuses on the eschatological implications of the Davidic covenant because of the nation's current miserable circumstance, the exile. First, Ethan restates the unending quality of David's dynasty: it is eternal (vv. 3, 4, 29, 30), inalterable (vv. 34, 38), and extends to David's offspring without an identified end point (vv. 29–30, 33, 37).

Though the situation is dark, Ethan commits himself to singing of Yahweh's covenant steadfast love forever (v. 2). The fluctuations between complaints in the present plight and outbursts of confidence in Yahweh insinuate an eschatological perspective in the writer's mind.⁸⁰ While it expresses concerns that Yahweh has broken his covenant with David, the psalm is a prayer to Yahweh, indicating that there is still hope that Yahweh will act in accordance with his steadfast love.

The final verse (v. 53) is overlaid with expectancy of Divine response. "The addition of v. 53 ('Blessed be the Lord forever. Amen and Amen') right after the emotional lamentations and complaints of vv. 39-52 is inexplicable or cynical, unless one assumes that v. 53 expresses a belief that the Lord would surely answer the requests of vv. 39-52."⁸¹ Knut Heim also observes an eschatological perspective in Psalm 89 because the psalm demands a response. He states the following:

The Psalm's Finale Demands a Response. The lament carries right through to the

⁸⁰Childs was very insightful on this point in his discussion of eschatological interpretation of the Psalms. See Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 517–18.

⁸¹Heim, "The (God-)forsaken King of Psalm 89," 304.

end of the psalm proper. The tension between the divine promise and its apparent failure finds no resolution. The *Urklage*, ‘How long, O Lord!’ (v. 47) hangs as if in mid-air, awaiting the divine response. The two questions in v. 47 are rhetorical, implying a negative answer: No, the Lord will not forever hide himself; his anger may burn, but *not* like fire, not at least to the point that the object set aflame is entirely consumed. Similarly, the question in v. 50, ‘Lord, where is your steadfast love of old, which by your faithfulness you swore to David?’ puts a legal claim on God to fulfil his covenant obligations. The tension in the psalm will not be alleviated until the Lord has answered. In an exilic or postexilic context, without restored national sovereignty and without the restoration of the Davidic line to the throne, the psalm’s demand for the Lord to fulfil[sic] his covenant obligations continues to sound with urgency.⁸²

Conclusion

Ethan interprets the Davidic covenant in light of both creation and the exodus, portraying the Davidic king as the installment of a new Israel to whom creation pointed. Yahweh’s kingship is rooted in creation and redemption.⁸³ If my assertion is correct that the exodus from Egypt builds on creation and that Ethan presents the Davidic covenant as patterned after creation and the exodus, then this psalm shows that these three events are closely related. Creation finds three installments: in the exodus, the Davidic covenant, and the *eschaton*—the culmination that Ethan hopes for during Israel’s exile.

Conclusion

According to the study of the water motif in Book 3 of the Psalter, there are intentional and clear allusions to the exodus from Egypt in this Book in all psalms with water imagery, except for Psalm 88. As noted above, the Book is best interpreted in light of the exile. God’s people are in exile, under God’s wrath (Ps 88), because of their transgressions. As Solomon prayed:

If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near, yet if they turn their heart in the land to which

⁸²Ibid., 305–6.

⁸³Similarly, J. J. M. Roberts, “The Enthronement of Yhwh and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language of the Psalms,” *CBQ* 64, no. 4 (2002): 679.

they have been carried captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captors, saying, 'We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,' if they repent with all their mind and with all their heart in the land of their enemies, who carried them captive, and pray to you toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city that you have chosen, and the house that I have built for your name, then hear in heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause and forgive your people who have sinned against you, and all their transgressions that they have committed against you, and grant them compassion in the sight of those who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them (for they are your people, and your heritage, which you brought out of Egypt, from the midst of the iron furnace). Let your eyes be open to the plea of your servant and to the plea of your people Israel, giving ear to them whenever they call to you. For you separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to be your heritage, as you declared through Moses your servant, when you brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God (1 Kgs 8:46–53)

According to 1 Kings 8:53, the exodus is the foundation of Israel's hope that God will hear them when they repent and pray to him. Thus, while in exile, the psalmists recall the exodus, alluding to it through water imagery, in order to sustain their hope, as they pray to Yahweh, the God of their Salvation, asking him to save them and re-stage the exodus to restore them to their land.

CHAPTER 5

THE WATER MOTIF IN BOOK 4

In this chapter, I will examine seven psalms, arguing that the use of water in these psalms is reminiscent of the historical accounts, which include creation, the Garden of Eden, flood, and exodus. Like in Book 3 of the Psalms, all occurrences of the water imagery evoke events from Israel's recorded history.

Watery Echoes of the Exodus (Ps 93:3–4)

Psalms 93 celebrates God's reign over creation and in redemption through allusions to the Red Sea. Allusions to the Red Sea are established through verbal links, one of which is based on the Qumran (4QPs^b) variant reading נִוָּה in verse 5. I will make the case for interpreting the use of water in verses 3–4 in light of the exodus allusions in the psalm.¹

Goldingay and Schaefer argue that the waters in verse 3 are subterranean waters that appear in oceans surrounding the world's land mass, pounding upon its shores, and gushing through the earth in springs and rivers. These waters, they argue, threatened to overwhelm the land until Yahweh put them under constraint back at the beginning (cf. Gen 1:9–10). By this argument, they conclude that Psalm 93 speaks of

¹The argument for allusions to earlier Scriptures is against the proponents of a *Chaoskampf*. Proponents of this view include Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and the Bible*, CBQMS 26 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1994), 161, 170; John Gray, "Hebrew Conception of the Kingship of God: Its Origin and Development," *VT* 6, no. 3 (1956): 268–85; John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (New York: Cambridge, 1985), 3, 19, 35–37; J. H. Eaton, *The Psalms: A Historical and Spiritual Commentary* (London: T&T Clark International, 2003), 331–32; James Luther Mays, *Psalms, Interpretation* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994) 301; James Donald Shenkel, "An Interpretation of Psalm 93:5," *Bib* 46, no. 4 (1965): 401–16.

Yahweh's sovereignty in the created world rather than in the realm of Israel's historical experience.² While this line of argument may seem convincing, the verbal and thematic links that this psalm shares with Israel's history are too strong to be ignored.³

Echoes of the Exodus

Yahweh reigns: Yahweh's acts in creation and redemption show that he reigns. Although the clause *יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ* occurs once, its placement as the first clause hints that it is the focus of the entire psalm.⁴ Moreover, the clause *נִכּוֹן כִּסְאָךְ* (v. 2) and the phrase *אֲדִיר בְּמְרוֹם יְהוָה* (v. 4) expand the concept of Yahweh's reign to the entire psalm. "Establishing a throne" and "Yahweh's exalted might" reassert his reign.

With the clause *יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ* the author likely alludes to Exodus 15:18. The clause *יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ* occurs seven times in the OT, five in the Psalter (Pss 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1; 146:10) and once in Chronicles (1 Chr 16:31), which quotes Psalm 96 with a few minor variations.⁵ Apart from these, *יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ* only appears in Exodus 15:18 in the imperfect, although the concept associated with Yahweh is present in other texts (cf. Deut 33:5;

²John Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 90-150*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 70–71; cf. Konrad Schaefer, *Psalms*, Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry, ed. David W. Cotter (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 232.

³Unlike Sylva who suggests verbal, stylistic, and ideological links mainly to Ugaritic literature in general and to Baal and Yamm myth in particular, although he does not advocate for a conflict between Yahweh and the sea. See Dennis D. Sylva, "The Rising נהרות of Psalm 93: Chaotic Order," *JSOT* 36, no. 4 (2012): 471–82.

⁴This clause has received a lot of attention since Mowinckel proposed that it should be translated "Yahweh has become king" (Sigmund Mowinckel, *Psalmestudier*, vol. 1 [Kristiana: J. Dybwad, 1921], 6–8). Michel counters Mowinckel arguing that the clause *יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ* (subject before verb) does not show how Yahweh has become king, but how he acts as king (Diethelm Michel, "Studien Zu Den Sogenannten Thronbesteigungspsalmen," *VT* 6, no. 1 [1956]: 65; cf. Anthony Gelston, "Note on יהוה מלך," *VT* 16, no. 4 [1966]: 507–12). Following Michel, Kraus argues that the clause be rendered "Yahweh is king" (Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2000], 233–34). Howard observes, "Michel's conclusion has prevailed, and no major English Bible version translates the clause following Mowinckel" (David M. Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93-100* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997], 36).

⁵It is difficult to determine why the author of Chr made these alterations.

Num 23:21). As we can see, Yahweh's kingship is not a dominant image in early Scriptures.⁶ The infrequency of the clause and concept in the Pentateuch makes it most likely that the single occurrence of the clause in Exodus 15:18 informed the psalmist's understanding of Yahweh's reign.

In a sense, Yahweh reign was experienced at the Red Sea (Exod 15:18) unlike anytime before then; at the Red Sea he acted with grandeur to save his people (Exod 15:1, 21). Before this, Yahweh was no doubt reigning in a nominal sense, but he was not asserting kingly authority over Egypt before he acted on behalf of his people Israel. The exodus was the occasion when Yahweh established his throne in the heavens for the deliverance of Israel, his people (Ps 103:19).⁷ The psalmists pick up this concept and expand it, such that Yahweh the king receives cosmic praise both as Creator of the world and as Redeemer of Israel.⁸ The rare frequency of יהוה מלך outside the Psalms argues for a possible connection between Psalm 93 and Exodus 15:18.

4QPs^b reading of Psalm 93:5: The Qumran's variant reading of verse 5 provides another link between Psalms 93 and Exodus 15. In 4QPs^b verse 5b reads לביתך נוה־קדש יהוה לארך ימים. Following this reading, the phrase נוה־קדש associates the psalm to Exodus 15. Traditionally, verse 5b is translated “holiness befits (נֶאֱחָה) your house,” with נֶאֱחָה analyzed as the *pilel* of נָאָה.⁹ Koehler and Baumgartner also recognize that the form נָאָה in Psalm 93:5 is questionable, which further suggests that it would be preferable to

⁶Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 90-150*, 3:67.

⁷Ibid.

⁸VanGemen also makes a similar observation, “The psalms, while ascribing kingship to Yahweh, explore the significance of Yahweh's rule for Israel, the nations, and creation” (Willem A. VanGemen, *Psalms*, rev. ed., in vol. 5 of *EBC*, ed. Tremper Longman and David E. Garland [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008], 119–20).

⁹Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *BDB* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906). s.v. “נָאָה.” Most English versions follow this rendering. Cf. ESV, NASB, NIV, RSV, ASV, NET.

follow the Qumran variant reading, נוה.¹⁰

Dahood parses the MT נִאָוֶה as a finite form of נוה, and supplies its object based on the suffix on לְבֵיתָהּ, taking the preposition לְ to mean “in,” קִדְשׁ as a collective reference to heavenly council (the holy ones, gods), and he finds in עֲדֵתֶיךָ the Ugaritic noun ‘d/’dt “throne”.¹¹ Kselman observes that Dahood’s reading is not impossible, but he suggests that a simpler and more elegant solution is provided by the Qumran variant לביתך נוה-קדשׁ.¹² The 4QPs^b variant, נוה-קדשׁ, with נוה which refers to the “abode” of shepherds or flock, or in poetic passages to habitation in general,¹³ forms a parallel with נוה קדשׁ in Exodus 15:13.¹⁴ The exact phrase in both passages suggests that the psalmist depends on Exodus 15. In Psalm 93:5, the preposition לְ can either be a locative “in”¹⁵ or an emphatic “surely.”¹⁶ The emphatic makes more sense, although it is a rare meaning of לְ.¹⁷ “Your testimonies are highly affirmed, surely your house is a holy abode, O Yahweh,

¹⁰Ludwig Köhler and Walter Baumgartner, *HALOT*, rev. ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2001) s.v. “נֹוֶה.”

¹¹S. J. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II: 51–100*, vol. 2 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1968), 342–44. Similarly, Shenkel, “Interpretation of Psalm 93.”

¹²Kselman argues that the praise of the king of the gods by the heavenly court is a motif found elsewhere in archaic Hebrew poetry, referring to the “sons of God” in Ps 29. He takes “sons of God” as divine beings who praise Yahweh in a heavenly abode (John S. Kselman, “Sinai and Zion in Psalm 93,” in *David and Zion* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004], 70). Howard also prefers the Qumran variant (David M. Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93–100* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997], 41).

¹³Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *BDB*, s.v. “נֹוֶה;” Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93–100*, 41.

¹⁴Similarly, William Henry Propp, *Exodus 1–18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 532–33.

¹⁵“In your house, (your) holy habitation” Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93–100*, 41.

¹⁶“Surely your house is a holy habitation” Kselman, “Sinai and Zion in Psalm 93,” 71.

¹⁷Ibid. Both the locative and emphatic use of לְ are rare but most grammarians suggest that there is an emphatic use of לְ, while noting that it is not common (Ronald J. Williams, *Williams’ Hebrew Syntax*, ed. John Beckman, 3rd ed. [Toronto, LDN: University of Toronto, 2007], 111; Gesenius, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, 458). Waltke and O’Connor observe that there are three places in a clause where the emphatic *lamed* can occur, one of which fits the Qumran text of Ps 93:5b: it can occur before a noun in a verbless clause (Bruce K. Waltke and Michael P. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 211–12). The locative, “in” is not attested in any grammar consulted for this project.

forever.”

Yahweh’s testimonies (עֲדוּת): The term עֲדוּת also evokes an exodus allusion. The term is sometimes synonymous with חֶק, מִשְׁפָּט, מִצְוָה, and תּוֹרָה (cf. Deut 4:45; 6:17, 20; Jer 44:23) but adds the nuance of witness—Yahweh’s covenant contains a clear, affirmed witness to his character and demands.¹⁸ The noun עֲדוּת primarily refers to the testimony of the Ten Commandments on tablets of stones, a solemn divine charge kept in the Ark of the Covenant (Exod 25:21) and housed in the tabernacle,¹⁹ as seen in the phrases “the tablet of testimony” (cf. Exod 32:15) “the ark of the testimony” (cf. Exod 25:22), “the tabernacle of the testimony (cf. Exod 32:21), and “the tent of the testimony” (cf. Num 9:15). This intimate association between עֲדוּת and the ark, tabernacle, and tent, which were symbols of Yahweh’s presence at the exodus, indicates strong covenantal overtones. Hiller makes a strong case for the term to be translated “covenant.”²⁰ The covenantal insinuations and the frequent use of the term in the exodus narrative suggest that its usage in our psalm bleeds the exodus motif into Psalm 93:5. The term עֲדוּת in Psalm 93:5 signifies a witness to and stands for Yahweh’s covenantal stipulations and expectations.²¹

Although Psalm 93:5 refers to Yahweh’s “house” or sanctuary, there still may be a link to the exodus. At the exodus the עֲדוּת was in the tabernacle, but in Zion it is

¹⁸The LXX constantly renders עֲדוּת as μαρτύριον, supporting the nuance of “witness.” See Sheldon H. Blank, “The LXX Renderings of Old Testament Terms for Law,” *HUCA* 7 (1930): 280.

¹⁹Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *BDB*, s.v. “עֲדוּת.” The term, עֲדוּת, refers “primarily in a “technical” sense to the tablets of the Mosaic law covenant placed in the ark of the covenant” (Stephen D Renn, ed., *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Word Studies for Key English Bible Words Based on the Hebrew and Greek Texts* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005], s.v. “Witness”).

²⁰Delbert R. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1969), 160–68.

²¹Similarly, Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93-100*, 40.

greatly affirmed in the sanctuary (Ps 93:5).²² During the exodus Yahweh's holy abode was the tabernacle where his decrees were kept, until the Zion sanctuary was built. Even before the sanctuary was built, Moses predicted during the exodus that Yahweh would bring Israel into his holy abode. In Exodus 15:13 Israel sang, יְהִלְתָּ בְּעֶזְרֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי־נֹה קְדֹשֶׁךָ. “Your holy abode” (נֹה קְדֹשֶׁךָ) could refer either to Sinai or to Zion's sanctuary, but according to Exodus 15:17, which calls “the holy habitation” of Yahweh “mountain” and “sanctuary” (מִקְדָּשׁ). This shows that the holy abode of Exodus 15:13 refers to the sanctuary in Zion.

Other lexical and thematic links: Exodus 15 and Psalm 93 share more lexical and thematic associations that further bear witness to Psalm 93's reliance on Exodus 15. We will examine four connections.

Both texts portray Yahweh's reign as central. Whereas the song in Exodus 15 culminates with the declaration יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ, Psalm 93 opens with it. In both positions, as the pinnacle (Exod 15:18) and as the preamble (Ps 93:1), the clause highlights the central point of both texts. Both passages use similar lexeme to assert that Yahweh's reign is eternal:

יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד Exod 15:18

יְהוָה מְלֹךְ . . . נִכּוֹן בְּסֻעָדָה מֵאֵז מְעוֹלָם אֶתָּה Ps 93:1–2

This declaration that Yahweh reigns is a recapitulation of the song of Moses²³ and a foundation for continued trust in Yahweh, since he not only reigns at the Red Sea, but

²²Kselman argues, “In the ancient hymn of Exodus 15, the deity's holy habitation is located in the area of Sinai. When the poet of Ps 93 uses the same phrase for Yahweh's dwelling place in the temple on Mount Zion, the psalmist is engaging in a process found elsewhere, the transfer of the role and status of Sinai to Yahweh's new dwelling place, Zion . . . the Zion tradition relocates Yahweh's holy dwelling place from Sinai to Zion; Mount Zion succeeds Mount Sinai to become the source of Torah, the preeminent role of Sinai; and the Sinai covenant is succeeded by the royal covenant, reliable and enduring” (Kselman, “Sinai and Zion in Psalm 93,” 73–75).

²³Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC, vol. 2 (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 361.

eternally. Israel must trust Yahweh always because his reign is not time-bound. Although this could be said of almost any passage in the OT, the two passages cited above state Yahweh's kingship as totally exclusive.²⁴

The two passages describe Yahweh as majestic. In Exodus 15:1, Yahweh acted majestically (גָּאֹה גָּאָה) and in Psalm 93:5 he is clothed in majesty (גָּאֹה לְבִישׁ). He is clothed in majesty, as if he has made himself ready for another majestic redemptive work like the one he accomplished at the Red Sea.

In Exodus 15:13, Yahweh led his people by his strength (נִהְלֵתָּ בְּעֶזְךָ), while in Psalm 93:1 he is girded with strength (עַזְּךָ הִתְאַזָּר), as though ready for action. Goldingay notes, "The psalm refers not to mere ceremonial robing in regalia but to Yhwh's taking up impressive battle equipment in connection with asserting kindly authority."²⁵

Both passages show Yahweh's reign as outspreading over the world, particularly the inhabited world and the waters. Exodus 15:18–19—"Yahweh will reign forever and ever. For . . . Yahweh brought back the waters of the sea upon them, but the people of Israel walked on dry ground in the midst of the sea"—grounds Yahweh's reign in his power over the Red Sea. Psalm 93:3–4 reveal his control over the waters as well. These links suggest that Exodus 15 and likely the entire exodus narrative were formative in the psalmist's mind.

From the exodus imageries in this psalm, we can see that Exodus 15:18 and the exodus narrative as a whole had a seminal influence on the mind of the author. The description of Yahweh's reign as exclusive from that of other gods originates from Exodus 15, which contains the victory song of Yahweh's defeat of Egypt and her gods

²⁴Scholars agree that the place of the clause "Yahweh reigns" in Ps 93 shows his reign as exclusive (cf. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 5:707; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 234; Dahood, *Psalms II*, 2:340). This is evident in Exod 15: 11, which says "Who is like you, O Yahweh, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?"

²⁵Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 90-150*, 3:68.

after the crossing of the Red Sea.²⁶ The phrase “Holy abode” and the term “testimony” are all exodus terminologies that entreat the readers of Psalm 93 to hear the author’s meditation on that historical event. Thus, the use of water in verses 3–4 could be understood in the context of these exodus allusions.

Yahweh Reigns over the Waters (vv. 3–4)

I will interpret these verses with the exodus story as its backdrop, given the allusions to that narrative in the psalm, as argued above. These verses are not referencing Canaanite mythology and the Babylonian creation epic, *Enuma Elish*.²⁷

Verse 4 contains lexical links to Exodus 15, which further argues for the author’s conscious dependence on the Exodus narrative. The only other place the adjective אֲדִירִים is used of water is Exodus 15:10 where it occurs together with יָם. The praise at the Red Sea, which culminated in the declaration יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד, shows the power of Yahweh’s reign. Yahweh blew the sea, and it enclosed Pharaoh’s hosts (כַּסְמוֹ); this sea (יָם) is further described as מַיִם אֲדִירִים (Exod 15:10).

Psalm 93 uses comparable lexeme for the waters over which Yahweh rules. Yahweh reigns over מַיִם אֲדִירִים מְשַׁבְּרֵי־יָם (Ps 93:4). Note similarities between these two verses:

Ps 93:4 מְשַׁבְּרֵי־יָם אֲדִירִים רַבִּים מַיִם

Exod 15:10 כַּסְמוֹ יָם צָלְלוּ כַּעֲוֶפֶת בְּמַיִם אֲדִירִים

There are also major differences between these two texts. In Psalm 93 אֲדִירִים designates מַיִם אֲדִירִים, but in Exodus 15 it describes מַיִם. Whereas the sea in Exodus 15 is an instrument of Yahweh’s wrath, in Psalm 93 Yahweh simply governs and rules over it.

²⁶Similarly, Gelston, “Note on יהוה,” 512.

²⁷Contra Dirk J. Human, “Psalm 93: Yahweh Robed in Majesty and Mightier than the Great Waters,” in *Psalms and Mythology*, ed. Dirk J. Human (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 147–69; Dahood, *Psalms II*, 2:341–42.

These variances are not strong enough to debilitate the link. First, whether Yahweh is using the sea as an instrument of wrath or not, both texts show him as sovereign over the waters. Second, the lexical variation can be explained in that מַיִם אֲדִירִים מְשַׁבְּרֵי־יָם parallels מַיִם רַבִּים, with יָם as synonymous to מַיִם.

The rare use of אֲדִיר to designate water makes the volume of the proposed link between Psalm 93 and Exodus 15 very loud. Following Beale's argument, with regards to inner-biblical interpretation, "ultimately, what matters most is uniqueness of a word, word combination, word order or even of theme,"²⁸ the distinct use of אֲדִיר for water enforces the suggested echo of Exodus 15 in Psalm 93.

The phrase מַיִם רַבִּים, which parallels מְשַׁבְּרֵי־יָם, often connotes the Red Sea in the Psalms. "Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters (מַיִם רַבִּים); yet your footprints were unseen. You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron" (Ps 77:20–21). Psalm 29 uses מַיִם רַבִּים for Red Sea,²⁹ and the close similarities between Psalm 93 and 29 may suggest that מַיִם רַבִּים in Psalm 93 has the same referent.³⁰

Conclusion

These points of connection between Psalm 93 and the Red Sea episode (Exod

²⁸G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 25.

²⁹See the discussion above of מַיִם רַבִּים in Ps 29.

³⁰Pss 93 and 29 have both lexical and thematic resemblances: Thematically, they proclaim the exclusivity of Yahweh, his sovereign rule over the waters and the land (29:3–5, 8; 93:2–4), in both Psalms despite all that is going on, the house of Yahweh, his sanctuary and Temple is secured (29:9; 93:5). Both psalms portray Yahweh as reigning eternally (29:10; 93:1, 2, 5), they both praise Yahweh's strength (29:1; 93:1). They portray surging tumultuous waters against which Yahweh wields his power and also controls (29:3; 93:3–4). Lexically, they share these phrases and terms: יהוה מֶלֶךְ (93:1) יהוה מֶלֶךְ (29:10), עוֹלָם for the eternality of Yahweh's throne (29:10; 93:2), מַיִם רַבִּים (29:3; 93:4), of the 54 occurrences of קוֹל in the Psalms, no other Psalms has as many occurrences as Ps 29 (7x), note that it occurs twice in Ps 93 as well (vv. 3, 4). Dahood also observes that Ps 93 finds its closest counterpart in Ps 29, a hymn "with similar motifs of victory, kingship, and praise of Yahweh" (Dahood, *Psalms II*, 2:339).

15) show that this psalmist is describing Yahweh's reign in light of his reign at the Red Sea.³¹ Yahweh will again destroy his enemies for the salvation of his people like he did at the Red Sea and bring them to his holy abode where his presence will always be with them. The sanctuary that was desecrated in Psalm 89 will be a holy abode. Yahweh will again rule over the waters as before for the good of his people. Yahweh who proved his strength and acted majestically at the Red Sea will act in same manner because he is still clothed in majesty and girded with strength. Yahweh will reign forever, and his covenant will be confirmed though now it may seem broken, as pictured in Psalm 89.

Watery Allusions to Creation (Ps 95:5)

The focus here is on verse 5, as I argue that this verse is a reference to the Genesis creation account (Gen 1:9–10) in the context of re-creation. The psalmist portrays Yahweh as one who created the sea and formed the dry land, but more prominently as one who re-creates, making a people for himself. The entire psalm, with verse 5 as an echo of Genesis 1:9–10, portrays a redemptive interpretation of creation; God's work in Genesis 1–2 relates to his work of redemption.³²

Praise to Yahweh who Creates

In verses 1–5 those for whom Yahweh is a rock of salvation (v. 1) are called to

³¹Tarazi associates the water in v. 3 to Leviathan, Rahab, and the dragon, which, as explored in Pss 74 and 89, these serpentine creatures figuratively refer to the foes Yahweh destroyed at the Red Sea. However, Tarazi sees in this verse the primeval waters: Paul Nadim Tarazi, "An Exegesis of Psalm 93," *VTQ* 35, no. 2–3 (1991): 143–44.

³²Briggs and Briggs argue that this psalm was originally two separate poems that were later merged. They state "the original Ps. had only two hexastichs v 1–6. To it was added a seam v 7 from 100:3, another originally independent Ps., probably a fragment of a historical Ps., giving a warning based on the experience of Israel in the wilderness, especially at Meribah v 7–11" (Charles Augustus Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. 2, ICC [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1907], 293). Contra Briggs, the fusion of the themes of creation and the wilderness wandering is no grounds to argue for this psalm as originally separate poems. We treat this psalm as a literary unit (cf. Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2000], 245; Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, WBC, vol. 20 [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990], 496–504).

sing and give thanks to him because of his sovereignty over the world, which he created. After the four cohortatives in verses 1-2, “let us sing,” “let us shout,” “let us come,” and “let us shout,” verses 3–5, which are introduced by *כִּי*, state the reason for the invitation to praise Yahweh: he is a great God and a great King over all gods (v. 3). The relative pronoun *אֲשֶׁר* introduces the next two verses, describing in detail how creation displays Yahweh’s greatness and kingship. In verse 4 the psalmist depicts Yahweh who holds the depths of the earth and the height of the mountains in his hand—Yahweh governs all creation from the depths of the earth to mountain peaks (v. 4).

In verse 5 the author observes Yahweh’s greatness and kingship with regards to the dry land and the seas. After he observes the world *vertically* in verse 4, the author proceeds to look at it *horizontally*. God is not only the ruler of heights and depths; he is also the master of the dry land and the seas. God is king everywhere because he created everything,³³ showing Genesis 1 as the background for this psalm.

Mowinckel, on the other hand, finds a reverberation of a creation myth in this psalm. The creation myth is about a dragon fight. Mowinckel quotes verse 3 as among those verses in which “Yahweh is King of the world because he has conquered Tiamat and created the world.”³⁴ This line of reasoning is improbable, given that the psalm does not indicate any battle between Yahweh and other beings or creation; the psalms simply declares that Yahweh is King over all, without any hints of a battle between Yahweh and the sea.³⁵

³³Cf. Samir Massouh, “Exegetical Notes: Psalm 95,” *TrinJ* 4, no. 1 (1983): 85; Briggs and Briggs, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:294; James Luther Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation (Louisville, John Knox, 1994), 305.

³⁴Sigmund Mowinckel, *Psalmstudien*, vol. 2 (Kristiania, Norway: J. Dybwad, 1921), 214.

³⁵One issue here is that in Gen 1:9–10 the sea and the dry ground are not made; God separates the sea and the dry land. Watson addresses this problem but also supports that argument that the background to Ps 95 is Gen 1. He argues “One must also be aware that the distinction between ‘making’ and ‘separating’ or ‘founding’, which seems so evident to moderns, may not originally have been a rigid one, and that apparently divergent creation accounts may effectively have been equated. Certainly, the

According to verse 5, God owns the sea and the dry land: אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ הַיָּם וְהוּא עָשָׂהוּ. The possessive לִי shows that Yahweh owns the sea (יָם). The fronting of the pronoun הוּא is for emphasis (he himself) and the pronominal suffix on עָשָׂהוּ is resumptive of הַיָּם. The verb עָשָׂה, although it has different nuances, refers to God's work of creation in Genesis 1–2, where it occurs twelve times.³⁶

The line וַיִּבְרָא יְדֵי יִצְרָו reinforces the allusion to creation. The verbs יָצַר, עָשָׂה, and בָּרָא are used interchangeably for God's work of creation,³⁷ so it is no surprise that the psalmist employs two of them here, with יָם and יִבְרָא as their objects. The nouns יָם and יִבְרָא form a merism that horizontally depicts the entire creation, matching the antithesis—mountains and the depths of the earth. The formation of the sea and dry land refers to Genesis 1:9–10 “And God said, ‘Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land (יִבְרָא) appear.’ And it was so. God called the dry land (יִבְרָא) Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas (יָם).” Genesis 1 is evidently the background to Psalm 95:1–5. The psalmist thus gives the invitation to praise Yahweh for his greatness and reign, which are must clearly evident in

frequent interchangeability of images employed in relation to creation would appear to suggest that they were not always understood literally, and that Israelite tradition was sufficiently fluid to encompass various modes of description without attributing great significance to their differences. In any case, the present portrayal offers no evidence of dependence on the mythic *Chaoshampf* view of creation, according to which the sea was not “made”, but subdued and confined; nor does it betray an awareness of a distinction in the intrinsic natures of the constituent elements of creation” (Rebecca Sally Watson, *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the Theme of "Chaos" in the Hebrew Bible* [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005], 219).

³⁶Gen 1:7, 11, 12, 16, 25, 26, 31; 2:2, 3, 4, 18.

³⁷Yahweh formed (יָצַר) man (Gen 2:7,8) and the beast of the fields (Gen 2:19); he made (עָשָׂה) the expanse (Gen 1:7), fruit trees (Gen 1:11, 12), the sun and the moon (Gen 1:16), beast (Gen 1:25), man (Gen 1:26), all creation (Gen 1:31; 2:2–3), the heaven and the earth (Gen 2:4); he also created (בָּרָא) the heaven and the earth (Gen 1:1; 2:4), sea creatures (Gen 1:21), man (Gen 1:27) and all creation (Gen 2:3). The fact that, at least in the Genesis account of creation, these verbs sometimes have similar objects or are used interchangeably, shows that they are synonyms contra Konkel who argues that יָצַר “is not a synonym with the usual words for the creation of the world, but is limited to particular acts of creation” (A. H. Konkel, “יָצַר,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997]). If יָצַר is limited to particular acts of creation, then the same can be said of the other two. An exhaustive examination of יָצַר indicates that it is a synonymous parallel to עָשָׂה and בָּרָא but it also maintains its unique nuance (Thomas E. McComiskey, “יָצַר,” in *TWOT*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Bruce K. Waltke, and Gleason L. Archer, [Chicago: Moody Press, 1980]).

that God created all things and owns all things.

Praise Yahweh the Creator of His People

The psalmist also calls for worship to Yahweh as the Creator of his people (Ps 95:6–7a). In verse 6, beginning with an imperative as in verse 1, the author extends the invitation to come (בֹּאוּ) with three hortatory cohortatives: let us worship, let us bow down, and let us kneel before Yahweh our maker. In verse 1 Yahweh is depicted as צוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל, but in verse 6 he is יְהוָה עֹשֵׂנוּ. The first person plural suffix refers to the people of God. Yahweh is not only the Rock of salvation, which Dahood rightly suggest alludes to the exodus,³⁸ he is also the Maker of his people (cf. Hos 8:14). This description of Yahweh as Maker of his people is reminiscent of Deuteronomy 32:6b, which says, “Is he not your father, who bought you, who made you, and established you?”³⁹

The psalmist links the creation of the world and the making of God’s people by the use of the verb עָשָׂה. It is as though the creation of God’s people was an installment of the creation of the earth—a salvific interpretation of creation. The creation of Israel somewhat repeats Yahweh’s work of the creation of all things.⁴⁰ The participial form יֹהֵךְ עֲשֵׂנוּ shows that it is characteristic of Yahweh to create covenant people; he did not only do it at the exodus from Egypt, he always creates people for himself. Even the eschatological people of God are Yahweh’s creation (cf. 2 Cor 4:6).

Verse 7 states the reason for praising Yahweh the Maker of Israel, with implicit allusions to the exodus: “because he is our God and we are the people of his

³⁸Dahood, *Psalms II*, 2:353.

³⁹The verbs “bought,” “create,” and “establish” are synonyms in this verse and restate Exod 15:16, “the people . . . you have bought.”

⁴⁰Similarly, Delitzsch observes, “By reason of the fact that Jahve is the Owner (cf. 1 Sam. 2:8), because the Creator of all things, the call to worship, which concerns no one so nearly as it does Israel, the people, which before other peoples is Jahve’s creation, viz., the creation of His miraculously mighty grace, is repeated” (Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. 3 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952], 86).

pasture and the sheep of his hand.” When the author speaks of God’s pasture (מִרְעֵיתָה) and Israel as God’s flock (צֹאן), he assumes that Yahweh is their Shepherd. The exodus was the quintessential occasion when Yahweh shepherded Israel (cf. Pss 23; 77:15–20; 78:52–55). Consequently the depiction of Israel as Yahweh’s flock makes explicit the implicit allusion to the exodus in verse 6—Yahweh our Maker.

The Creator of the world (vv. 1–5) and the Maker of Israel (v. 6) is also Israel’s Shepherd (v. 7; cf. Ps 100:3). Tate observes that the strongest parallel to the dual role of Yahweh as Creator and Shepherd is found in Isaiah 40–66.⁴¹ According to Isaiah, at the *eschaton* (the new exodus) Yahweh who created and formed Israel (Isa 43:1) will “tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom and gently lead those that are with young” (Isa 40:11). The psalmist perhaps is foreshadowing the new exodus when Christ would shepherd his people. In John 10:11–14, Jesus presents himself as the unmatched Shepherd of Yahweh’s people.⁴² Psalm 95:7d–11 concludes the psalm, warning its readers not to be unfaithful like the first generation at Meribah and Massah (Exod 17:1–7; Num 20:1–13). The focus on Meribah and Massah, two main instances of rebellion during the exodus from Egypt, makes clear the connection to the Exodus implicit in verse 7.⁴³

⁴¹Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 20:501.

⁴²Köstenberger rightly observes, “The metaphor of the ‘flock,’ an everyday feature of Jewish life, pervades the OT . . . God himself was known as Israel’s Shepherd (e.g., Gen. 48:15; 49:24; Ps. 23:1; 28:9; 77:20; 78:52; 80:1; Isa. 40:11; Jer. 31:9; Ezek. 34:11–31), and his people are the ‘sheep of his pasture’ (e.g., Ps. 74:1; 78:52; 79:13; 95:7; 100:3; Ezek. 34:31). Part of this imagery was also the notion of chief shepherd and assistant shepherds and of hired hands. David, who was a shepherd before he became king, became a prototype of God’s shepherd. Jesus saw himself as embodying the characteristics and expectations attached to this salvation-historical biblical figure as the Good Shepherd par excellence” (Andreas J. Köstenberger, “John,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 462).

⁴³Peter Enns, “Creation and Re-Creation : Psalm 95 and Its Interpretation in Hebrews 3:1–4:13,” *WTJ* 55, no. 2 (1993): 256. Enns argues for the unity of the psalm based on the thematic relationship between vv. 1–5 and 6–11. For more the unity of this psalm, see Massouh, “Exegetical Notes.”

Conclusion

In Psalm 95:1–5 the ground for worship is that Yahweh is the Creator of the dry land and the sea. In verses 6–7a the exodus is another work of creation that inspires the faithful to worship. Verses 7d–11 focuses on the key rebellion of Israel in the wilderness, warning the present people of God to avoid such unfaithfulness. As examined above, Psalm 95 fuses the themes of creation and redemption. According to Mowinckel, in Psalm 95, “Yahweh, creator of the world and of Israel, has come to take his seat on his throne and receive the homage of his people.”⁴⁴ These two themes show a soteriological understanding of creation; redemption is an installment of the work of creation.

Echoes of Creation (Ps 96:11)

In verses 1–6 the author calls for universal praise to Yahweh. He invites all the earth (כָּל-הָאָרֶץ) to praise Yahweh and calls on God’s people to recount Yahweh’s glory and wonders among the nations (בְּגוֹיִם) and among all the peoples (בְּכָל-הָעַמִּים) (v. 3). All the gods of the peoples are futile; they cannot be real gods because only Yahweh created the heavens (v. 5). On earth, Yahweh’s might and glory are evident in his sanctuary (v. 6).

In the second part of the psalm, verses 7–13, the author calls on the families of the peoples to ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength (vv. 7, 8). The phrase מְשַׁפְּחוֹת עַמִּים alludes to the Abrahamic covenant in which God promised saying, “in you all the families (מְשַׁפְּחוֹת) of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen 12:3). The phrase מְשַׁפְּחוֹת עַמִּים parallels כָּל-הָעַמִּים (v. 3) and כָּל-הָאָרֶץ (vv. 1, 9). In verse 3 the psalmist commands his audience to recount Yahweh’s glory and wonders among all the nations, who were once

⁴⁴Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), 1:156. Mowinckel further argues that the second part is a renewal of the covenant through the mouth of a cultic prophet, which imposes on the people “the supposed commandments of Mount Sinai and of Kadesh (ibid., 178.) . While it is possible that there is a covenant renewal motif in this psalm, it does not seem obvious and to maintain such a stance would be to read into the psalm (Similarly, Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 20:499).

his enemies (Ps 2:2), and in verse 7 all the families of the peoples are summoned to praise Yahweh, as though responding to the wonders and the glory about which they have heard (Ps 96:3).

The author also invites them to come to the courts (הֶחָצֵר) of Yahweh (v. 8). Some psalms use הֶחָצֵר as a synonym for the temple (Pss 65:5; 84:3, 11; 92:14), illustrating the reverence Israel had for the courts of the temple, the most holy place. To be in the precincts of the temple must have been the greatest joy of any faithful believer.⁴⁵

In verses 10–13 Yahweh’s reign implies that he is the Creator of the world and the one who will judge in uprightness (v. 10). This judgment is a reason for joy; so all of Yahweh’s creation is called upon to celebrate his coming (vv. 6, 10, 11).

We must give special attention to verse 11 where the author makes a reference to the sea, which the psalmist commands to roar in praise to Yahweh. The author poetically personifies Yahweh’s creation to orchestrate cosmic praise to God.⁴⁶ The heavens and earth, the sea and all its fullness (הַיָּם וּמָלְאוֹ), the fields and all in them, and the trees of the thicket are summoned to rejoice (vv. 11–12). The phrase הַיָּם וּמָלְאוֹ is reminiscent of God’s blessing on the sea creatures, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas” (Gen 1:22).⁴⁷ The water and its fullness, part of the world Yahweh established along with the rest of creation, are summoned to rejoice.⁴⁸ The psalmist

⁴⁵ Mark F. Roeker, “הֶחָצֵר,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997).

⁴⁶ Contra Keel who sees not mere poetic personification here, but an ancient Near Eastern concept of the universe (Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*, trans. Timothy J. Hallett [New York: Seabury Press, 1978], 56).

⁴⁷ This line of reasoning is incongruous with Dahood who sees here mainly a Ugaritic parallel (Dahood, *Psalms II*, 2:358).

⁴⁸ Similarly, Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 20:514. Tate observes a renewed creation in our psalm and, about the trees in v. 12, he notes “The trees of the forest (in v. 12) are singled out to shout for joy at the coming of Yahweh. Perhaps this is only an incidental feature of the natural world, but trees in temples seem to have been important in the ancient world . . . The courts of the temple in Jerusalem probably had fine olive trees and cedars growing in them (see Pss 52:10; 92:13–15; note the “trees of Yahweh” in Ps 104:16–

seems to long for a renovation of creation at the coming judgment of Yahweh (v. 13), which will result in the heaven and the earth, the sea and its fullness, the fields and all in them, and the trees of the thicket jubilating as the families of the earth in turn praise in Yahweh's courts.⁴⁹

Conclusion

The renovation that the psalmist is longing for illustrates a futuristic interpretation of history; he looks back to God's work at creation (Gen 1) and longs for a future renewal of that creation that would effect cosmic joy in nature and all the peoples will dwell in the courts of Yahweh's temple.⁵⁰ Accordingly VanGemeeren says, "Though the focus of the psalm lies on the present, the theological and canonical function stretches to the eschatological hope, when God's rule is fully established."⁵¹ The reference to creation is set in the context of redemption, again showing that the psalmists saw a link between these two acts of God.

Allusion to Creation and Desire for a Renewed Creation (Ps 98:7–8)

Psalm 98 is robed in the same garments as Psalm 96. The sea and rivers in

17; cf. Ps 84:4). In Isa 55:12 the "trees of the field" (עצי השדה) will clap their hands at the new exodus of the Israelites from exile into an Eden-like life (also note, of course, the trees in the garden in Gen 2 and see the description of the great tree in the garden of God" in Ezek 31:1–9)" (Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 20:515).

⁴⁹Foster observes that the absence of the OT covenant people of God, Israel and Judah, puts the nations at the center of Yahweh's eschatological activity. He notes, "Conspicuously absent from Psalm 96 is any explicit reference to the people of God: no references to Israel, Judah, Jerusalem, Zion, or the line of David. The traditional people of God find themselves decentered in Psalm 96, no longer the focal point, but with their vision turned outward toward the relationship between YHWH and the nations. This psalm invites those who claim fealty to God to gain a new vision of space, some distance from which to see that they do not have sole claim to a relationship with God and, from at least one perspective, perhaps do not even have claim to the central relationship" (Robert L. Foster, "A Plea for New Songs: A Missional/Theological Reflection on Psalm 96," *CurTM* 33, no. 4 [2006]: 289).

⁵⁰Briggs incorrectly and without any evidence suggest that the psalmist's longing was probably fulfilled in the overthrow of the Persian empire by Alexander the Great (Briggs and Briggs, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:303).

⁵¹VanGemeeren, *Psalms*, 5:725.

verses 7–8, like Psalm 96, illustrate a reflection on the creation of the world.⁵² The author intermingles redemption and creation to express his longing for a transformed creation.

The clause יִרְעֻם הַיָּם וּמִלְאֵוּ (Ps 98:7) repeats Psalm 96:11b but varies a little in its scope, since it not only anticipates nature rejoicing, but also the world and its inhabitants (humans) shouting for joy. As in Psalm 96, the lexeme similarities between Psalm 98:7 and Genesis 1:22 show that the author is reflecting on the creation narrative, longing for a cosmic transformation.

פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמִלְאֵוּ אֶת־הַיָּם בַּיָּמִים Gen 1:22

יִרְעֻם הַיָּם וּמִלְאֵוּ Ps 98:7

In Genesis God blesses the sea creatures to multiply and fill the earth; in Psalm 98, as in Psalm 96, the sea that God blessed with its creatures shout in praise to their Creator. In Genesis God blesses the sea creatures to procreate; in Psalm 98 the sea and its creatures bless God.⁵³ The move from the sea and its fullness to the inclusion of the rivers, the inhabitants of the earth, and the mountains is the psalter's attempt to connote the entirety of creation.

The language of nature rejoicing, clapping, and shouting to Yahweh depicts a renewed curse-free creation. The fact that nature breaks forth in praise and joy in the context of a cosmic disclosure of Yahweh's salvation demonstrates that Yahweh has removed the curse on nature through the redemption of man. Yahweh has made known his salvation (יְשׁוּעָה), he has revealed his righteousness (צִדְקָה) before the nations (v. 2; cf.

⁵²Pss 96 and 98 share several lexical and thematic links, but it is beyond the scope of this project to explore that except to note that the similarities insinuate that the use of the water imagery is similar as well. For a good discussion on the similarities see, Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93-100*, 144–50.

⁵³Similarly, Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 265; Briggs and Briggs, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:308; Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation, 313; Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3:98; Tremper Longman III, "Psalm 98: A Divine Warrior Victory Song," *JETS* 27, no. 3 (1984): 271; Alphonse Maillot and André Lelièvre, *Les Psaumes: Traduction Nouvelle et Commentaire* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1966), 285.

Luke 2:30–31; 3:6), and all the ends of the earth have seen his salvation (v. 3b).

Therefore, the curse on creation is removed through man's redemption.⁵⁴

Moreover, the *הָסֵד* and *אֶמּוּנָה*, which Yahweh seemingly disregarded in Psalm 89:50, he now remembers (*זָכַר הָסֵדוֹ וְאֶמּוּנָתוֹ לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל*) (v.3a), and they will endure forever (Ps 100:5). This is an eschatological vision; God's people, although in shambles now (cf. Ps 89), will again experience Yahweh's *הָסֵד* and *אֶמּוּנָה*. Yahweh's recollection of his *הָסֵד* and *אֶמּוּנָה* to the house of Israel will have cosmic effects: the ends of the earth will see Yahweh's salvation (v. 3b; cf. Ps 22:27).

Conclusion

The psalm celebrates Yahweh's remembrance of his covenant, steadfast love, and faithfulness to Israel, which has cosmic effects. The nations see his salvation, and the earth, which he created, is transformed such that the seas are shouting in praise to Yahweh and the rivers as clapping for joy.

Watery Depiction of Creation, Flood, and Eden (Ps 104)

Davidson observes that Psalm 104 “contains some of the finest lyric poetry in the Old Testament.”⁵⁵ “Variety and breadth, sharpness of detail and sustained vigour of thought put this psalm of praise among the giants.”⁵⁶ Contra Day who argues for the

⁵⁴Longman correctly links the apparently curse-free creation in our psalm to Paul's hope for the renewed creation in Rom 8. He states, “Nature owes praise to Yahweh because he created it (Psalm 95), but special interest attends the connection between nature's praise and the future judgment. The connection may be explained by Rom 8:18 ff., a passage that describes the ‘eager expectation’ felt by the creation for the future ‘glorious freedom.’ God had created creation ‘good’ (the story of Gen 1), but man had perverted the goodness of creation through sin (the story of Gen 3). The result was the curse and the subjection of the world to frustration. Paul speaks in the light of this present status of the world and looks forward with the creation to the future redemption. Psalm 98 with its association of the rejoicing of creation and future judgment may be seen as an OT anticipation of Rom 8:18-27” (Longman, “Psalm 98,” 271).

⁵⁵Robert Davidson, *The Vitality of Worship: A Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1998), 339.

⁵⁶Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC, vol. 16 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 400.

Egyptian Akhenaten hymn and Canaanite mythology as the background of the water imagery in this psalm,⁵⁷ I will argue that the imagery is a medley of three Pentateuchal narratives: creation, flood, and the Red Sea crossing. These three themes build the variety and breadth of the psalm. The water in verses 3, 6–9, 10–18, and 25–26 also allude to a range of resonances from the Pentateuch.

Chambers on the Water (v. 3)

In verse 3 the author describes Yahweh's establishment of his chamber on the waters.⁵⁸ A reference to the creation account, particularly Genesis 1:6–7, is presumed in this verse.⁵⁹ Allen supports this idea, saying, "We are told that Yahweh first created the tent or firmament of the heavens and above it built a palace, over the celestial reservoir of water (cf. Gen 1:6–7; Ps 29:10; Amos 9:6)."⁶⁰ Briggs also observes an allusion to the

⁵⁷Day argues, "Ps 104 is perhaps best understood as a wisdom psalm. This would account for its Egyptian background—as is well known, it is dependent in some way on Akhenaten's hymn to the sun god (Aton)—for the wise men were in close touch with Egypt . . . besides Egyptian influence this psalm also shows an ultimate dependence on Canaanite mythology, as is attested by the allusion to the *Chaoskampf* and accompanying storm theophany . . . Yahweh's onslaught against the chaos waters was in the thunder (cf. v 7), a motif ultimately deriving from the Canaanite god Baal who manifested himself in the storm against the waters. Vv. 3–4 also apply storm theophany language to Yahweh, the parallel in Ps 18:11 (ET 10) confirming that it too is to be understood as being directed against the chaos waters" (John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* [New York: Cambridge, 1985], 29–30). Day's line of argument strips the psalmist from the biblical theological poetry he aimed to communicate. We will show, against Day, that the psalmist ultimately depended on the Pentateuch not Canaanite mythology in crafting this beautiful piece, Ps 104.

⁵⁸Johnson argues for a strange translation of the second half of the verse under consideration, "rider through the desert" (Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* [Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2006], 78. Similarly, Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 31). It is difficult to see how this translation is derived from the MT text.

⁵⁹Contra Allen who argues that the description in v. 3 is derived from Baal imagery (Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, WBC, vol. 21 [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983], 45). Day follows the same line of argument: "this imagery ultimately derives from Baal" (Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 30). Similarly, Norman C. Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal: A Conflict of Religious Cultures: A Study in the Relevance of Ugaritic Materials for the Early Faith of Israel* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1964), 82. Weinfeld also argues the imagery in Ps 104:3 are found in Greek mythology and Near Eastern mythology and originated from them (Moshe Weinfeld, "Rider of the Clouds" and "Gatherer of the Clouds," in *Gaster Festschrift* [New York: Ancient Near Eastern Society, 1973], 421–26).

⁶⁰Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:45.

second day of creation, suggesting that verse 3 is about the time when “God said, ‘let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.’”⁶¹

The argument for an allusion to the creation account in verse 3 is strongly supported by the immediate context, verses 1–5. In verse 2 the author uses two participles to describe two acts of Yahweh, which illustrates his greatness in verse 1. First, he wraps himself in light, with אור as an accusative of material with which something is clothed.⁶² While light is the first work of Yahweh’s creation (Gen 1:3), it is not entirely well-defined that this description is an allusion to Genesis 1:3, since here the author does not explicitly define light as a work of Yahweh’s creation but uses it to illustrate that Yahweh is invisible yet conspicuous. One could also surmise that in creating the light Yahweh covered himself with it. For VanGemeeren “light” refers to God’s first creative work. He notes, “God is light. Light is vital to life; hence its primary importance places it as the first of the creative acts. In poetic fashion the psalmist portrays God as covered with light (cf. Hab 3:4). The light reveals something of the divine glory, because God is light (1 John 1:5).”⁶³

The possibility that the description of Yahweh wrapping himself in light points to his work of creation may be supported by the next line: בִּוֹטָהּ שָׁמַיִם כִּי־יָעָה. The clause בִּוֹטָהּ שָׁמַיִם is a poetic description of the work of God in creation. Israel’s Redeemer (Is 44:24), Yahweh, “it is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by

⁶¹Briggs and Briggs, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:332. Similarly, Walter J. Harrelson, “On God’s Care for the Earth, Psalm 104,” *CurTM* 2, no. 1 (1975): 19; Virgil P. Howard, “Psalm 104,” *Int* 46, no. 2 (1992): 175; Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, 16:401; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 299; Steven J. Lawson, *Psalms 76-150*, HOTC, vol. 12 (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2006), 154; Hugh Tobias, “Psalm 104: God and Nature,” *TTE*, no. 29 (1984): 38; Bruce K. Waltke, “Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3,” *BSac* 133, no. 529 (1976): 34.

⁶²Dahood, *Psalms III*, 3:34.

⁶³VanGemeeren, *Psalms*, 5:764.

his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens” (Jer 51:15).⁶⁴ Yahweh not only formed Israel, but he also stretched out the heavens. The metaphorical depiction of God’s creation of the heavens pictures the heavens as a spread-out curtain, canopy, or tent over the earth. Thus, the light (אור) covers Yahweh as a garment, and the heavens (שָׁמַיִם), the earth like a tent. The author paints a picture of creation that, although it builds on Genesis 1, assigns functions to light and heavens that are not immediately evident in Genesis 1:3, 7, 8, as he interprets creation as a cosmic tent.

Verse 5 makes it abundantly clear that these verses 1–5 are about creation. The clause יסד אֶרֶץ always describes Yahweh’s work of creating the earth when it is in union with נטַה שָׁמַיִם (Is 51:13, 16; Zech 12:1), טַפַּח שָׁמַיִם (Is 48:13), or כּוֹן שָׁמַיִם (Prov 3:19). Thus the establishment of the earth and the spreading of the heavens is a merism for God’s total work of creation (cf. Gen 1:1; Exod 31:17; 2 Kgs 19:15; Is 37:16).

From these allusions it is safe to conclude that verse 3 builds on the creation account of Genesis 1. This conclusion begs the question: why does the psalmist describe it the way he does: הִמְקַרָּה בַּמִּיִּם עֲלִיּוֹתָיו? The author, in speaking this way, pictures the cosmos as Yahweh’s dwelling place—a tent, sanctuary, or temple. The verb קָרַה, denominative of קִוְרָה (beam; cf. 2 Chr 3:7), is only used for the construction of the beams of the temple (Neh 2:8; 2 Chr 34:11) and the walls of Jerusalem (Neh 3:3, 6). In all instances of קָרַה, the LXX renders it στεγάζω (to roof or cover with a roof), a term that only translates קָרַה and no other verb.⁶⁵ The use of קָרַה and the LXX rendition στεγάζω

⁶⁴Cf. 2 Sam 22:10; Isa 44:24; 45:12; 51:13; Jer 10:12; Zech 12:1; Pss 18:10; 104:2; 144:5; Job 9:8.

⁶⁵Johan Lust, Erik Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003), s.v. “στεγάζω.” Besides the LXX the only other time it is used is in Josephus and describes the temple as well. “This house was a large and curious building, and was supported by many pillars, which Solomon built to contain a multitude for hearing cases and taking a cognizance of suits. It was sufficiently capacious to contain a great body of men who would come together to have their causes determined. It was a hundred cubits long, and fifty broad, and thirty high, supported by quadrangular pillars, which were all of cedar; but the roofing [ἐστεγασμένον] was according to the

suggest that the psalmist may have envisioned the earth as Yahweh's sanctuary and his dwelling place (עֲלִיָּה) over the waters of the earth.

The term עֲלִיָּה is used for the upper chambers of a house (cf. Judg 3:20, 23–25; 2 Kgs 4:10) and of the Jerusalem Temple (1 Chr 28:11; 2 Chr 3:9; 9:4). Thus, when the psalmist depicts Yahweh's work of creation as laying beams (קִרְיָה) of his upper chambers (עֲלִיָּה) on the waters, from where he nourishes the earth (cf. Ps 104:13), he shows that the cosmos is Yahweh's dwelling place. Isaiah shares a similar understanding when he writes, "It is he [Yahweh] . . . who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in" (Isa 40:22). The vast firmament of the heavens provides a tent for Yahweh's dwelling.⁶⁶

A Medley of Water Allusions (Ps 104:6–9)

In this section I will argue that Psalm 104:6–9 combines two themes, creation and the flood. The term מַיִם and the clause כִּסָּה . . . תְּהוֹם in verse 6 refer to both the waters of creation and the flood. He uses participles to describe Yahweh's work in these historical events, which suggests that the author understands Yahweh's work in the past as characteristic of Yahweh and he also means to insinuate that Yahweh will do the same things again. I will argue that the psalmist has a typological understanding of these events.

Creation: Psalm 104 is identified as a creation hymn. Tobias notes, "It is one of the several psalms of praise to the creator-God and has been characterized as the epitome of the nature psalms. In it God is seen both as the maker and maintainer of

Corinthian order, with folding doors, and their adjoining pillars of equal magnitude, each fluted with three cavities: which building was at once firm and very ornamental" (Josephus, *Antiq* 8:133).

⁶⁶For an extensive treatment of the subject of the created world as a tent, see G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), 29–80.

nature.”⁶⁷ Delitzsch observes, “The poet sings the God-ordained present condition of the world with respect to the creative beginnings recorded in Gen. 1:1-2:3; and closes with the wish that evil may be expelled from this good creation, which so thoroughly and fully reveals God’s power, and wisdom, and goodness.”⁶⁸

The structure of Psalm 104 apparently portrays reliance on Yahweh’s six-day creative work as in Genesis 1.⁶⁹ “The structure of the psalm is modelled fairly closely on that of Genesis 1, taking the stages of creation as starting-points for praise. But as each theme is developed it tends to anticipate the later scenes of the creation drama, so that the days described in Genesis overlap and mingle here.”⁷⁰ Largely, allies of this view agree with Kidner’s layout of the creative days in Genesis as presented in Psalm 104:

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Day 1 (Gen. 1:3–5) | light; Psalm 104:2a |
| Day 2 (Gen. 1:6–8) | the ‘firmament’ divides the waters; 104:2b–4 |
| Day 3 (Gen. 1:9, 10) | land and water distinct; 104:5–9 (+10–13?) |
| Day 3 (Gen. 1:11–13) | vegetation and trees; 104:14–17 (+18?) |
| Day 4 (Gen. 1:14–19) | luminaries as timekeepers; 104:19–23 (+24) |
| Day 5 (Gen. 1:20–23) | creatures of sea and air; 104:25, 26 (sea only) |
| Day 6 (Gen. 1:24–28) | animals and man (anticipated in 104:21–24) |
| Day 6 (Gen. 1:29–31) | food appointed for all creatures; 104:27, 28 (+29, 30) ⁷¹ |

The terms עֹרֵף הַשָּׁמַיִם, תְּהוֹמוֹת הַמַּיִם, רִיחַ, מִיָּם, שָׁמַיִם, אֵוֶר, so prominent in Genesis 1,

⁶⁷Tobias, “Psalm 104,” 37.

⁶⁸Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3:127. Others who share the same understanding of this psalm are: Davidson, *The Vitality of Worship*, 339–42; Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation, 331–37; Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 16:400–7; Briggs and Briggs, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:331–34; Dahood, *Psalms III*, 3:48; VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 5:762–71; Kemper Fullerton, “The Feeling for Form in Psalm 104,” *JBL* 40, no. 2 (1921): 43–56.

⁶⁹Contra Day (Day, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 3, 23), Ps 104 in its portrayal of creation does not insinuate any conflict between Yahweh and the sea.

⁷⁰Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 16:401.

⁷¹Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 16:401. For similar structures see: Waltke, “Creation Account in Genesis 1,” 34–35; Bernhard W. Anderson, *Creation Versus Chaos: The Reinterpretation of Mythical Symbolism in the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 91–93. Tobias see Ps 104: 1–32 as corresponding to the seventh day of in Gen 2:1–3 (Tobias, “Psalm 104,” 38; similarly, Luis I. J. Stadelmann, *The Hebrew Conception of the World: A Philological and Literary Study* [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1970], 31–34).

are also present in Psalm 104 (cf. vv. 2, 3, 6, 12). Although these terms are not unique for these two contexts, the compounding of them in Psalm 104 and Genesis 1 illustrates intentional association. The **אֵלֹהִים** going out to his work (v. 23) is reminiscent of Genesis 2:15, where God ordained work for man. Moreover, the clauses **נָטָה שָׁמַיִם** (v. 2) and **יָסַד אֶרֶץ** (v. 5) commonly describe the creation of heaven and earth respectively.⁷² In some contexts, these two clauses balance each other as a merism for the totality of God's creation acts similar to Genesis 1:1. It is Yahweh "who stretched out the heavens and who founded the earth" (Isa 51:13; cf. Zech 12:1).⁷³

Psalm 104, however, apparently does not describe creation from a cosmogonical standpoint but creation as it is now (e.g., light in verse 2 is not spoken into existence as in Genesis 1:3, but engulfs Yahweh).⁷⁴

The separation of land and water in verses 6–9 possibly refer to Genesis 1:9–10. The waters (**מַיִם**) that once covered the earth rushed away at Yahweh's command and the dry land, or mountains, according to the psalmist appeared (cf. Gen 1:9, Ps 104:6–8).

The creation of the sun and the moon for seasons reflects Genesis 1:14, which says, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years."

These connections to the Genesis account of creation demonstrate that the

⁷²See Isa 44:24; 45:12; 51:13; Jer 10:12; 51:15; Zech 12:1; Job 9:8 for the stretching of the Heavens and Isa 48:13; 51:13, 16; Zech 12:1; Prov 3:19 for the establishment of the earth.

⁷³Habel analyzes **נָטָה שָׁמַיִם** and concludes that it refers to Gen 1, observing that "within this context of theophanic imagery the function of the formula "he who stretches out the heavens," in vs. 2b seems apparent. It serves to introduce Yahweh as the creator who pitches the heavens to be an overarching tent within which he appears in luminous splendor. He prepares the sky as an abode or arena for his majestic self-manifestation. Once he appears on the horizon of heaven, his world tent is filled with the brilliance of his epiphany. He stretches out the heavens to reveal himself as he assumes his creative activities" (Norman C. Habel, "He Who Stretches out the Heavens," *CBQ* 34, no. 4 [1972]: 422–23). For the clause **יָסַד אֶרֶץ** see Theodore M. Ludwig, "Traditions of the Establishing of the Earth in Deutero-Isaiah," *JBL* 92, no. 3 (1973): 345–57.

⁷⁴Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1," 35.

waters in verse 6 and their effect in the following verses refer to the creation waters.

Psalms 104 is modeled after Genesis 1, the creation account.⁷⁵

Flood: Contrary to scholars who believe that the psalmist was influenced by Canaanite mythology,⁷⁶ I perceive that Psalm 104:6–9 demonstrates strong lexical and thematic links to the flood narrative (Gen 6–9).⁷⁷

Proponents in favor of my view maintain that, while the psalm may reflect the events of the six creation days in Genesis 1, these events do not accurately frame the psalm. Supporters of this position argue for different structures for the psalm under consideration.⁷⁸ Barker, for example, argues that, although there are literary connections between Psalm 104 and Genesis 1, structurally, the psalm cannot be limited to the scope of Genesis 1. Rather, the psalm describes the creative and providential acts of Yahweh in the world. It extends beyond Genesis 1 into an account of God’s overall relationship to creation, both as Creator and Preserver. This understanding “opens the way for seeing vv.

⁷⁵Contra Allen who argues, “Vv. 6–8 present a version of the ancient Near Eastern myth of the Chaoskampf or divine war against chaos, represented by the sea, as in Rev 21:1” (Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:45). See also Fischer who follows the same line of argument with Allen, Loren R. Fisher, “Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament,” *VT* 15, no. 3 (1965): 313–24.

⁷⁶Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 300. VanGemeeren also unconvincingly argues that the language of v. 7 “may be an allusion to the Baal myth, according to which Baal was victorious over the sea god (Yamm)” (VanGemeeren, *Psalms*, 5:765).

⁷⁷Contra scholars who only see allusions to the creation account in Ps 104:6–9: Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2011), 51; Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3:130–1; Briggs and Briggs, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:332–33.

⁷⁸Barker argues for the following structure: “First, the term *עֲשֵׂה* ends strophe A and begins strophe A’; it also ends strophe B and begins strophe B’; finally it stands in the middle of strophe C (v. 19). Second, the divine name *יְהוָה* in strophes A and A’ serve to indicate their complementary nature. Third, the repetition of the terms *אָדָם* and *עֲבֹדָה* in both vv. 14 and 23 indicate an *inclusio* marking the limits of the central strophe (C). A similar phenomenon is observable with the repetition of the term *אָרֶץ* in vv. 5 and 13, again indicating an *inclusio* and marking the limits of strophe B, as well as a central instance of the term at v. 9. Additionally, a clear theme dominates strophe B as indicated by the fourfold repetition of the term *הָרִים*. Finally, clear indications of a new thought are observable by the exclamation at v 24 (beginning strophe B’) and the expression of the wish at v 31 (beginning strophe A’)” (David G. Barker, “The Waters of the Earth: An Exegetical Study of Psalm 104:1–9,” *GTJ* 7, no. 1 [1986]: 64).

6–9 in particular as a reference to the great deluge of Genesis 6–9.”⁷⁹

The earth (אֶרֶץ) covered (כָּסָה) by the deeps (תְּהוֹמוֹת) and waters (מַיִם) best describes Genesis 7:19, 20. Moses employs similar terms in the flood narrative; because of the iniquity of man, God brings floodwaters (מַיִם), sourced by the fountain of the deeps (תְּהוֹמוֹת), upon the earth (אֶרֶץ) (Gen 6:17; 7:11; 8:2), and it covers (כָּסָה) all the mountains under heaven (Gen 7:19, 20). Thus the description of the earth covered with the deeps as with a garment in verse 6 echoes the flood.⁸⁰

The first occurrence of the noun הַמַּיִם and the verb כָּסָה, which parallels עָמַד in verse 6, occurs in the flood narrative (Gen 7:19, 20). The phrase “at your rebuke [the waters] fled” (מִן־גְּצֵרֶיךָ יָנוּסוּ) —with the implied plural subject on יָנוּסוּ resuming מַיִם in verses 6—echoes the abating waters after the flood (Gen 8:1, 5).

Waters rising and abating in connection with mountains is in sync with the flood narrative (cf. Gen 7:11, 17, 19, 20; 8:1, 5). Waters standing above the mountains (v. 6b) evoke Genesis 7:19, 20. “The waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered” (Gen 7:19). After the flood, the waters that prevailed over the mountains, controlled by its Creator, recede to the place Yahweh appoints for them (cf. Gen 8:1; Ps 104:8).

The boundaries that Yahweh sets for water never to cross again (v. 9) echo God’s covenantal promise after the flood that he will never again judge the world with

⁷⁹Barker, “The Waters of the Earth,” 65.

⁸⁰“The deep” is taken here as the subject because of v. 9, which states that Yahweh has set a border for the waters and they shall never again cover the earth. Clifford rightly argues, “MT *kissîto*, ‘you covered it (masc),’ is a problem because the two possible referents of the masculine suffix, *’eres* and *têhôm*, are feminine (although *têhôm* is treated as grammatically masculine in a few of its biblical occurrences) *Têhôm* in any case would be virtually senseless as the object suffix, ‘as for the deep, like a garment you covered it’ Greek *penbolaion autou*, ‘his covering,’ reads *kêsûto* as *Vorlage*, hence ‘the deep, like a garment, is his (Yahweh’s) covering’ Quinta and Aquila read *penebales autên*, ‘you covered it (fern),’ the feminine *autên* referring to *tên gên* = *’eres*, a reading also supported by *luxta Hebreos* and the Targum However, parallelism within the verse and the reflex in v. 9b which states that *the waters* will not again cover the earth strongly urge that Yahweh is not the subject of *ksh* in v. 6a. Context suggests *kissata*, ‘[the deep] covered it, i.e. the earth’ (Richard J. Clifford, “A Note on Ps 104:5-9,” *JBL* 100, no. 1 [1981]: 87).

water (Gen 9:11–16). Waltke makes a similar case and observes,

How could he have the flood of Genesis 1:2 in mind when later in the time of Noah, God once again unleashed the destructive sea and once again covered the earth? Surely, the psalmist must have had in mind the deluge at the time of Noah, for it was only after this flood that God promised never again to destroy the earth with a flood (Gen. 9:11)⁸¹

The above arguments make a convincing case for allusions to the flood in Psalm 104:6–9. It is difficult to deny echoes of the flood narrative in these verses. Even Waltke who argues for a six day of creation structure of this psalm argues that even though the psalm follows Genesis 1 in structure, the waters refer to the flood in Genesis 6–9.⁸² In addition, allusions to the creation narrative also seem very convincing.

These two events contributed significantly to form the world in the state in which it now exists. With creation and the flood so clearly echoed, it seems best to assert that the psalmist is fusing the two themes, understanding creation and the flood as two very closely related stories; he reads them as typologically overlapping events. The Pentateuch narrates these events, creation and the flood, with noteworthy overlapping details as well.⁸³ Psalm 104 thus commemorates Yahweh's sovereignty in the creation of the universe (Gen 1), the destruction of the earth by the flood (Gen 6–9), and the restoration of beauty and order after chaos, the subject to which we now turn.⁸⁴

⁸¹Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1," 36.

⁸²Ibid., 35. Cf. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 5:765; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 300.

⁸³See John Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 125; Waltke, *Genesis*, 127–30.

⁸⁴Megilligan supports this position when he examines the use of תְּהוֹם and rejects any dependence on Babylonian or Ugaritic sources (5–21), seeing no mythological ties to this term. Rather he concludes, "Thus, by the use of the word תְּהוֹם in Psalm 104:6, the writer was not limiting himself to a referral of the 'primeval ocean' of Genesis 1 and the acts of creation. His use of the term indicates 'the waters of the deep' and could therefore be referring to Genesis 7 and 8 (the flood passage), or perhaps to both the flood and creation passages. Nothing about the term itself requires an either/or option. The context is the deciding factor" (K. Keith Megilligan, "The Deep of Psalm 104:5–9" [Th.M. thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1977], 21). The context of Ps 104 thus supports allusions to both the creation of Gen 1 and the flood of Gen 6–9.

Restored Edenic Earth (Ps 104:10–18)

Psalm 104:10–18 paints a renewed creation through its water imagery. The author portrays this renovated creation as a new Eden with language that also corresponds to Moses' depiction of the Promised Land in Deuteronomy 8:7–10.

The description of Yahweh's benevolence on the earth in verse 10 is similar to the following description of the Holy Land, Canaan:

Ps 104:10 הַמְשַׁלַּח מַעְיָנִים בְּנַחְלִים בֵּין הָרִים יְהִלְכוּן

Deut 8:7 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מְבִיאָךְ אֶל-אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה אֶרֶץ נַחֲלֵי מַיִם עֵינַת וְתַהֲמַת יְצְאִים בְּבִקְעָה וּבְהָר

Just as the Promised Land had brooks (נַחֲלֵי) and springs (עֵינַת) flowing between the mountains (הָרִים), so did this renewed creation the psalmist envisions. “Between the mountains” (בֵּין הָרִים) (Ps 104:10) corresponds to “in the Valleys” (בְּבִקְעָה) (Deut 8:7). The similar lexemes hint a similar concept in both texts.

Yahweh waters the earth from his habitat (Ps 104:13) like he waters the Holy Land from heaven (Deut 11:11, 14–15).⁸⁵ Just as Yahweh plants Israel and the trees of the Holy Land (cf. Exod 15:17; Jer 2:21; 11:17; 12:2), so the psalmist envisions Yahweh benevolently planting trees again (Ps 104:16).

Wine, oil, and bread, which Yahweh now bestows on all mankind (Ps 104:15), are also staples in the Promised Land. Wine-producing-vineyards and oil-producing-olives trees were freely given to Israel in the Holy Land (Deut 6:11; Josh 24:13). A land that is like Israel's is “a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey” (2 Kgs 18:32). “The general expression at the end of verse 14 is now rendered more specific by distinctly mentioning the great staples of production and

⁸⁵Allen suggests Baal mythology as the background to v. 13, although he does not give any reason the assertion (Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:46). Craigie also follows a similar line of thought. See Peter C. Craigie, “The Comparison of Hebrew Poetry: Psalm 104 in the Light of Egyptian and Ugaritic Poetry,” in *Semitics*, vol. 4, ed. Eybers I. H. and Glück J. J. (Pretoria: Univ. of South Africa, 1974), 10–21.

subsistence in the Holy Land.”⁸⁶ The prophets foresaw that at the eschaton God’s people would enjoy these staples with their neighbors (cf. Mic 4:4; Zech 3:10). Oil that was once restricted for the head of the priests now oils the face of all mankind (cf. Exod 29:7, 21; Pss 23:5, 104:15). In addition, just as Yahweh plants Israel and the trees of the Holy Land (cf. Exod 15:17; Jer 2:21; 11:17; 12:2), so the psalmist envisions Yahweh benevolently planting trees again (Ps 104:16).

Besides using language that recalls the Promised Land, the psalmist also uses language to evoke themes from Genesis 1–2. Psalm 104:14 shares very close lexemes (עֵשֶׂב, צִמָּח, הָאֲדָמָה, אֶרֶץ, and the root עבד) with Genesis 1:11; 2:5, 15, which describes a similar work of Yahweh, suggesting an allusion. The *hiphil* צִמָּח with Yahweh as the subject and with agrarian objects (עֵשֶׂב and אֶרֶץ), from the ground (אֲדָמָה), for man’s advantage only occur in Genesis 2:9 and Psalm 104:14, validating a connection between the two passages.

In both Genesis and Psalm 104 man is to work the ground for sustenance (Gen 2:15; Ps 104:14). Man is does not eat meat in both passages (Gen 1:29–30; 3:18; Ps 104:14).⁸⁷ It is only after the flood that Yahweh permits man to be omnivorous. “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything” (Gen 9:3). In Psalm 104, man cultivates plants (עֵשֶׂב לְעִבְדָּתָהּ הָאֲדָמָה) so that he may get food from the earth (לֶחֶם מִן־הָאֲרֶז) and in Genesis every plant (כָּל־עֵשֶׂב) on the face of the earth (פָּנֵי כָל־הָאֲרֶז) is given man for food (Gen 1:29; cf. 1:30; 3:18). In verse 14 and 23 of Psalm 104, work is depicted as the normal activity for human beings, as in Genesis 2:5, 15, and, with a different and adverse accent, in Genesis 3:18.⁸⁸

⁸⁶Joseph Addison Alexander, *The Psalms: Translated and Explained* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1864), 424.

⁸⁷Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 52.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 54.

Certain descriptions of Yahweh bring Genesis 1-2 to mind. Alexander observes that Yahweh's exuberance in his work (Ps 104:31b) depicts his rest after creation on the seventh day (Gen 2:1-2).⁸⁹ Also, Yahweh's own Spirit, רִיחַ (Ps 104:30), is the source of life as in Genesis 2:7 (cf. Gen 1:2). Allen observes,

Whenever this life-force [Yahweh's רִיחַ] is withdrawn, the animate reverts to dust (cf. Gen 3:19; Job 34:14-15). God gives and God takes away . . . Each new generation is evidence of ongoing renewal of divine activity, rhythmically replenishing human and animal stock. Remarkably this is spoken of as a new creation, and an implicit link is forged with God's initial work of creation.⁹⁰

All of these similarities in concert argue for allusions to Yahweh's first act of creation in Genesis 1-2, especially the Garden of Eden, given that most of the verbal and thematic links go back to Genesis 2. Echoes of Eden, alongside allusions to the Promised Land, in the psalmist's depiction of the cosmos suggest that he envisions an Edenic, Promised-Land-like cosmos, a renewed earth.⁹¹

⁸⁹Alexander, *The Psalms*, 428.

⁹⁰Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 21:48.

⁹¹The clause הַחַדָּשׁ פְּנֵי אֲדָמָה (Ps 104:30b) suggests an eschatological understanding of the transformation. Not only does the Spirit create, he renews the face of the ground. There is no comparable idea in the OT. The *piel* of חָדַשׁ occurs nine times in the OT with varying subjects and objects: the altar (2 Chr 15:8), temple (2 Chr 24:4, 12), and the monarchy (1 Sam 11:14) are renewed. Isaiah prophesied that the devastated cities of the exile would be renovated (חָדַשׁ) (Isa 61:4). David calls Yahweh to renew his spirit (Ps 51:12). Yahweh renews witness, that is, he recurrently re-create witnesses (Job 10:17). He is called upon to renew his work of salvation as of the days of old (Lam 5:21). In the *piel* the semantic domain of חָדַשׁ seems narrow, as observed; it means to cause something to become new and different, to make new, restore, reaffirm, or remake (See Pieter A. Verhoef, "חָדַשׁ," in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997]). Thus, the psalmist longs for a renewed earth, where there will be no sinners, from where the wicked will be completely banished, and where the souls of the righteous will Praise Yahweh eternally (Ps 104:35). The author invites us to join in a song of hope, "for doxology is always also eschatological vision. Because it is God's spirit-breath that goes forth, there can be creation and re-creation (v. 40a and b), new creation, transformed creation. Because God rejoices in the divine works, the time can be envisioned when sin and wickedness will be no more (v. 35)" (Howard, "Psalm 104," 179). In Ps 104 the verb חָדַשׁ connotes a re-creation, a remaking of creation; out of the expiration of life in v. 29 Yahweh recreates, brings a new cosmos. The psalmist paints the picture of the renewed creation, as argued above, as Edenic and Promised Land-like; it is as though Eden and the Promised Land have expanded and covered the cosmos. The new creation points to the eschatological remaking of all things; the Promised Land, Jerusalem the holy city, will extend its borders to the ends of the earth. Isaiah also employs the motif of a consummated and renewed creation. He makes frequent use of creation imagery in his visions of the future (cf. also Isa 11:6-9; 65:17-25). The New Testament also foresees a renewed creation for the future that God has planned for his covenant people. In John's vision of

Conclusion

For the psalmist creation is not stagnant and deteriorating, even after the curse in Genesis 3, but dynamic and regenerative, moving toward consummation of the perfect freedom that Yahweh will bring. “To sing the doxology of Psalm 104 is to sing of promise and hope, hope not just in the worn out sense of ‘maybe—maybe not—but maybe’ but in the Pauline sense of living toward the sure thing,”⁹² the renewed, perfect, and consummated creation.

Allusions to the Exodus: Salvation Through Waters (Ps 105; 106)

The spotlight here is on Psalms 105:29, 41 and 106:7–11. Psalm 105:29 paints a picture of one of the plagues in Egypt and verse 41 captures God’s provision of water in the wilderness. Psalm 106:7–11 uses water to picture the salvation that Yahweh worked for Israel at the Red Sea. The exodus insinuated in Psalm 104:32 becomes the major theme in Psalms 105 and 106. Psalm 105 rehearses God’s faithfulness as the basis of the exodus, and Psalm 106 admits Israel’s failure in the hope of an exodus-like rescue.

Yahweh’s Judgment and Grace Through Waters (Ps 105:29, 41)

In rehearsing God’s salvation at the exodus from Egypt, among other things, the psalmist highlights the plagues, which he calls signs and wonders (Ps 105:27; cf. 78:43). He does not address the plagues in the order that they occurred in Exodus 7–11.

“a new heaven and a new earth” (Rev 21:1–22:5), images of the new city and the new creation are merged to describe that sphere in which God and humanity dwell together in peace, where, as in Ps 104, water has been transformed from threat (Rev 21:1) into nourishment for life (Rev 21:6; 22:1), where sun and moon (Ps 104:19–23) are swallowed up in the light of the Lamb (Rev 21:23) and God (Rev 22:5), and where the tree of life is a source of healing for the nations (Rev 22:2; cf. Ps 104:16–17). In Paul vision of the consummation of all things in Rom 8:18–25, he, like the psalmist in Ps 104, brings together the motif of a renewed creation (Rom 8:19; cf. Ps 104:30), the *eschaton*, and Spirit of God (cf. Ps 104:30). The entire creation, not just human beings (Rom 8:22; cf. Ps 104:11–13), looks forward to a glorious freedom from every form of decay and oppression (cf. Ps 104:29).

⁹²Howard, “Psalm 104,” 180.

He begins with the ninth (Ps 105:28; cf. Exod 10:21–29) and leaves out the plague on the cattle and the boils.⁹³ Given the present of all the other plagues, it is unquestionable that the waters turned into blood (Ps 105:29) refers to Exodus 7:14–26, the first plague. The plagues were judgment on Egypt but a means of salvation for Israel. Through the plagues God brought Israel out of Egypt (Ps 105:37; Exod 12).

After Yahweh brings Israel out of Egypt, he guides them with cloud and fire to give light at night (Ps 105:39; Exod 13:21). In the wilderness, among other things, Yahweh provided water to them from a rock (Ps 105:41). This refers to Exodus 17:6 and Numbers 20:11, the only instances in the OT where Yahweh supplied water through a rock. The uniqueness of the events makes it unquestionable that the psalmist is referring to them. This gracious provision was based on Yahweh’s remembrance of his promise to Abraham his servant. The water imagery along other allusions in Psalm 105 mainly highlights God’s faithfulness to Israel, without mentioning any of Israel’s failure,⁹⁴ Psalm 106 recounts the exodus with a focus on Israel’s failure at the Red Sea (Ps 106:7–11).

Yahweh’s Salvation Through Waters (Ps 106)

The message of Psalm 106 can be pictured chiastically:

Call to Praise Yahweh 1–3

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| ⁹³ The order of the plagues in Exodus differs significantly from the psalmist’s in Ps 105 | | |
| First Plague | Exod 7:14–26, water turned into blood | Ps 105:29 |
| Second Plague | Exod 8:1–15, Frogs on the land | Ps 105:30 |
| Third Plague | Exod 8:16–19, Gnats in all Egypt | Ps 105:31 |
| Fourth Plague | Exod 8:20–32, Swarm of flies | Ps 105:31 |
| Fifth Plague | Exod 9:1–7, Death of livestock | _____ |
| Sixth Plague | Exod 9:8–12, Boils on man and beast | _____ |
| Seventh Plague | Exod 9:13–35, unmatched hail | Ps 105:32 |
| Eighth Plague | Exod 10:1–20, Locusts devour the land | Ps 105:34 |
| Ninth Plague | Exod 10:21–29, Thick darkness | Ps 105:28 |
| Tenth Plague | Exod 11:1–10, Death of firstborns | Ps 105:36 |

⁹⁴Similarly, Allen observes that “the psalmist is deliberately selective in that no reference is made to the people’s complaining. The same is true in v 41, which leans on Exod 17:6” (Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:60)

Prayer for the new exodus 4–5

Confession of unfaithfulness 6–46

Prayer for the new exodus 47

Call to Praise Yahweh 48⁹⁵

The water imagery falls within the innermost part of the chiasm. This section, vv. 6–46, rehearses Israel’s persistent failure to keep the covenant; they did not remember the abundance of Yahweh’s covenant steadfast love (Ps 106:7).

In verse 6 the author, in the same spirit of Nehemiah 9 and Daniel 9, confesses, “Both we and our fathers have sinned; we have committed iniquity; we have done wickedness.” In verses 7–46, the author switches to third person to confess the failures of the generation that left Egypt and that of the generation that entered Canaan. Verse 7 retells Israel’s rebellion at the Red Sea, and verses 8–11 recount God’s kindness to save Israel in spite of her sins.

Verbal links support this conclusion. יָם סוּף is only used of the Red Sea (cf. Exod 13:18). Although מֶרֶד does not occur in Exodus 14, the rebellion in verse 7 points to Israel’s unbelief in God’s saving power at the edge of the sea (Exod 14:11–12).⁹⁶ Israel’s complaint in Exodus 14:11–12 shows that they did not remember Yahweh’s abundant covenant steadfast love and they did not trust him. The psalmist observes that Yahweh cured this unbelief by saving them at the Red Sea. “They believed his works” when he divided the Red Sea (Ps 104:12).

Verses 8–11 depict the ground and the manner by which Yahweh saved Israel.

⁹⁵Cf. Robert L. Alden, “Chiastic Psalms (III): A Study in the Mechanics of Semitic Poetry in Psalms 101–150,” *JETS* 21, no. 3 (1978): 201–2; VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 5:780. For a detail study of the structure of Ps 106 see Pierre Auffret, *Que Seulement de tes Yeux tu Regardes...: Etude Structurale de Treize Psaumes* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 328–58.

⁹⁶Allen makes a similar observation and suggests, “The parallels of rebelling and ‘for the sake of’ Yahweh’s ‘name’ suggest dependence on Ezek 20” (Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:71).

Yahweh “rebuked the Red Sea and it dried” (יָגַעַר בַּיַּם־סוּף וַיִּחָרֶב) (v. 9).⁹⁷ The specification יַם־סוּף leaves us without any doubt that this is an allusion to the Red Sea.⁹⁸ “Rebuke the Red Sea” refers to Moses’ report that “Yahweh drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided” (Exod 14:21). While the חרב does not occur in Exodus 14:21, the noun form חֲרָבָה is used for the result of Yahweh’s rebuke of the Red Sea.

The clause בְּיַד יִשְׂרָאֵל הָלְכוּ בַּיַּבְשָׁה (Ps 106:9) depicts יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיַד יִשְׂרָאֵל (Exod 14:29), with יִשְׂרָאֵל implied in the plural suffix on יִלְיָכֶם, and בְּיַד יִשְׂרָאֵל paralleling בַּיַּבְשָׁה. With the *hiphil* of הִלָּךְ the psalmist underlines Yahweh’s role in the Red Sea rescue. He caused Israel to walk in the deeps as on a desert.

As in Psalm 106:11, the verb כָּסָה occurs in Exodus 14:28 with מִים as its subject, describing the destruction of Pharaoh’s host, Israel’s archenemy. Psalm 106:12 summarizes Israel’s response to the deliverance at the Red Sea as recorded in Exodus 14:31–15:1. At the Red Sea when Yahweh delivered Israel, when they saw his saving power, they believed (אָמֵן) in Yahweh, which is equal to believing his word (Ps 106:12a; cf. Exod 14:31), and they sang (שִׁיר) his praise (Ps 106:12b; Exod 15:1).

In addition, salvation for the sake of Yahweh’s name refers to Exodus 14:17–18. “I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. And the

⁹⁷This verse does not insinuate any battle between Yahweh and the sea. It simply states what Yahweh did to the sea. Suggestions for a combat between Yahweh and the sea are heavily influenced by ancient Near Eastern mythology, which are often taken as the background of this imagery. For example of such a reading of v. 9, see Day, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 127.

⁹⁸Hossfeld states that the miracle at the Red Sea in the psalm under consideration is “clothed in the mythological language of the Ugaritic Baal myth” (Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalm 3*, 89). While it is possible that such a mythological language influenced the psalmist, we will show in the succeeding pages that the account of Israel’s crossing of the Red Sea is what primarily stands behind these verses. It cannot also be argued that the account in Exod 14–15 was influenced by the Ugaritic Baal mythology since Moses is simply recounting what Yahweh did; it seems to me that to assign such a mythological influence would dismiss the historicity of that account and simply ascribe to Yahweh what was once attributed to Baal.

Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

Through all of these allusions, Exodus 14–15 clearly seeps into Psalm 106:7–11. Allen notes, “The psalmist speaks as heir of the Pentateuch . . . and weaves [his] themes into the fabric of the penitence of the postexilic community.”⁹⁹

The recollection of Yahweh’s past salvation for the sake of his name spotlights Israel’s failure, which the psalmist confesses. Israel soon forgot Yahweh’s work (Ps 106:13), forgot Yahweh (v. 21), murmured against him (v. 25), and served Baal (v. 28). While in the Promised Land, Israel continued in rebellion (v. 34ff). Even though Yahweh repeatedly delivered them they were relentlessly disloyal. The question now is, Will Yahweh again deliver Israel and gather her from the nations?”

Will Yahweh Save?

In verses 1–5, 47–48 the psalmist prays and hopes for a return from exile. He longs for Yahweh to gather his people from the nations. In spite of Israel’s failure (vv. 6–46), Yahweh is still the God of Israel (v. 48), and Israel is still his chosen people (vv. 4, 5). He hopes for the Yahweh’s favor on his people.

First, the author prays that Yahweh would remember him with the favor of his people (פְּרִצִּיּוֹן עֲמָךְ) so that he may look upon the goodness of his chosen ones (בְּטוֹבָתָהּ) and rejoice in the joy of his nation (בְּשִׂמְחַת גּוֹיְךָ). He trusts Yahweh will save his chosen ones and longs to be a part of it.¹⁰⁰

The hope for Yahweh’s favor is implicit in the eternality of Yahweh’s goodness and steadfast love (Ps 106:1). Because Yahweh is good and his steadfast love

⁹⁹Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:74.

¹⁰⁰Similarly, *ibid.*, 21:70.

endures forever, there is hope for Israel.¹⁰¹ Miller comments on verse 1 saying:

This benevolent and gracious condescension of the majestic and transcendent Lord in order to save is further acknowledged as the ground of praise and joy in the reference to God's "steadfast love" (*hesed*), a term that points to his covenantal faithfulness, which has been experienced concretely in the past and which is so firmly the basis for Israel's hope and trust that the community can speak of that faithfulness as the content of the future as surely as it knows such a way with God in the past.¹⁰²

The clause קִבְּצָנוּ מִן־הַגּוֹיִם refers to the return from exile, a new exodus. The *piel* of קִבֵּץ, with Yahweh as its subject and Israel as its object, is used for the return from exile, the new exodus, for which the psalmist prays.¹⁰³

The concluding praise of Yahweh as "the God of Israel" and the response of all the people, "Amen," demonstrate that Yahweh is still Israel's God and that the people are looking to him for the new exodus. "Amen" is an affirmation of trust in Yahweh's faithfulness and a confession of belief that just as he saved Israel from Egypt based on the Abrahamic covenant (Ps 105:6–11, 42) he will do it again. The community promises that

¹⁰¹The clause הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם תִּקְדֹּדוּ is often used in contexts new exodus contexts. Outside Book 5 of the Psalms, in Ezra 3:11, with the same words, Yahweh is praised for the return from exile and the reconstruction of the temple, with conscious verbal echoes of the dedication of Solomon's temple (cf. 2 Chr 5:13; 7:3, 6). In 1 Chr 16:34 David sings the exact words of Ps 106:1 when the Ark of the Covenant was brought from the Philistines through Kiriath-Jearim *en route* to Jerusalem (cf. 1 Chr 16:41). The return of the Ark was like an exodus. The prophet Jeremiah prophesizes that after the exile they will be a restoration of the land and a new covenant (Jer 33:10). He says there will be blessing to Yahweh "for he is good and his steadfast love endures forever" (Jer 33:10). A similar song, albeit shortened, is used in 2 Chr 20:21 when Yahweh rescued his covenant people from the hands of their enemy. On Jer 33, Harrison correctly notes, "The prosperity of the restored land will evoke a spontaneous chant from those bringing thank offerings to the temple (cf. Ezra 3:11; Pss 106:1; 118:1; 136:1), and be reminiscent of the golden age of the early monarchy" (R. K. Harrison, *Jeremiah and Lamentations: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC, vol. 21 [Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973], 146).

¹⁰²Patrick D. Miller, "'Enthroned on the Praises of Israel': The Praise of God in Old Testament Theology," *Int* 39, no. 1 (1985): 12–13.

¹⁰³As the object of the verb קִבֵּץ, God's people are referred to as: Israel (Deut 30:3, 4; Isa 11:12; 43:5; 56:8; Jer 32:37; 1 Chr 16:35; Neh 1:9), Remnant of Israel (Mic 2:12), Redeemed (Ps 107:3), Jacob (Isa 43:5; Jer 31:8, 10), like a grieved wife (Isa 54:7), Ephraim (Hos 8:10; Zech 10:8, 10), exiles from Jerusalem (Jer 29:14; Mic 4:6), prostitute (Ezek 16:37), house of Israel (Ezek 11:17; 20:34, 41; 28:25; 36:24; 37:21; 39:27), Jerusalem (Zeph 3:20), this new exodus in-gathering of God's people will include the Egyptians (Ezek 29:13), outcasts (Zeph 3:19) and all nations and tongues, for judgment (Joel 3:2; Mic 4:12) and for salvation (Isa 66:18).

they will give thanks to Yahweh if he would do this (Ps 106:47b).

Conclusion

The community of God's covenant people waits upon him, all too conscious of their own transgression and its returns (vv. 6–46), but the psalmist, on behalf of the people, entreats Yahweh to rebirth the nation and accomplish his saving work on their behalf (vv. 4, 47), as he once redeemed their ancestors through the waters of the Red Sea for the sake of his name (vv. 8, 10). Yahweh saved Israel's ancestors for his name's sake and will do it again so that he might make known his saving power and Israel might give thanks to his holy name and glory in his praise (v. 47b).

Conclusion

This chapter has advanced my thesis that the water imagery in the Psalter is primarily rooted in the authors' understanding of God's relationship with Israel as recorded in her history. I demonstrated that Psalm 93 alludes to the exodus from Egypt, showing that the testimony of Yahweh that was in the tabernacle throughout the exodus is now affirmed in Zion's sanctuary. Psalm 95 uses water imagery to capture God's work of creation (Gen 1–2) and his work of re-creation, the redemption of his people. Psalms 96 and 98 show the authors' reflection on the creation account of Genesis. In Psalm 104, we see a beautifully crafted psalm that merges creation and the flood in anticipation of a renewed creation, an Edenic cosmos. Psalms 105 and 106 reflect on Yahweh's work of redemption and envision with great expectation the time when Yahweh will bring about a new exodus for the sake of his name so that his covenant people will give him thanks and praise his name forever. All the psalms that I examined show that the authors were very conscious of their recorded inspired history. They reflected on their history as they prayed and sang, setting an example for all believers to write their songs and pray their prayers through meditation on the Holy Scriptures.

CHAPTER 6

THE WATER MOTIF IN BOOK 5

In this chapter, we will examine eight psalms in Book 5 of the Psalter and find that all the instances of the use of the water imagery draw upon earlier Scripture. The psalmists use water imagery with an intentional focus on the exodus and creation, as they anticipate a restoration from exile, which for them will be a new exodus and a re-creation.

Watery Faint Echoes of the Exodus (Ps 107)

Psalms 107, the first psalm with water imagery, closely relates to the previous psalm.¹ It praises Yahweh for his response to the psalmist's longing for his salvation in Psalm 106:47.² In response to his people's prayer during the exile, Yahweh brought his people out of Babylon back to the Promised Land (Ps 107:3). Due to its placement in the Psalter after Psalm 106, it is clear that this psalm describes Israel's return from exile.

¹Zenger sees Pss 107 and 145 as a frame and suggests that the identical verses in Pss 106:1 and 107:1 emphasizes that the fifth Book of the Psalms is a commentary summarizing the preceding four Books of the Psalms which are to be understood as a unit (Erich Zenger, "The Composition and Theology of the Fifth Book of Psalms, Psalms 107-145," *JSOT*, no. 80 [1998]: 88).

²Even though there is a shift in genre, Pss 106 and 107 share very close lexemic, phrasal, and thematic associations. See Jinkyu Kim, "The Strategic Arrangement of Royal Psalms in Books IV-V," *WTJ* 70, no. 1 (2008): 145; Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, WBC, vol. 21 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 49-53, 60-63. Scholars suggest different genre categorization for Pss 106 and 107. Kraus identifies Ps 106 as a hymn (Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2000], 316-17). Allen proposes that the genre of Ps 107 is a song of thanksgiving (vv. 1-32) and a hymn (vv. 33-43) (Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 21:49-53). Kraus' grouping of Ps 106 and Allen's classification of Ps 107:33-43 belong to the same class, hymn. This kind of agreement insinuates that there is no significant break between the two psalms in terms of their types. Moreover, the two psalms also share in common the exodus motif, Ps 106 recalling the exodus from Egypt and Ps 107 recounting the new exodus. See Dahood and Kirkpatrick on the exodus motif in the two psalms: S. J. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms III: 101-150*, vol. 3 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1970) 78-91; Alexander Francis Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms: With Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1891) 637-46.

The water imagery in Psalm 107 depicts Yahweh's salvation in the new exodus. In verse 3 the psalmist observes that Yahweh gathers his redeemed from sea. In verses 23–32 he elaborates on this rescue. In verses 33–43, after Yahweh gathers the redeemed, the psalmist describes how Yahweh transforms all of creation, as he turns parched lands into springs of water.

I propose that, although subtle, the psalmist touches on the experience of Israel's journey from Egypt to the Promised Land.³ The rescue of the desert wanderers (v. 4) evokes the desert wandering of Israel where Yahweh found and rescued them (Deut 32:10). When the wanderers cry to Yahweh he rescues them like he did Israel from their distress (Pss 107:6; 106:44). Just as Yahweh led Israel to the Promised Land (Exod 15:13, 17), so he leads these people to a city to dwell in (Ps 107:7). The phrase “in straight path” in Psalm 107:7 is only used in Jeremiah 31:9 for the path where Yahweh will lead his people in the new exodus. In Jeremiah, as in our psalm, not only does Yahweh provide good roads for the returnees, but he also gives them ample supplies (Ps 107:7, 9; Jer 31:9), thus recalling the way God provided for Israel in the wilderness (Exod 17:1–7) and the provisions in the new exodus in Psalm 23. Just as Yahweh justified his benevolence to Israel on the basis that he was Israel's Father (Deut 32:6) and Israel was his firstborn son (Exod 4:22), so his benevolence to those in this psalm is based on their relationship to him as sons (Ps 107:8). Although the psalmist is describing Israel's recent return from exile in Psalm 107, these verbal and thematic links show that he is also consciously albeit subtly recalling Israel's deliverance from Egypt, meaning that he sees this as a recurrence of Yahweh's salvation.

Those who “sat in darkness and in gloom, prisoners in misery and irons” (v. 10) are people who rebelled against the words of God (Pss 107:11; 106:7,33), and

³Kelly S. Allen, “‘Let the Redeemed of the Lord Say so’: Receiving the Texts and Living the Faith of the Lenten Season,” *JP* 35, no. 2 (2012): 35.

spurned him (Ps 107:11; cf. Deut 31:20) like Israel did in the wilderness. Israel's sin resulted in poisonous serpents biting and killing some among them (Num 21). The people in this psalm are also sick and suffering because of their sin. They loathe food (Ps 107:18) and are faced with death (Ps 107:18). Like Israel, they cry to Yahweh and he delivers them (cf. Num 21:7; Ps 107:19). In Numbers 21:8–9 the word of Yahweh instructs Moses to create a serpent for the deliverance of Israel; in Psalm 107:10, Yahweh also sends his word to heal.

If Psalm 107 is describing the return from exile in such a way as to subtly retell Israel's journey in the exodus, then the rescue from water (vv. 23–32) may evoke the waters of the Red Sea. I will again demonstrate that the psalmist's poetry does not flow from his imagination or mythology but from the scriptures.

Ingathering from the Sea or Cardinal Point?

In this section we will establish that the sea in verse 3 is more than a cardinal point in the compass; it corresponds to the rescue from the tumultuous waters in verses 23–32. I will show that verses 2–3 summarize the four rescues in verses 4–32, with the sea in verse 3 referring to the waters in verses 23–32—a Red Sea type rescue.

To prove that verses 2–3 encapsulate the four rescues in verses 4–32 and that the sea in verse 3 corresponds to verses 23–32, first, we observe that Psalm 107 begins with a plural imperative (v. 1) and verses 2–3 describe those to whom the command is directed. This description establishes a close link with the final prayer in Psalm 106, making Psalm 107 a praise song for Yahweh's redemption of his people from the exile. In Psalm 106:47 the author prayed “הוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְקַבְּצֵנוּ מִן־הַגּוֹיִם” and Psalm 107:2–3 takes up the language of the appeal for restoration and in-gathering of God's people

(קבץ), suggesting that these verses depict Yahweh's response to that plea.⁴

Verse 2 uses גאל twice, a term that designates the exodus from Egypt and the return from exile. The passive participial of גאל appears four times in the OT, once for those redeemed from Egypt (Isa 51:10), and thrice for those redeemed in the new exodus (Isa 35:9; 62:12; Ps 107:2). The verb גאל also describes the exodus from Egypt (cf. Exod 6:6; 15:13; Pss 74:2; 77:16; 78:35; 106:10), but particularly in Isaiah גאל becomes a technical term for the redemption from exile. “Redeemer” (גאל) becomes a title for Yahweh⁵ likewise, as noted above, the restored Israel is now called “גאולים” or “גאולי אֶשֶׁר גָּאֲלָם מִיַּד-” as in Psalm 107:2. Zenger observes that the relative clause in verse 2, “אֶשֶׁר גָּאֲלָם מִיַּד-” underscores by means of the prepositional phrase “מִיַּד-” “that this is about ‘release’ from a foreign, hostile sphere of power and that, as v. 3 explains, its goal is ‘gathering’ or ‘bringing home’ to the family of Mother Zion (cf. Isa 54:1–5; 62:1–4, 10–12) and the restoration of Zion as the center of Israel or in fact as the cosmic center of the renewed world.”⁶ This line of reasoning puts verse 2 in the context of the new exodus; the redeemed of Yahweh are those he has rescued in the new exodus, which verse 3 further defines.

Verse 3 describes the topographical landscape of the new exodus, as from the lands. In apposition to “the lands” the authors says מִמִּזְרֵחַ וּמִמַּעֲרֵב מִצֶּפֶן וּמִיָּם. Most modern English translations emend מִיָּם to מִיַּמִּין, in which case the entire phrase would read “from the rising of the sun, and from the setting of the sun, from the north, and from the

⁴As in Ps 106:47, all the *piel* forms of קבץ with Yahweh as subject refer to gathering of people at the new exodus (cf. Deut 30:3–4; 1 Chr 16:35; Neh 1:9; Pss 106:47; 107:3; Isa 11:12; 43:5; 54:7; 56:8; 66:18; Jer 29:14; 31:8, 10; 32:37; Ezek 11:17; 16:37; 20:34, 41; 28:25; 29:13; 36:24; 37:21; Hos 8:10; Joel 3:2; Mic 2:12; 4:6, 12; Zeph 3:19–20; Zech 10:8, 10). The gathering assumes the centrality of Zion in the new exodus (cf. Isa 2:1–4; Jer 29:14; 29:14; 32:34; Ezek 11:17).

⁵Isa 41:14; 43:14; 44:6, 24; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7, 26; 54:5, 8; 59:20; 60:16; 63:16.

⁶Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 104.

south.”⁷ Such emendation is doubtful for numerous reasons.

No Hebrew manuscript has that reading. Hebrew manuscripts differ over the minor question of the location of the conjunction ׀—should it be “from east and from west, from north and from sea,” or “from east and from west *and* from north and from sea,” or even “*and* from east and from west and from north and from sea”?⁸ They all, however, concur on the final word, ים. In addition, the LXX and the Latin Vulgate (106:3) follow the MT, preserving the Hebrew reading with sea as the final word. The Targum Psalm paraphrases it as “southern sea” in order to make the fourth direction, but the translator obviously had “ים” rather than “יָמִין” in the text before him or he would not have mentioned “sea” at all.⁹

Moreover, the exact phrase הַיָּהֳאֵלָה מְצָפוֹן וּמִיָּם occurs in Isaiah 49:12 “הַיָּהֳאֵלָה מְצָפוֹן וּמִיָּם וְהַיָּהֳאֵלָה מְצָפוֹן וּמִיָּם וְהַיָּהֳאֵלָה מְצָפוֹן וּמִיָּם וְהַיָּהֳאֵלָה מְצָפוֹן וּמִיָּם” which does not seem to designate the four corners of a compass. The phrase is enclosed by מְצָפוֹן וּמִיָּם and מְצָפוֹן וּמִיָּם and may be taken to signify the mountains of the far north and the seas of the south, not strictly “north and south.”¹⁰

⁷It is most commonly translated “from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south” (cf. ESV, HCSB, NKJV, KJV, NIV, NASB, RSV, BBE, ASV, NET, NLT). Kraus follows this emendation (Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 323, 325.), but others cast doubts on it (cf. Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 21:56, 58; Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 639). The Message renders it as “from the four winds, from the seven seas.” It is unclear why they translate וּמִיָּם as seven seas, but they at least maintain the original text. The Amplified Bible takes it as the “[Red] Sea from the South.” The Dead Sea Scroll is unhelpful here because there is a lacuna and only has part of the verse “[מְצָפוֹן וּמִיָּם] בְּ[מִזְרָח וּמִמְעַר]”.

⁸Similarly, John Jarick, “The Four Corners of Psalm 107,” *CBQ* 59, no. 2 (1997): 272.

⁹The Latin Vulgate reads “a solis ortu et occasu et ab aquilone et mari” (Ps 106:3) and the LXX “ἐκ τῶν χωρῶν συνήγαγεν αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν καὶ βορρᾶ καὶ θαλάσσης.” Both the Vulgate and the LXX differ with the placement of the conjunction as well. The LXX also renders וּמִיָּם as βορρᾶ καὶ θαλάσσης in Ps 88:13, indicating that the phrase could still be understood in our psalm as “north and south.”

¹⁰Jarick, “The Four Corners of Psalm 107,” 273. Watts argues on Isaiah 49:12 that “‘seaward’ from Palestine means ‘from the west’” (John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, rev. ed., WBC (Waco: Word Books, 2005), 738. Oswalt argues “Instead of the more usual east-west, north-south pattern, here the poet moves around the compass from east (*afar*) to north to west (*the sea* meaning, as usual, the Mediterranean) to south (*Syene*)” (John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998] 300).

Furthermore, Psalm 107:3 depicts four afflictions from which Yahweh rescues, culminating with the salvation at sea (יָם) (vv. 23–32). The four directions enumerated in verse 3 can be interpreted as a pattern of figurative geography applied to the four rescue incidences in verses 4–32.¹¹ Zenger astutely makes the following argument:

The direction מִיָּם, ‘from the sea,’ is usually corrected to מִיָּמִין, ‘from the south,’ so as to retain the four points of the compass: east (‘rising’), west (‘evening’), north, and south. But that does not fit very well with the course of the ‘stories of rescue’ told in the psalm, where four salvation stories (vv. 23–32) take place in or on the ‘sea’ (and not in the south!); the combination ‘from north and from the sea’ is also found—with reference to the returning *gālā*/Diaspora—in Isa 49:12. The text as received can therefore be retained.¹²

Besides, יָם is never used for simple direction in the Psalms. The closest directional usage of this term, “distant seas,” is in Psalm 65:6, which seems to use “קִצְוֵי-יָם” and “יָם רְחֹקִים” as a merism for the totality of creation.

For all these reasons, retaining the text as it is seems to be the best option. Yahweh will gather from the east, west, north, and from the sea, which corresponds to the rescue in verses 23–32. Although this argument cannot completely discount the fact that מִיָּם could refer to the south,¹³ in context of Psalm 107, מִיָּם is most likely the author’s figurative description of the rescue from the sea in verses 23–32, especially since verses 2–3 summarize what 4–32 explains.¹⁴ The “sea” in verse 3, therefore, is a figural

¹¹For a full defense of this suggestions see, Jarick, “The Four Corners of Psalm 107,” 270–87.

¹²Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalm 3*, 99.

¹³Outside of the Psalms, it is sometimes paired with other directional adjectives to refer to one of the corners of the compass Cf. Gen 12:8; 13:14; 28:14; Num 35:5; Deut 3:27; 33:23; Josh 8:13; 11:2, 3; 15:8, 10, 11; 18:12, 14, 15; 19:26, 34; 1 Kgs 7:25; 1 Chr 9:24; 2 Chr 4:4; Isa 11:14; 49:12; Ezek 42:19; 45:7; 46:19; 47:20; 48:1, 10, 16, 17, 34; Dan 8:4; Amos 8:12; Zech 14:4.

¹⁴Goldingay argues, “Here, ‘from the north and from the sea’ follows the wording of Isa 49:12, another promise about Yhwh’s bringing people back to the land that the psalm thus suggests has been fulfilled. In signifying directions, ‘the sea’ usually denotes the west, but here might refer to the south (cf. Tg), perhaps the Red Sea, perhaps the southeast corner of the Mediterranean; one of the main countries from which people will need to return is Egypt, and they might make that journey by sea. Within the psalm, the sea as the fourth direction from which people are gathered will reappear in the fourth of the sections in vv. 4–32” (John Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 90-150*, vol. 3 [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 249).

portrayal of threats elaborated in verses 23–32. Yahweh will gather his people from all lands, even from the threatening “sea” (vv. 23–32).¹⁵

The Rescue of the Mariners

In verses 4–32 there are four rescue narratives, which become paradigms of redemption and restoration.¹⁶ The four rescues in this section must be read in association with the return from exile in verses 2–3; all four groups are included in the “צְאֹנֵי יְהוּדָה”¹⁷ but our concern here is the rescue from the ominous sea (יָם) (vv. 23–32).¹⁸

Verse 23 pictures marine traders who witness a theophanic parade of Yahweh’s power in the deep waters (v. 24). Yahweh speaks and stirs up the tempest, which lifts the waves of the sea, carrying the sailors up to heaven and down to the depths

¹⁵Zenger observe, “‘The sea’ is . . . in Israel’s traditions a metaphor for historical threats and rescue (cf. especially Exodus 14–15 as well as the fourth rescue narrative in vv. 23–32), but at the same time YHWH reveals his divine uniqueness in his victory over the ‘sea’” (Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 104).

¹⁶Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 104. Beyerlin’s argument that vv. 2–3 incorporates another group, those restored from the Diaspora is unlikely. Rather, as suggested above, vv. 4–32 should be read as an exposition or specific deliverances of the general rescue in vv. 2–3. Moreover, his citation of scriptures, which he claims underlie the early part of the psalm to show dependence seems overstated (Walter Beyerlin, *Werden und Wesen des 107. Psalms* [New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1979], 21–6, 38–52, 67–68, 74–76.); parallel motifs does not always imply dependence.

¹⁷Similarly, Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 104–5. Kraus argues that the first two of the distress and rescue narratives have been adopted into the circle of the postexilic community. About the first (vv. 4–9), he says “it is easy to see that the desert trek in vv. 4ff. could be transferred to the journey of travelers who were homeward bound from Mesopotamia, especially since in the prophetic vision the ‘second exodus,’ the journey through the Syrian-Arabic desert, played an important role: Isa 42:10ff.; 49:10ff.; 51:9ff.” About the second he observes, “the liberation from the imprisonment could be understood as the release from Babylonian exile (cf. Isa 42:7; 45:13; 49:9)” (Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 328–29). Kraus does not make the same connection with the last two distress and rescue episodes. Dahood follows a historical interpretation, associating the episodes with Israel’s past. He notes that the pilgrims assemble to praise Yahweh for the exodus (v. 2) because he saved them from the wilderness, threats of death, prison, and from sickness, but he also does not fit vv. 23–30 into his historical scheme (cf. Dahood, *Psalms III*, 3:80–91). Zenger argues that the third episode “with its poetic metaphors, is open to a reading within the horizon of the experience of exile and the restoration of Israel (cf. Isa 52:13–53:12; Ezek 37:12–14)” (Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 107).

¹⁸VanGemen observes, “Verses 23–32 parallel the section of the wanderers in the desert (vv. 4–9) and complement it because ‘desert’ and ‘sea,’ being contrastive, denote the farthest regions (cf. 42:10–11)” (VanGemen, *Psalms*, 5:800). For a chiasmic structure of the entire psalm and its parts, see Alden, “Chiasmic Psalms (III),” 202–3.

(vv. 25–26). Dahood observes that verse 26a shares close similarities with Psalm 104:8a:¹⁹

יַעֲלוּ הַיָּרִים יִרְדּוּ בְּקַעֲוֹת Ps 104:8a

יַעֲלוּ שָׁמַיִם יִרְדּוּ תְּהוֹמוֹת Ps 107:26a

In Psalm 107, שָׁמַיִם parallels הַיָּרִים, and תְּהוֹמוֹת parallels בְּקַעֲוֹת. In both passages, Yahweh stirs the waters to go up and come down to the valleys. However, these parallels do not guarantee that Psalm 107 alludes to the events referred to in Psalm 104. Although the language is similar the concepts appear dissimilar. Psalm 104 evokes the flood, but Psalm 107 faintly point to the Red Sea. It must be noted, however, that the lexemic links above may imply that this may be one of the instances where the flood lives vicariously in the depiction of the Red Sea.²⁰

Verses 23–32 share verbal connections with the exodus narrative. Verses 24 and 26 are close linguistically to Exodus 15:5 and almost sound synonymous. The mariners saw Yahweh’s wonders in the deeps (בְּמַצּוֹלָה), the same location where Israel’s enemies sank (Exod 15:5). Exodus 15:5 reads, “תִּהְיֶה מַת יִכְסִימוּ יַרְדּוֹ בְּמַצּוֹלָה.” The clause יַרְדּוֹ בְּמַצּוֹלָה parallels תְּהוֹמוֹת יַרְדּוֹ in Psalm 107:26b; מַצּוֹלָה replaces תְּהוֹמֹת, indicating that the two

¹⁹Dahood, *Psalms III*, 3:36. Brigg and Briggs hypothesize that the clause “Their soul was melting because of trouble” is the only line of these verses, which was original to the psalm (Briggs and Briggs, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:361). This hypothesis cannot be sustained because there is nothing in the psalm that suggests the work of a glossator. According to Hebrew grammarians, the *nun inversum* on the margin of the BHS of vv. 21–26 and 40 are like brackets to indicate that the verses are out of place, that they do not fit in the context (Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, ed. E. Kautzsch, trans. A. E. Cowley [Mineola, NY: Dover, 2006], 31; C. H. J. van der Merwe, J. A. Naudé, and Jan H Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000], 49; Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Biblia Hebraica* [Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995], 13). It is unclear why the Masoretes delineated these verses, as out of context; they seem to fit in this context where the author enumerates several instances where Yahweh rescues. Most commentators read these verses as fitting in the context of the entire psalm. See Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:59–65; Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 329; James Luther Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation (Louisville, John Knox Press, 1994), 344; Adrian Curtis, *Psalms* (Peterborough: Epworth, 2004), 213–15. The refrain at the end of each rescue narrative (vv. 8, 21, 31) “let them thank Yahweh for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man” reveals an intentional structure and, as thus, argues for an original unity of the psalm.

²⁰See the introduction to chapter 2 of the work for a discussion on how the flood relates to the crossing of the Red Sea.

may be almost synonymous. The fact that מְצִלָּה also occurs in Psalm 107:24 may confirm this suspicion.²¹

The terms “מַיִם רַבִּים” (v. 23b; cf. 2 Sam 22:17), “מְצִלָּה” (v. 24b; cf. Exod 15:5), and “תְּהוֹם” (v. 26a; cf. Gen 7:11; Exod 15:5, 8), which are used in OT deliverances passages, evoke those acts in which Yahweh’s power is upheld in his control of the waters for the preservation of his people (e.g., the exodus).²² In Psalm 107, as at the flood and Red Sea, the rescue is of human beings through Yahweh’s power, which raises the storm of the sea and stills it again (vv. 25, 29). Even though the links are faint, Zenger perceptively claims that the fact that the return from exile is depicted as through waters may thematically link the two events. He says the following:

It is true that the transparency of this strophe to the rescue of Israel is not immediately apparent, but at the same time one should remember that in Isaiah 40–55 also Israel’s rescue from the power of Babylon was described with metaphors of battle with the sea, although the route from Babylon to Palestine/Israel was not a path through the sea (cf. Isa 43:2, 16). In any case, the motif of YHWH as ‘master of the sea’ has an Israelite horizon in light of the preceding Psalm 106, since in 106:6–12 the rescue of Israel at the sea at the time of the first exodus is sung as a deed of YHWH’s power as well as a miracle of his goodness.²³

The root נָחָה (v. 30), with Yahweh as its subject and his covenant people as object, in both the *hiphil* and *qal*, is the common term for describing the exodus from

²¹Scott T. Yoshikawa, “The Prototypical Use of Noahic Flood in the New Testament” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Deerfield, IL: Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2004), 168.

²²Similarly, Schaefer observes that the language of this psalm is evocative of the exodus, what he calls “the archetype of national distress” (Schaefer, *Psalms*, 268).

²³Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalm 3*, 108. Schnider interprets these verses in light of Jesus’s calming of the storm in Mark 4 (Franz Schnider, “Rettung Aus Seenot: Ps 107:23–32 Und Mk 4:35–41,” in *Freude an Der Weisung Des Herrn: Beiträge Zur Theologie Der Psalmen: Festgabe Zum 70. Geburtstag von Heinrich Gross/Ernst Haag*, Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, ed. Heinrich Gross, Ernst Haag, and Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge 13 [Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1986], 375–93). Meye argues that Ps 107 provides the horizon for interpreting Mark’s miracles (Robert P. Meye, “Psalm 107 as ‘Horizon’ for Interpreting the Miracle Stories of Mark 4:35–8:26,” in *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology*, ed. Robert A. Guelich [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1978], 1–13). Stones on the other hand argues that Matt 8:23–27 serves as a lens through which Ps 107, precisely vv. 23–32, and Jonah portray the significance of Jesus’ death and resurrection (Timothy J. Stone, “Following the Church Fathers: An Intertextual Path from Psalm 107 to Isaiah, Jonah and Matthew 8:23–27,” *JTI* 7, no. 1 [2013]: 37–55).

Egypt.²⁴ Just as Yahweh led (נחה) Israel to the Promised Land (Exod 13:21; Deut 32:12), a land of delight (Mal 3:12), so he leads the mariners to the city of delight (Ps 107:30).

These common lexemic links indicate that the psalm finely alludes to earlier Scripture, the crossing of the Red Sea.²⁵ Barnes argues that the author's language takes some color from the great events of the past, but the past melts into the present.²⁶ I agree with Barnes on the verbal connections, but I do not maintain that the past melts into the present and disappears. The author uses language from the past because the crossing of the Red Sea and the flood have become metaphors for water deliverances. The psalmist employs the paradigm of the exodus to depict the new exodus from Babylon.

The mariners, flabbergasted by the wonders of Yahweh's power, cry to him for help. He brings them out (אצא), like he did Israel out of Egypt,²⁷ by stilling the waters and its waves (vv. 28–29). The new exodus, like the first, is accomplished by means of

²⁴Cf. Exod 13:17, 21; 15:13; Deut 32:12; Neh 9:12; Pss 23:3; 77:21; 78:14, 53. The use of the same verb for the first and second exodus shows that Yahweh is restoring people to the land the same way that he first brought them into it. Similarly, Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 90-150*, 3:256.

²⁵Stone examines these four rescues and the way that the Targum historicizes them and argues, “the contextual chain between the four illustrations and the opening invitation and its juxtaposition with Ps 106 links these general stories into the specific story of Israel's exile and return. The canonical shape does not collapse the distance between the four general stories and Israel's specific story (as the Targum does, anchoring them to specific instances in Israel's history); rather, it applies them to Israel's exile and return. Appropriately, then, these four illustrations have been consistently used to describe God's wonders and kindnesses to humanity in their many exiles” (Stone, “Following the Church Fathers,” 44). Vassar, on the other hand, examines the language of Ps 107 and argues for a close relationship and dependence on Gen 1:1–2. See John S. Vassar, *Recalling a Story Once Told: An Intertextual Reading of the Psalter and the Pentateuch* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2007), 108–24.

²⁶William Emery Barnes, *The Psalms with Introduction and Notes*, vol. 2 (London: Methuen, 1931), 517.

²⁷The *hiphil* of אצא is the standard verb used with Yahweh as its subject for the rescue from Egypt (cf. Exod 6:6–7; 7:4–5; 12:17, 42, 51; 13:3, 9, 14, 16; 16:6, 32; 18:1; 20:2; 29:46; 32:11–12; Lev 19:36; 22:33; 23:43; 25:38, 42; 26:13, 45; Num 15:41; 20:16; 23:22; 24:8; Deut 1:27; 4:20, 37; 5:6, 15; 6:12, 21, 23; 7:8, 19; 8:14–15; 9:26, 28–29; 13:5, 10; 16:1; 26:8; 29:25; Josh 24:5–6; Judg 2:12; 6:8; 1 Kgs 8:16, 21, 51, 53; 9:9; 2 Chr 6:5; 7:22; Jer 7:22; 11:4; 31:32; 32:21; 34:13; Ezek 11:9; 20:6, 9–10, 14; 20:22; Dan 9:15; Pss 66:12; 68:6; 105:37, 43; 136:11). Similarly, Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 90-150*, 3:255. The city of their delight (מְנוּחָהּ הַמְּצֻיָּה) to which Yahweh leads them is similar to “the land of delight” (אֶרֶץ חַיֵּה) (Mal 3:12), referring to the Promised Land and its inhabitants.

water; Yahweh again rules the waters for the restoration of his covenant people, bringing about the new exodus.²⁸

The adoption of this episode of the rescue of the mariners in the context of the restoration from exile (vv. 2–3) indicates that it is not only about the rescue of merchants and traders from dangers at sea. The great waters of verse 23 are symbolic of the nations, as in Isaiah 17:12, 13.²⁹

If the psalm pictures the new exodus return from exile, as another installment of the exodus from Egypt—water deliverance, why are the allusions to the exodus so faint? Why no loud recollection of Israel’s history as in Psalm 106? The subtleness of the allusion, I propose, is to give the psalm an international flavor. The new exodus will constitute not only Israel but also other nations.³⁰ This psalm differs markedly from its two predecessors (Ps 105, 106). Barnes makes the following observation:

They [Pss 105 and 106] are full of allusions to events in the early history of Israel, but this [Ps 107] does not once mention the name of Israel . . . There is in fact no trace of historical allusion except in the expression, ‘the redeemed’ (*gē’ûlē*) of the LORD’ (v. 2). The Hebrew verb *gā’al* is used of redemption from Babylon . . . and (less often, as in Ps 106:10) of the deliverance from Egypt. The Psalmist is half-consciously remembering the release from Babylonian captivity (vv. 10–16) and (perhaps) even the desert wandering which followed the Exodus (vv. 4–7), but he makes no direct historical references.³¹

The patent absence of Israel and her history raises the suspicion that the psalm was

²⁸Hutchinson rightly observes that the answer to the prayer of Ps 106 in Ps 107 is eschatological. He proposes that “the glorious answers to prayer set forth in Psalm 107 and developed throughout Book V were never realized in the post-exilic period, to which the final form of the Psalter dates. In other words, there is an eschatological or teleological thrust to the book of Psalms, as signaled right from the start by the introductory and programmatic Psalm 2” (James Hely Hutchinson, “The Psalms and Praise,” in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. Philip S. Johnston and David G. Firth [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005], 98).

²⁹Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:61.

³⁰For the early church also, the absence of direct references to Israel gave the psalm an international flavor (Senator Cassiodorus, *Cassiodorus: Explanation of the Psalms*, vol. 3 [Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1991], 82–95).

³¹William Emery Barnes, *The Psalms with Introduction and Notes*, vol. 2 (London: Methuen, 1931), 517.

written for both Israel and Gentiles.³²

In addition, Yahweh's dealing is only with the "sons of men" (בְּנֵי אָדָם) (Ps 107:8, 15, 21, 31), without any direct reference to Israel. All occurrences of the plural בְּנֵי אָדָם in the OT refer to human beings in general.³³ Thus Yahweh summons all men, the sons of men,³⁴ ascertaining the suspicion that the generic depiction of rescue from water may be a way of portraying a new worldwide exodus, including בְּנֵי אָדָם, not Israel alone; Yahweh's mercy is not limited to Israel, for the Creator-God is kind to all men.³⁵

Moreover, the fact that prayers are offered to Yahweh in everyplace, in the desert (Ps 107:6), in prison (v. 13), on a sick bed (v. 19), and in fuming waters (v. 28) presupposes that one does not need to be in temple to pray.³⁶ Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple (2 Chr 20:9) uses similar language as in verses 13 and 19 of our psalm. Solomon says that when in trouble, Israel is to pray before the temple and Yahweh will hear and rescue (cf. 2 Chr 7:12–16). In our psalm, however, people of all lands (v. 3), in any circumstance, and anywhere (vv. 4–32) call on Yahweh and he saves. Consequently, the mariners cry to Yahweh, Israel's covenant God, and he rescues them.³⁷ Therefore "let them give thanks Yahweh for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the sons of man" (Ps 107:31).

³²Ibid.

³³Cf. Deut 32:8; 2 Sam 7:14; Isa 52:14; Jer 32:19; Ezek 31:14; Joel 1:12; Mic 5:6; Pss 11:4; 12:2, 9; 14:2; 21:11; 31:20; 36:8; 45:3; 49:3; 53:3; 57:5; 58:2; 62:10; 66:5; 89:48; 90:3; 107:8, 15, 21, 31; 115:16; Prov 8:4, 31; 15:11; Dan 10:16.

³⁴Similarly, David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *True Happiness: Psalms 1 and 107*, U.S. ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 92.

³⁵VanGemen, *Psalms*, 5:797.

³⁶Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 90-150*, 3:247.

³⁷The *qal* imperfect of the verb צַעַק, the indirect object אֶל־יְהוָה, and the root יָשַׁע, which are used together in Ps 107:13, 19, do not commonly occur together in the OT. In Exod 14:10, Israel cries to Yahweh (אֶל־יְהוָה . . . יִצְעָקוּ) and he works salvation (יִשְׁעָה) for them (cf. 2 Chr 20:9). In Judg 3:9, 15 they cry to him (אֶל־יְהוָה . . . יִצְעָקוּ) and he sends them deliverers (מוֹשִׁיעִים).

The above exploration of Psalm 107:23–32 shows that Yahweh will deliver through water at the new exodus as he did at the exodus from Egypt; history is the paradigm for the future. In addition, its portrayal of the new exodus suggests that it is not be limited to Israel, but includes all the children of men, who praise Yahweh for his covenant steadfast love to them.

De-Creation and Re-Creation of the Promised Land (Ps 107:33–43)

In Psalm 107:33–43, the author again uses terminology common in the earlier Scriptures, which in this context describes the destruction and rebuilding of Canaan. Through lexemic and thematic parallels, the psalmist depicts the destruction at the deportation to Babylon as a de-creation and the restoration to the Promised Land after the return from exile as a re-creation.³⁸

The author says that Yahweh converts rivers and their sources into a dry arid ground (v. 33). Albeit with different terminology, this alteration is similar to what Yahweh did at creation, the flood, and at the Red Sea and Jordan, as he brought dry ground out of water. The main variance is that in those past acts the transformation was for redemption, but in Psalm 107:33 it is a divine sentence of judgment on the Promised

³⁸Vassar's arguments for verbal and thematic links between Ps 107 and Gen 1:1–2 are not very convincing. He argues that several formal markers that connect Gen 1–2:3 to Ps 107. First, he states that the initial connection between Ps 107 and the book of Genesis is the culmination of the fivefold division of the Pentateuch and the Psalter The terminal book of the Psalter leads to the initial text of the Pentateuch. Second, "in addition to the sequential progress through the books Psalm 107 and Genesis 1:1–2 each speak the language of creation. These terms depict the reality of the existence of chaos. The four in-common words that we will examine are תֹהוֹ ('chaos'), חֹשֶׁךְ ('darkness'), תְּהוֹמוֹת ('the deep'), and מַיִם ('water')." Each of these four words is a term typically associated with the creation, but specifically to chaos" "These four words do not appear together in the same chapter except in two instances in the Hebrew Bible. Those instances are Genesis 1 and Psalm 107. Indeed, in Genesis 1 they all appear in the same verse. The common language provides a strong formal link between the two texts" (Vassar, *Recalling a Story Once Told*, 119–22). While this argument may be convincing, the thematic connections that Vassar posits—Battle between creation and chaos, God conversing with men, distress and deliverance, the Hebrew God is at work in this world" (ibid., 122–24)—seem too general that they could be true of almost any texts in the OT.

Land.

In support of the proposal that Psalm 107:33–43 is about the Promised Land, we observe that these verses share close verbal parallels with Leviticus 25, which looks forward to Israel’s stay in the land. Leviticus 25:3 almost lexically equals Psalm 107:37:

Lev 25:3 תִּזְרַע שָׂדֶךְ . . . תִּזְמַר כְּרָמָה וְאַסְפֶּתָּ אֶת־תְּבוּאָתָהּ

Ps 107:37 וַיִּזְרְעוּ שָׂדוֹת וַיִּטְעוּ כְּרָמִים וַיַּעֲשׂוּ פְּרִי תְבוּאָהּ

According to Leviticus 25, Israel shall sow fields, plant vineyards, and yield produce in the land of Canaan. Equally, the psalmist shows that Yahweh’s blessing results in sowing of fields, planting of vineyards, and the land yielding produce. The phrase אֶרֶץ פְּרִי (Ps 107:34) only occurs once in Leviticus 25:19 and describes the Promises Land.³⁹

Isaiah also employs the same language to describe Israel’s return to the land from exile, which supports the argument that this judgment is on Canaan. Except for the change of the person of the verb שִׁים (third person in Psalm 107:35 and first person in Isaiah), the clause יִשֶׁם מִדְּבַר לְאֻגִּם־מַיִם וְאֶרֶץ צִיָּה לְמִצְאֵי מַיִם occurs exactly in Isaiah 41:18. This exact quote insinuates that the psalmist and Isaiah are describing the same event.⁴⁰

According to Deuteronomy 28:15, when Israel disobeys Yahweh, they will face: hunger (v. 17), fruitlessness (v. 18), waning livestock (v. 31), homelessness (v. 21, 30), drought (v. 22), and deterioration of fertile and watery land into dusty arid land (v. 24). This type of destruction and judgment is hinted at in Psalm 107:33–35. After the water is restored in verse 35, Psalm 107:33–38 lists the opposite of Deuteronomy’s curses—fertile land, fruitfulness, abundant food, increase in livestock, dwelling places,

³⁹Although in Lev 25 אֶרֶץ is the subject of נָתַן and פְּרִי is its object, whereas the two terms are in construct in Ps 107:34, the land which Moses says will produce fruit is what the psalmist describes as אֶרֶץ פְּרִי.

⁴⁰Here it does not matter whether Isaiah is quoting the psalm or that the psalm quotes Isaiah, it is sufficient to note that the similarity of language shows that they describe a similar thing.

blessings, and the exaltation of the needy.⁴¹ The themes of judgment and blessing on the land in Psalm 107 commend the notion that the land described is the Promised Land.

In judgment Yahweh turns rivers into a desert and fruitful land into a salty waste (Ps 107:33–34), a reversal of the blessing on the Promised Land in Leviticus 25. Then mercifully (Ps 107:43) he again reverses the judgment, turning deserts into pools of water and parched land into springs of water (Ps 107:35). As a result of this restoration, the hungry are satisfied; those who once had not city (Ps 107:4) are now led by Yahweh to dwell in a city (Ps 107:7), which they establish and inhabit (Ps 107:36), just as Israel once wandered without a city until Yahweh brought them to settle in Canaan. In this city, they sow fields and plant vineyards and get fruitful produce (Ps 107:37), the same blessings Israel once enjoyed (cf. Lev 25:3; Deut 20:6; 2 Kgs 19:29). As Yahweh once blessed Israel so that they multiplied greatly (Exod 1:7), so the redeemed in the new exodus from Babylon, by Yahweh's blessing, multiply greatly (Ps 107:38), fulfilling God's word of blessing on Abraham (Gen 12:2).

The Targum Psalm supports the argument that Psalm 107:33–43 is about the destruction and restoration of the Promised Land. It says the following:

Concerning the generation of Joel son of Pethuel he prophesied and said: "When the house of Israel rebelled in the days of Joel the prophet, he brought a drought into the world; he made the rivers like the desert, and the sources of water like thirst." The land of Israel that produces fruit became a waste like Sodom, which was overthrown because of the evil of its inhabitants. When they returned to the Torah, he made the desert like a channel of water, and the parched land became sources of water. And he made the hungry dwell there, and they set up an inhabited city. And they sowed fields and planted vineyards, and they yielded fruit of produce. And he blessed them and they multiplied greatly, and their livestock will not diminish. And when they sinned, they diminished and became poor because of the affliction of misery and pain. He pours contempt on the leaders, and made them wander in a void without a path. But when they returned to the Torah, he exalted the needy from poverty, and made them like the flocks of the well-born families. The upright will see and rejoice, but every liar's mouth is closed and sealed. Would that the wise man keep these things, and discern the kindnesses of the LORD (Ps107:33–43 PST).

⁴¹Goldingay also reads v. 33 as divine judgment on Israel's land (Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 90-150*, 3:257).

The Targum Psalm identifies the land as “the land of Israel” (Ps 107:33 PST), which was desecrated because of Israel’s sin (Ps 107:33, 39 PST). The restoration will occur when Israel returns to the Torah (Ps 107:35, 41 PST). Although the Targum speaks of Israel, the psalm does not; this restoration could be what other OT authors speak about (cf. Isa 2:1–6; 66:18–24; Mic 4:1–3), which will be cosmic in scope.

Conclusion

Therefore, with the Targumic Psalm and the verbal and thematic link observed above uphold the proposal that Psalm 107:33–43 is about the Promised Land, its judgment (de-creation) at the time of Israel/Judah’s fall, and its restoration in the new exodus from Babylon (re-creation).⁴² Psalm 107, thus, subtly alludes to Israel’s journey from their distress in Egypt to the joys of the Promised Land, showing that the new exodus is patterned after that first.

Echoes of the Exodus (Ps 114)

Psalm 114 is deeply rooted in biblical tradition;⁴³ it is a distinct account of the exodus from Egypt and Israel’s arrival in Canaan. Verses 1–2 summarize the entire exodus and verses 3–4 gives more details about the exodus, and verses 5–6 ask a series of exodus-related questions. The water imagery in verses 3, 5, and 8 describes the journey from Egypt to Canaan.

⁴²Similarly, albeit without showing the verbal connections, Hossfeld and Zenger note, “Verses 36–38 make YHWH’s creative power explicit through a recollection of Israel’s settlement in the land. In part, the vocabulary of the first rescue narrative in vv. 4–9 is repeated here, but the event itself is different: YHWH relieves and puts an end to hunger by giving the hungry the land he has endowed with a wealth of waters as their dwelling place and blesses them, their cattle, and their work. Here there is not only an echo of the theology of creation and blessing in the book of Genesis, but the view expands to the Pilgrim Psalter (Psalms 120–134), integrated by the same Psalter redaction. The section portrays Israel’s history in the land as a history of blessing, although one that, as v. 39 summarizes, was disrupted and destroyed by a contrary history of evil resulting in exile” (Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalm 3*, 109).

⁴³Similarly, Stephen A. Geller, “The Language of Imagery in Psalm 114,” in *Lingering over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran*, ed. Tzvi Abusch, John Huehnergard, and Piotr Steinkeller (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 179.

Of all the water imagery in the Psalter that recalls history, that of Psalm 114 is one of the strongest allusions to earlier Scripture. Unlike Psalm 107 whose allusions are very subtle, Psalm 114 is very well defined in its echo of the past. Its clarity has left scholars without any choice but to embrace it as a recollection of Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan.⁴⁴ Let us establish the case that this psalm recounts the exodus from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan, and Yahweh's provision in the wilderness. The recollection of the exodus in Book 5 of the Psalter suggests that the restoration from exile, the main focus of the Book,⁴⁵ is similar the historical exodus.

Seas Flee, Mountains Skip (Ps 114: 1–6)

Verses 1–6 recapitulate the exodus journey, personifying nature as fleeing and skipping. The use of the clause “coming out of Egypt” (בְּצֵאת מִמִּצְרַיִם) is standard for recounting the Exodus.⁴⁶ Verse 2 describes Israel's settlement in the land.⁴⁷ When the

⁴⁴There is a general agreement among scholars on the historic nature of this psalm. It recounts Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Compare William S. Plumer, *Psalms: A Critical and Expository Commentary with Doctrinal and Practical Remarks* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1975), 991–93; Briggs and Briggs, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:390–92; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 373; John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 5, trans. James Anderson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 335.

⁴⁵Zenger also proposes that Book 5 of the Psalter recounts a “spiritual pilgrimage to Zion” (Zenger, “Composition and Theology,” 100–101). Similarly, Kim, “The Strategic Arrangement of Royal Psalms in Books IV-V.” Hamilton rightly notes, “Book 5 opens by speaking of the return from exile as though it has already taken place. This seems to be the perspective of faith. Psalms 107–50 present the eschatological triumph of Yahweh through the conquering Davidic king, who decisively bring about salvation that come to Israel through the exile by means of judgment upon the enemies of Israel” (James M. Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010], 287–88).

⁴⁶Cf. Exod 12:39; 13:3; 23:15; 34:18; Num 11:20; 22:5, 11; Deut 9:12, 26; Josh 5:4, 6; 1 Kgs 8:51.

⁴⁷Glassner observes that vv. 1–2 depict the move of Israel from bondage to the Promised Land as immediate and without obstacles, as the obstacles, Red Sea and Jordan stated later in this psalm all fled before Yahweh (Gottfried Glassner, “Aufbruch Als Heimat: Zur Theologie Des 114. Psalms,” *ZKT* 116 [1994]: 472–79). Avriel and Amzallag suggest that the fact that v. 2 of our psalm speaks of the conquest of Canaan, inserted between the coming out of Egypt (v. 1) and the crossing of the sea (v. 3), shows that the psalmist arranged the events thematically rather than chronologically (Mihal Avriel and Nissim Amzallag, “The Canonic Responsa Reading of Psalm 114 and Its Theological Significance,” *OTE* 24, no. 2 [2011]: 304).

house of Jacob comes out of Egypt, Judah becomes his sanctuary and Israel, his dominion.⁴⁸ Israel as Yahweh's *מְשָׁלָה* and *קֹדֶשׁ* is derived from Exodus 19:6, which says "You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." The transformation of Israel into God's sanctuary and dominion causes the natural world's reaction in verses 3–6.⁴⁹

The sea in verses 3 and 5 must refer to the Red Sea, since *הַיָּם* hardly refers to the River Jordan.⁵⁰ Thus, *הַיָּם* and *הַיַּרְדֵּן* refer to the two miraculous water crossings at the Red Sea and Jordan (Josh 4:23).⁵¹ The crossing of the Red Sea (Exod 14) and the Jordan

⁴⁸Goldingay argues that the third person pronouns on *לְקֹדֶשׁ* and *מְשָׁלָה* have Israel and house of Jacob as their antecedent because there is no word for Yahweh in this verse. It is possible, he notes, to read those pronouns as referring to Yahweh. However, this is dubious because the only apparent antecedent to the pronouns is Israel. Moreover, there is no other text that describes Judah as Yahweh's sanctuary. "The antecedent for 'his/its' is rather 'Jacob's household.' The holy land of Judah/Israel comes to belong to this family; it is also its realm (cf. Isa 39:2; Jer. 34:1), the land over which it rules. Set over against each other, sanctuary is a religious or theological notion, realm a political one; in the parallelism the expressions form a hendiadys" (Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 42-89*, 2:322). Contra Goldingay, Geller rightly posits that the ambiguity of the pronominal suffix reference anticipates and strengthens the effect of the divine titles in vv. 5–6, but also to the unspoken but real question in the reader's mind raised by v. 2" (Geller, "The Language of Imagery in Psalm 114," 181). Both the territory of Judah and Israel have become a dwelling place for Yahweh and the domain, where he rules through his people, Israel. This understanding fits well with Exod 15:17 (cf. Ps 74:2) "You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, Yahweh, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established." Yahweh established his people in the land where he dwells and rules. Berlin suggests, "The psalm is subtly invoking the *concept* of the united monarchy, or better, the ideal kingdom of Israel . . . It indeed views the kingdom of Israel as incipient in the exodus, exactly as Exod 15:17 does. The use of the bipartite terminology, Judah and Israel, predates the actual division of the kingdoms, and even the establishment of the monarchy (e.g. Josh 11:21; 1 Sam 11:8). It represents the ideal of the Israelite kingdom, an ideal that pre-dates and post-dates the actual divided kingdom" (Adele Berlin, "Myth and Meaning in Psalm 114," in *Diachronic and Synchronic: Reading the Psalms in Real Time: Proceedings of the Baylor Symposium on the Book of Psalms*, ed. Joel S. Burnett, W. H. Bellinger, and W. Tucker [New York: T & T Clark, 2007], 74–75).

⁴⁹The syntax of vv. 1–2 makes it clear that the emphasis is not on the departure from Egypt in essence (the subordinate clause) but on Israel's becoming a sanctuary and dominion to God (the main clause). The birth of Israel as a nation began at the exodus and culminated in the establishment in the Promised Land as a sanctuary and dominion to Yahweh (cf. Berlin, "Myth and Meaning in Psalm 114," 75).

⁵⁰This is contra Dahood who identified *הַיָּם* as the Dead Sea based on Josh 3:16, arguing that our psalm celebrates Yahweh's choice of Palestine (Dahood, *Psalms II*, 2:135). Renaud correctly disagrees with Dahood's argument on Josh 3:16, saying that Josh 3:16 is purely geographical (B. Renaud, "Les Deux Lectures Du Ps 114," *RevScRel* 52 [1978]: 14–28).

⁵¹Similarly, Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:141; Konrad Schaefer, *Psalms*, Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry, ed. David W. Cotter (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 282; Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 90-150*, 3:322. Contra Berlin who proposes that "the parallelism of 'sea' //

(Josh 3–4) frame the exit from Egypt and the entrance to the Promised Land (cf. Josh 4:23). The author personifies the Red Sea as “seeing and fleeing” but does not state what the sea saw; Psalm 77:17, the only other instance in the Psalter where the waters see, supplies that object, רְאוּהוּ מַיִם אֶלֶה־יָם. Following Psalm 77, the Red Sea saw Israel’s God and fled. The verb נִסַּח poetically describes what happened at the Red Sea, when Yahweh drove the sea back for the redemption of his people, Israel (cf. Exod 14:21). Jordan turning back figuratively refers to Joshua 3:13, where the sea stood in one heap. The two unfathomable water crossings were accomplished by Yahweh’s presence and word (cf. Josh 3:13; Pss 18:15; 76:6).⁵²

The skipping mountains and hills (vv. 4, 6) and quaking earth (v. 8) in the presence of the God of Jacob depict a theophany that evokes Exodus 15:14 and 19:18, where Canaan trembles with pangs and Sinai smokes and quakes because of Yahweh’s presence.⁵³ In our psalm, God’s presence in verse 7 answers the questions in Psalm 114:5–6—“What is the matter with you, sea, that you flee? Jordan, that you turn back? Mountains, that you skip like rams? Hills, like lambs?”⁵⁴ The earth quakes at the presence of Israel’s covenant God, Yahweh, as he leads his people to establish them as a sanctuary and dominion for himself.

‘Jordan’ . . . suggests the mythic parallelism of the primordial cosmic waters, ‘sea’ // ‘river’ (e.g. Pss 24:2; 66:6; 72:8; 89:25 and in the Ugaritic Baal Epic), the water that were subdued and restrained at creation (cf. Pss 74:12–14; 89:10–11)” (Berlin, “Myth and Meaning in Psalm 114,” 77).

⁵²The fleeing of the Red Sea and turning of Jordan does not insinuate a conflict between Yahweh and the waters. The psalmist simply states that the sea saw Yahweh and fled, intimating no sense of battle, as Nelson argues (Richard D. Nelson, “Psalm 114,” *Int* 63, no. 2 [2009]: 172).

⁵³Goldingay makes a similar observation and notes, “Sea, river, mountain, and hill know that they are not just witnessing an ordinary group of migrants but something of earthshaking significance” (Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 90-150*, 3:323). See also Geller, “The Language of Imagery in Psalm 114,” 184.

⁵⁴Allen suggests that the reference to mountains and hills may be a double reference to Sinai and the mountains of Canaan. “In the sweep of vv. 3–4 the psalmist encompassed the crossing of the Reed Sea and the Jordan (Exod 14:21–22; 15:4–12; Josh 3:14–17), here combined as in Josh 4:23, the earthquake of Sinai, and imaginatively the shaking of Canaan’s hill country (Exod 15:14–16; 19:18)” (Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:142).

At the time of creation, the geological features of the earth were fixed in their respective places so that they would not move, signifying the permanency of the earth (Pss 93:1; 96:10; 104:5). In Psalm 114:5–6, these fixed features are moving, signaling the de-creation and re-creation of the world because of the new exodus, Yahweh’s rebirth of his nation. Similar imagery is found in Jeremiah 4:23–24, which depicts the destruction of Judah as a de-creation; in Jeremiah 4 the earth is formless and void, hills are moving to and fro, and darkness is over the whole earth.

Just as the destruction of Jerusalem was a de-creation, so the restoration is pictured as a re-creation. This re-creation is the remaking of the destroyed world. It is as though the world order hangs on the birth of Israel and their settlement in the land.⁵⁵ The birth of Israel in the exodus from Egypt had cosmic effects. In the same manner, the rebirth of the nation through the return from exile will likewise be earth shaking. This is a clear pattern in which the past is the paradigm for the future.⁵⁶

Yahweh Turns a Rock into Water (Ps 114:8)

The crossing of the Red Sea (Exod 14) and the Jordan (Josh 3–4) referred to in verses 3–5 frame the exit from Egypt and the entrance into the Promised Land. Between these two great events lay the wilderness wandering alluded to in verse 8. In verse 8 the author refers to Yahweh’s provision of water for Israel in the arid desert. The terms צִוּר, מַיִם, and הַלְמִישׁ only occur together in Deuteronomy 8:15 to describe Yahweh’s wilderness

⁵⁵Berlin observes, “The exodus is a re-creation of the world. After the exodus, intimates the psalm, the map of the world must be redrawn, for a new nation has come into existence. The exodus-event thereby transcends its national significance and becomes an event of universal significance” (Berlin, “Myth and Meaning in Psalm 114,” 69).

⁵⁶Macintosh demonstrates this future orientation of history by interpreting our psalm in light of the new exodus accomplished in Christ (A. A. Macintosh, “Christian Exodus An Analysis of Psalm 114,” *Theo* 72, no. 589 [1969]: 318–19). Rossel argues that Ps 114 present a great redeeming God of whom Jesus is the ultimate embodiment (Wilfried Rossel, “Eens En Voorgoed Werd Ontzag Geboren: Exegetische En Bijbel-Theologische Beschouwingen Bij Psalm 114,” *Coll* 20 [1990]: 243–55).

supply of water during the exodus. In Deuteronomy 8:15, Yahweh is the one “who brought water for you from the rock and the flint” (הַמּוֹצִיא לָךְ מַיִם מִצּוּר הַחֲלָמִישׁ). The psalmist leaves out the pronoun “you” and changes the verb to state “הַהֲפִכִי הַצּוּר אֶגַם-מַיִם” (הַחֲלָמִישׁ לְמַעַיְנוֹ-מַיִם). The participle הַהֲפִכִי suggests that the author understands Yahweh’s past work as something that characterizes him—he is a turner of rock into a pool of water. By this supply of water, Yahweh kept his people after saving them; he saves and preserves. The phrase אֶגַם-מַיִם and מַעַיֵן suggest that verse 8 may involve the restoration from the exile, given that these terms are only used together in exile restoration contexts (cf. Isa 41:18; Ps 107:35).

Isaiah 43:16–21 speaks of God creating a way through the sea and providing rivers in the wilderness in the new exodus. We see the same motifs in our psalm. In the new exodus God’s people will share in a similar experience of Israel of old. God will again make a way in the sea and provide in the wilderness. In both the sea and the wilderness God provided a path for his people and will do it again in the new exodus.⁵⁷

Conclusion

The psalmist evokes the past exodus to give meaning to the present and to give hope for the future, the return from exile. This return from exile will also have cosmic effects as the exodus from Egypt. According to the psalmist, the same God who saved Israel at the exodus from Egypt will save them and provide for them in the new exodus,

⁵⁷Berlin sees in our psalm not only allusions to the exodus, but also to the creation. She concludes, “Psalm 114 joins the creation (the defeat of chaos) with the exodus and its aftermath. A wonderfully poetic nexus is formed between these two past events, implying their equivalence. The psalm describes the exodus, or more specifically, the founding of the nation of Israel in its land that the exodus initiated, in terms of the creation of the world. By implication, the exodus is a re-creation of the world. After the exodus, intimates the psalm, the map of the world must be redrawn, for a new nation has come into existence. The exodus-event thereby transcends its national significance and becomes an event of universal significance” (Berlin, “Myth and Meaning in Psalm 114,” 69). Berlin’s arguments for the merging of creation and the exodus are convincing, but it is difficult to see any battle, as she insinuates, in the Genesis account of creation. Moreover, one cannot assume that the “waters fleeing” and “mountains skipping” intimate any battle between Yahweh and creation.

the return from exile.

Flood-like Water Distress (Ps 124)

This psalm describes Yahweh's favor toward his people, as he rescues them from the attack of man. The anger of אֱלֹהִים is pictured with water imagery in verses 4–5. In these verses the psalmist uses flood imagery to picture the attack of the enemies, the nations. The water imagery is similar to that of Psalm 18; also, in both psalms the enemies are humans, depicted as a flood. We will propose that this imagery finds its origin in the flood in Genesis 6–9.⁵⁸

Using an “if/then” construction, the psalmist looks back and exclaims, inviting Israel to do same, “If Yahweh had not been for us⁵⁹ when man rose up against us,” (v. 1) we would have been destroyed (vv. 3–5).⁶⁰ The repetition of the possible dangers Israel faced in verses 3–5 further highlight Yahweh's kindheartedness towards Israel. If Yahweh had not been for Israel, the enemy's anger would have been kindled against Israel and her foe who rose up against her would have swallowed her (v. 3).

Verses 4–5 symbolize the enemy as a flood. Whereas in the rest of the OT people go across (עָבַר) rushing waters (נַחֲלִים) (cf. Deut 2:13, 14; 2 Sam 15:23), in our psalm the same torrent nearly sweeps over Israel (Ps 124:4). Verse 5 further denotes the rushing water as “raging waters.” Job describes his distress in language similar to Psalm 124:4: “My brothers are treacherous as a torrents (נַחֲלִים), as torrential streams that pass away

⁵⁸Contra McCarter who argues that the water ordeal in our psalm and other psalms alludes to a mythological background sharing certain concepts with Mesopotamia and probably Canaan (P. Kyle McCarter, “River Ordeal in Israelite Literature,” *HTR* 66, no. 4 [1973]: 412).

⁵⁹The preposition לְ on לָנוּ is a *lamed* of advantage, “for us.”

⁶⁰Vv. 3–5, which form the apodosis, are introduced by וְ. This particle occurs nowhere else in the OT, but most likely has the same semantic nuance with וְ. Allen observes that this particle “has been found in a Hebrew letter of C.E. 134 or 135 discovered at Murabba‘at in a similar context, introducing the apodosis after a conditional clause introduced by אִלּוּ. It also appears in a seventh-century BCE Aramaic inscription” (Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:219).

(נָהָלִים יַעֲבֹרוּ)” (Job 6:15). In both our psalm and in Job, the flood is an image of human threats, אָח and אָדָם. If Yahweh were not for Israel, “the flood would have swept us away” (אֲזִי הַמַּיִם שָׁטְפוּנוּ). Isaiah uses the clause מַיִם שֹׁטֵף to describe the judgment that Yahweh will meet on the scoffers (Isa 28:17), and Job uses it as a parallel for the way that Yahweh ruins man’s hope (Job 14:19). While in Isaiah and Job Yahweh is the source of the “sweeping waters” of judgment, in our psalm he saves Israel from it.

The imagery of raging waters sweeping over people is a reprise of the flood in Genesis 6–9. Since it is recurrent for David to allude to the flood through water imagery (Pss 18; 29), it is possible that he is doing the same in Psalm 124. Psalm 124 shares certain features with the flood account. To state the obvious, the ordeal is water in both passages (Gen 7:6; Ps 124:4). McCarter rightly observes that the background of the water imagery in our psalm is a cosmic river ordeal, although he does not see the flood of Noah as the background.⁶¹ In both passages, the water rages (Gen 7:18; Ps 124:5), the water sweeps over people (Gen 7:20–23; Ps 124:4), and God is the one who delivers from the floodwater in both passages (Gen 8:1–2; Ps 124:6–8).⁶² In both passages God’s help is experienced as the help of the Maker of heaven and earth (Gen 9:7; Ps 124:8).⁶³ These parallels suggest that the flood is the paradigm that informs the psalmist’s use of water imagery.

Conclusion

Yahweh, the Maker of heaven and earth, rescues Israel from the deadly flood. The author portrays Yahweh as Savior and Creator, representing a soteriological

⁶¹McCarter, “River Ordeal in Israelite Literature,” 412.

⁶²Martin Luther’s hymn “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” captures this thought well, when he writes, “Our Helper, he amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.”

⁶³In Gen 6–9 God is not clearly called Maker of heaven and earth, but he is portrayed as re-making the heavens and the earth. For more on this, see the introduction to chapter 2 of this work.

understanding of creation; the same God who created saves and is worthy of praise (Ps 124:6–8). The author uses figurative language that recalls the flood of Noah to depict the invasion of adversaries and Yahweh’s mighty deliverance.

Echoes of the Red Sea (Ps 135)

Of special interest here is verse 6 where the psalmist says God does all he pleases *כָּל-תְּהוֹמוֹת וְכָל-יָמִים וְכָל-אֶרֶץ וְכָל-שָׁמַיִם*. The quartet, *יָמִים*, *אֶרֶץ*, *שָׁמַיִם*, and *כָּל-תְּהוֹמוֹת*, epitomizes the territory and extent of all existence, the entire created world. The final *כָּל* certifies complete comprehensiveness. The quartet refers to all spheres of creation over which Yahweh exercises lordship and in which he does whatever he desires (v. 6).⁶⁴

The tripartite, *יָמִים*, *אֶרֶץ*, and *שָׁמַיִם*, often appear together for all of creation. The reference closest to our verse is “heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them” (Ps 146:6; cf. Gen 9:2; Exod 20:11). In our psalm *שָׁמַיִם* parallels *אֶרֶץ*, and *יָמִים* parallels *כָּל-תְּהוֹמוֹת*, which extends “seas” (parallelism: heaven-earth and sea-all deeps) and also extends Yahweh’s invincible competence beyond anything imaginable.⁶⁵ Taking the quartet as parallelism, the psalmist means that the heavens are higher than the earth (land) and the seas higher than the deeps, the deepest depths. Such an understanding is illustrated in Exodus 20:4 “anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.” The psalmist like Moses talks of the uppermost region, heavens, the sphere beneath it, earth, and the sea and the deepest region of the sea (cf. Exod 15:8 Ps 24:2).⁶⁶ By this he poetically and comprehensively

⁶⁴Contra Kraus who argues that these terms are catchwords for “the age-old story of the battle against chaos—victory over the sea and the *תְּהוֹמוֹת*” (Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 493). For a similar argument see also Dahood, *Psalms III*, 3:261.

⁶⁵Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 497–8.

⁶⁶Compare Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:291; Rebecca Sally Watson, *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the Theme of "Chaos" in the Hebrew Bible* (Berlin, NY: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 212; VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 5:941–42.

describes creation.⁶⁷

While the pendulum swings toward an allusion to creation, talk of sea and deeps are also common in exodus contexts, which the author depicts in verses 8–12.⁶⁸ The terms יָם and תְּהוֹם often occur as a pair to describe the Red Sea. With the terms יָם and תְּהוֹם the author could echo Exodus 15:8. By the blast of Yahweh’s nostrils “the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea” (Exod 15:8; cf. Isa 51:10; Ps 106:9). Yahweh did what he pleased in the sea and the deeps for Israel’s salvation.

Conclusion

We may conclude that the author of Psalm 135 fuses creation and redemption in the use of water imagery to depict the truth that Yahweh is sovereign over every terrain (heavens, earth, seas, and all deeps) and works in them whatever he desires. The creation of the world and parting of the Red Sea at the exodus were instances that displayed Yahweh’s power working in the sea and the deeps whatever he pleased. Yahweh’s sovereign power, which he uses in favor his people, guarantees the present and future generations that Yahweh “will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants” (Ps 135:14)⁶⁹ as he would desire.

Allusions to Creation and the Exodus (Ps 136)

Psalm 136 links creation and the exodus, as it praises Yahweh’s steadfast love revealed in both events. Along with other elements of nature, the author uses water first

⁶⁷Similarly, Goldingay, *Psalms, Psalms 90-150*, 3:581.

⁶⁸With the reference to the plagues on the firstborns in Egypt (v. 8) and the entrance into the Promised Land (v. 12), he captures the entire exodus journey and highlights Yahweh’s power to save his people (Schaefer, *Psalms*, 318).

⁶⁹Ps 135:14 is an exact quotation from Deut 32:36, כִּי־יִדְּי יְהוָה עֲמֹ וְעַל־עֲבָדָיו יִתְנַחֵם, where Yahweh promised that he will graciously vindicate Israel when she is brought low to utter impotence. When the psalmist quotes this verse here, he implies that that promise will be fulfilled in the return from exile, the focus of the fifth Book of the psalter.

in verse 6 as the bed on which the earth lies, in a context that alludes to Genesis 1:6–9, and again in verses 13–15 as a passage for Israel, reminiscent of Exodus 14.⁷⁰

Like Psalm 135, our psalm praises Yahweh’s lordship over creation and history, from the exodus to the settlement in the Promised Land to the return from exile, and it celebrates Yahweh’s steadfast love for the end of the exile.⁷¹ The constant references to the exodus and creation in Book 5 of the psalter betray the psalmist’s understanding that the restoration will be a new exodus and re-creation (cf. Ps 114).

Yahweh’s Steadfast Love in Creation

Verses 4–9 describe Yahweh’s work of the creation of the world. Verse 4 is a double-entendre: it serves as the introduction for verses 5–9, which describe creation, and verses 10–22, 23–25, which explicate the exodus. “He who does great wonders” (נַפְלְאוֹת וְגִדְלוֹת) encapsulates Yahweh’s creating and redeeming works.⁷²

In our psalm, the first great wonder is the creation of the world (vv. 5–9): verses 5–6 describe the formation of the heavens and the earth as a cosmic structure, evocative of Genesis 1:1–2, while verses 7–9 describes the equipment of the structure. The psalmist evidently depends on the creation account in Genesis 1–2. Sequentially, Genesis 1 inspired the sequence of the list in Psalm 136: 5–9: heavens, earth, sun, moon,

⁷⁰The psalm has a three-part structure: the first section, vv. 1–3, is a threefold appeal to give thanks to Yahweh, who is depicted as God of God and Lord of Lords. The second section, vv. 4–25, describes Yahweh’s work in creating the world (vv. 4–9), in creating Israel (vv. 10–22), and in the current state of Israel and of the world (vv. 23–25). The third section is the final exhortation to give thanks to the God of the heavens (v. 26).

⁷¹Goulder observes several similarities between Pss 135 and 136, one major parallel being that they both draw widely from Deuteronomy and Jeremiah, suggesting that a single author wrote the two psalms. See Michael D. Goulder, *The Psalms of the Return (Book V, Psalms 107–150): Studies in the Psalter, IV* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 221.

⁷²Similarly, Konrad Schaefer, *Psalms*, 319. Contra Allen who sees it as referring only to the work of God in creation (Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:297).

and the stars.⁷³ In the Genesis account of creation, the sequence is similar: heavens, earth (Gen 1:1), sun (greater light), moon (lesser light), and stars (Gen 1:16).

Semantically, וַיַּעַשׂ . . . הַמָּאֲרֹת הַגְּדֹלִים (Ps 136:7a) parallels אֶת־הַשָּׁמֶשׁ לְמַמְשָׁלֶת בַּיּוֹם (Gen 1:16a), אֶת־הַמָּאֹר הַגָּדֹל לְמַמְשָׁלֶת הַיּוֹם (Ps 136:8a) correlates with אֶת־הַשָּׁמֶשׁ לְמַמְשָׁלֶת בַּיּוֹם (Gen 1:16b), וְאֶת־הַמָּאֹר הַקָּטָן (Ps 136:8b) corresponds to אֶת־הַיָּרֵחַ וְכֹכָבִים לְמַמְשָׁלוֹת בַּלַּיְלָה (Gen 1:16c), and the use of the root רקע (Ps 136:6a) mirrors רָקִיעַ (Gen 1:6–8). Both passages portray the polarity of the day and night (Ps 136:8a, 9a; Gen 1:14–18). In both passages, Yahweh is the author of creation. The dissimilarities between Genesis 1 and Psalm 136: 4–9 are minimal: the “greater light” in Genesis is “the sun” and the “lesser light” is “the moon” in our psalm. Moreover, instead of the noun רָקִיעַ, the psalmist uses the verb רקע. Despite these minor differences, the similarities are convincing enough to sustain the argument for dependence on the creation account in Psalm 136.⁷⁴

The sequential, semantic, and lexical parallels between Psalm 136:4–9 and Genesis 1, leave no shadow over the fact that Genesis 1 inspired the writing of these verses. The similarities make it indisputable that the “מַיִם” (v. 6) upon which God spreads the earth poetically refers to the formation of the dry ground out of water (Gen 1:9, 10). Psalm 24 uses the same phrase עַל־הַמַּיִם as the location of the created world. Moses also understood the earth as on waters, “the water under the earth” (Exod 20:4). Thus, the water in Psalm 136:6, in concert with the parallels argued above, poetically recalls the waters of creation in Genesis 1:9–10.

⁷³Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 506.

⁷⁴Hypostatization, like Dahood argues, seems to go against the vain of the claims of Genesis, Prov 8, and our psalm (Dahood, *Psalms III*, 266).

Yahweh's Steadfast Love in the Exodus

The celebration of Yahweh as Creator sets the stage for the celebration of Yahweh as Redeemer, Re-creator. Verses 10–22 celebrate God's steadfast love in the redemption of Israel from Egypt. Thus, the water imagery in verses 13–15 reflects on history. The phrase יַם־סוּף (vv. 13, 15) irrefutably refers to the sea that Yahweh parted for Israel at the Exodus.⁷⁵ Verse 15 mirrors Exodus 14:27, which says “וַיִּנָּעַר יְהוָה אֶת־מִצְרַיִם.” The two verses (Ps 136:15; Exod 14:27) have the same verb (נָעַר), subject (יהוה), and indirect object (בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם), but the psalm specifies the sea as יַם־סוּף, omits תִּנּוּךְ, and expands the object from מִצְרַיִם to וְחִילוֹ פָּרַעַה וְחִילוֹ, following Exodus 15:4.

Other allusions to the exodus abound. Verse 10 describes the violent anger of Yahweh against Egypt in the plagues, the peak of which was the striking of the firstborns (cf. Exod 12:12, 29; Num 33:4; Pss 78:51; 135:8).⁷⁶ Israel's firstborn sons became Yahweh's when he struck the firstborn sons of Egypt (Num 3:13; 8:17). In addition, יוֹצֵא (Ps 136:11) refers to the exodus from Egypt because the third plural pronoun מֵתוֹכָם resumes מִצְרַיִם. Moreover, the *hiphil* of יָצָא (v. 17) is often used for the exodus.⁷⁷

⁷⁵Cf. Exod 13:18; 15:4, 22; 23:31; Num 14:25; 21:4; 33:10–11; Deut 1:40; 2:1; 11:4; Josh 2:10; 4:23; 24:6; Judg 11:16; 1 Kgs 9:26; Jer 49:21; Pss 106:7, 9, 22; 136:13, 15; Neh 9:9. The surrounding context of v. 13 makes Kraus' argument for the influence of the myth about the slaying of Tiamat based on the use of the verb גָּזַר unlikely (Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 499; cf. Dahood, *Psalms III*, 266). While the verb was used in Ras Shamra texts, Allen rightly argues that although the same nuance, as in the Taimat myth, may underlie the use of the verb גָּזַר in Psalm 130:13, “in the present context it has become a worn metaphor and appears to connote not hostility but simply divine power over nature” (Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:298).

⁷⁶van Rensburg highlights Yahweh's graciousness towards Israel when he observes that Yahweh sides with Israel against Egypt and the trans Jordanian armies and that no reason is given for why he chooses the one and condemns the other (J. F. J. van Rensburg, “History as Poetry: A Study of Psalm 136,” *OTSSA* 29 [1986]: 89). Israel's election was a free divine choice, unmerited, and entirely a display of his steadfast love, celebrated in our psalm.

⁷⁷Similarly, P. Humbert, “Dieu Fait Sortir: Hiphil de *Yāṣā* Avec Dieu Comme Sujet,” *TZ* 18 (1962): 357–361, 433–36. The structure of v. 11a, verb, subject, and prepositional phrase fit into the pattern of the exodus formulas. See J. N. M. Wijngaards, “הַעֲלָה וְהוֹצִיא: A Twofold Approach to the Exodus,” *VT* 15, no. 1 (1965): 91–102; Joanne N. M. Wijngaards, *The Formulas of the Deuteronomic Creed (Dt. 6/20–23: 26/5–9)* (Tilburg: A. Reijnen, 1963), 23. Childs makes a similar argument (Brevard S. Childs, “Deuteronomic Formulae of the Exodus Traditions,” in *Hebräische Wortforschung: Festschrift zum 80. Geburtstag von Walter Baumgartner*, vol. 16, VTSup [Leiden: Brill, 1967], 30–9).

In verse 12, Yahweh's power "in a strong and outstretched arm" (*בְּיָד חֲזָקָה*) (v. 12) always depicts his potency at the exodus (Deut 4:34; 5:15; 26:8) or the return from exile (Ezek 20:33–34). According to Moses, there is no God who rescues with such an outstretched arm (Deut 4:34).

Verse 16 reiterates Israel's journey through the wilderness. Yahweh led Israel through the wilderness, continuing the exit from Egypt and the transit through the Red Sea.⁷⁸ In verses 17–20 the author recounts Yahweh's mighty deeds when Israel set out to conquer the land. God's people are to give thanks to the one who struck great kings (vv. 17–18), Sihon and Og (vv. 19–20), in order to give the land as an inheritance to Israel his servant (21–22).

In addition, the portrayal of Yahweh as "God of gods" and "Lord of lords" (vv. 2–3) occurs only in Deuteronomy 10:17, making concrete the argument that Israel's history shaped Psalm 136.⁷⁹ Yahweh reigned over all other gods at the exodus from Egypt (cf. Exod 12:12; Num 33:4; Isa 19:1) and will do so again at the new exodus; he is always God of gods and Lord of lords.

The above links makes it incontrovertible that the exodus from Egypt is in view. The syntax changes in verse 23, however, marks the start of a new section.⁸⁰ The

⁷⁸The LXX expands v. 16 with words that echo Deut 8:15. Zenger states that it is actually a citation of Deut 8:15. "In v. 16 it [LXX] inserts a citation from Deut 8:15 and adds the antiphon to it ('to him, who caused water to emerge from a steep cliff, for his love/mercy endures forever'); this insertion elucidates or makes concrete that YHWH's leading Israel through the wilderness was a proof of his love" (Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalm 3*, 509).

⁷⁹Compare Macholz who argues that Ps 136 was written at a time when the Pentateuch was complete and well recognized as authoritative and that the entire psalm is based on the Pentateuch. He makes a distinct note that there is nothing in Ps 136 in general about the gift of the land, the last of Yahweh's wondrous deeds at the exodus, but only of the gift of the land east of the Jordan. Like the Pentateuch, he argues, Ps 136 says nothing about the gift of the land west of the Jordan (Christian Macholz, "Psalm 136: Exegetische Beobachtungen mit methodologischen Seitenblicken," in *Mincha Festgabe für Rolf Rendtorff zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Erhard Blum and Rolf Rendtorff [Neukirchen-Vluyn, Germany: Neukirchener, 2000], 177–86). Schaefer, contra Macholz, suggests that the events in Ps 136 relate to the events recounted from Genesis to Joshua, the conquering of the land (Schaefer, *Psalms*, 319).

⁸⁰V. 23 begins with a relative pronoun, which marks a new section, and continues with verbal

first person pronouns, “us” and “our”, feasibly introduce and include the present generation as part of the redeemed.⁸¹ Yahweh has rescued the present generation from her low estate, her adversaries (v. 24),⁸² and as Creator of all, he gives food to all flesh. Just as Yahweh once remembered Israel in her distress in Egypt (cf. Exod 2:24; 6:5), he remembers her again and rescues her (v. 23–24). The resumption of Yahweh’s remembrance and rescue in verses 23–24 demonstrates that the exodus rescue of verses 10–22 was an archetype of what Yahweh has again reenacted for the present generation.⁸³

Yahweh’s *חַסֵּד* is everlasting, filling all time. Thus the display of his *חַסֵּד* in the past points to what he will do at all times, since it is the underlying reason for all his acts. Mays rightly argues, “Psalm 136 is a liturgical use of tradition whose interest is the way

clauses and a participle in v. 25 instead of the participles with the dative *ל* in previous verses.

⁸¹It is difficult to determine what particular circumstance vv. 23–24 refer to. Kraus suggests that it could refer to the time of the judges (Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 499). Goldingay lists four possible ways that the readers could have understood these verses: First, they summarize Yahweh’s involvement with Israel described in vv. 10–22, which began with Yahweh remembering Israel (cf. Exod 2:24; 6:5)—Zenger concurs with this point (Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 508). Second, they summarize Yahweh’s involvement with Israel after giving them the land. Third, they summarize Israel’s experience in exile (cf. Lam 1:5, 7; Isa 2; 57:15; Lev 26:42, 45; Isa 63:11). Fourth, they capture Judah’s experience after the exile (Goldingay, *Psalms*, *Psalms 90-150*, 3:595–96).

⁸²The Hebrew for adversaries (*מַצְרִיִּים*) and Egypt (*מִצְרַיִם*) in this psalm are partial homophones (Similarly, van Rensburg, “History as Poetry,” 87). This phonetic similarity may be another way that the author equates the two rescues, the exodus and the rescue of the present congregation. Broyles suggests that the second rescue may be the return from exile (Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms: Understanding the Bible Commentary Series* [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012], 438), which was patterned after the exodus from Egypt. This suggestion may not be far fetched given that it is the focus on the next psalm, Ps 137. Ps 136 celebrates the deliverance that Ps 137 longs for. While Israel is unable to sing Yahweh’s song by the rivers of Babylon (v. 1), in the hand of their tormentors they cry that Yahweh will remember them (v. 7). Ps 136 celebrates this remembrance, describing Yahweh as he who remembered them in their humiliation (v. 23) and rescued them (v. 24).

⁸³Allen also observes, “In late psalms, such as Pss 33:5; 119:64; 145:8–9, Yahweh’s *חַסֵּד*, “loyal love,” is expanded beyond a concern for Israel as covenant partner to the creator’s care for all creatures. This development is presupposed here in the bracketing of nature and saving history as joint evidence of the active love of God. Yet the main emphasis is on the latter manifestation, and indeed it is the theological basis for the former one The saving events of the exodus and its sequel are shown to be archetypal, not only by the resumptive vv. 23a, 24a but also by the accompanying refrain” (Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:299).

the past impinges on the present and shapes the future.”⁸⁴ The events in our psalm transcend history because they exhibit the identity of Yahweh whose steadfast love endures forever.

For the author of our psalm, creation and redemption are closely linked. Creation and redemption are the two major domains where Yahweh most lucidly exhibits his everlasting steadfast love, which is praised 26 times. Moreover, the creation of the world sets the stage for redemption. The earth, which Yahweh lays upon the waters, is the platform on which he stages redemption.⁸⁵ Yahweh’s exclusive status as God of gods and Lord of lords is seen in his work of creation and redemption; he alone is the Creator (vv. 4–9) and Redeemer (vv. 10–22). In addition, the author summarizes both works as נַפְלְאוֹת וְגִדְלוֹת. These observations imply that the author has a soteriological understanding of creation. “Special revelation of God’s work as savior sheds its warmth over the stark phenomena of nature and invests them with new meaning as evidence of the bountiful care that breathes in the air and shines in the light.”⁸⁶

Conclusion

We have established that the water imagery in this psalm in connection with other verbal and thematic links points to the creation and to the exodus. When God’s people celebrate the end of the exile by praising Yahweh’s steadfast love as seen in creation and the exodus, they insinuate that the restoration the new exodus is a remaking

⁸⁴Mays, *Psalms*, 418.

⁸⁵Kraus argues that when the psalmist juxtaposes creation and the exodus, he sees creation as Yahweh’s historical act, as the first, basic work which brought into existence the area of God’s activity, of his choice of Israel and his establishment of a covenant, of his shepherding and speaking with his people, and finally and above all Yahweh’s coming to the peoples of the earth. See Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, trans. Keith Crim (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 62.

⁸⁶Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:299.

of creation and reenactment of the exodus.⁸⁷ One reason the author sees creation and the exodus as closely related is that Yahweh created the world and saved Israel out of Egypt because of his eternal *חַסֵּד*. Because his *חַסֵּד* is eternal, mortal man can always look to Yahweh's work in the past for future hope and present joy. The hope for a new exodus and re-creation is anchored in Yahweh's covenant steadfast love.

Echoes of the Red Sea: “Rescue Me from Mighty Waters” (Ps 144:7)

Psalm 144 shares authorship and many similarities with Psalm 18. As David's enemies are pictured with water imagery in Psalm 18, so, in Psalm 144:7. In Psalm 144:7, the phrase *יְד בְּנֵי יָכָר* parallels *מִיַּם רַבִּים* and describes the author's adversaries. Yahweh's rescue of the psalmist is typological of the water rescue at the exodus like in Psalm 18.⁸⁸

Psalm 144:1–10 and Psalm 18

Verses 1–10 share close parallels with Psalm 18.⁸⁹ In both texts, the authors

⁸⁷Miller rightly argues that in our psalm “the community recalls the creative and redemptive work of God . . . it is especially appropriate, therefore, that this psalm be on the lips of those who liturgically await and anticipate the resurrection of Jesus, who celebrates God's new exodus, the demonstration afresh and forever of God's powerful victory over the enemy that would do in the humanity God created and loves so very much . . . As we focus on the particular redemptive act of God in Jesus Christ, our eyes are opened to the larger horizon of God's creative work. There is a sense in which this psalm functions somewhat like the Johannine Prologue in that it reminds us that what happens at Easter is not an isolated event in either the history of salvation or the history of the world. It is rooted in the whole work of God, a realization of the purposes of God from the creation and a manifestation of the power that made a universe. Indeed, part of the anticipatory function of this psalm is to make us aware that the God to whom Jesus cried on the cross is the creator of the universe, the giver of life, the ruler of all the worlds that are” (Patrick D. Miller, “Psalm 136:1-9, 23-26,” *Int* 49, no. 4 [1995]: 391–92).

⁸⁸Contra Dahood who takes the water as a reference to the waters of the nether world (Dahood, *Psalms III*, 3:331). Allen follows the same line of thought, arguing that the water imagery refers to “the cosmological motif of Yahweh's victory over the rebellious, chaotic waters” (Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:364). Similarly, Norman C. Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal: A Conflict of Religious Cultures: A Study in the Relevance of Ugaritic Materials for the Early Faith of Israel* (New York: Bookman, 1964), 66; Nicholas J. Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament*, *Biblica et orientalia* 21 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), 64. Day takes the imagery as derived from Baal (Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 123–25).

⁸⁹Most scholars observe these parallels: Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:361; Gunkel, *An Introduction to the Psalms*, 118; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalm 3*, 585; Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 16:514;

say, “Yahweh is my rock” (v.1; 18:3, 47), “he trains my hand for war (v.1; 18:35), “my fortress,” “my stronghold,” “my deliverer,” “my shield,” “in whom I take refuge,” and “who subdues peoples under me” (v. 2; 18:3, 48). Yahweh stretches the heaven and comes down (v. 5; 18:10). He flashes forth the lightning and scatters the enemies; he sends out arrows and routs them (v. 6; 18:15).⁹⁰ He sends from on high and delivers from mighty waters—foreign enemies (v. 7; 18:17, 45) to rescue David, his servant and king (v. 10; 18:51).⁹¹

Hope for a Theophanic Rescue

The psalmist prays with the prospect that divine help will come through a theophany. He expects that colossal divine power will break into space and time for his redemption. The verb ירד in verse 5 does not occur with Yahweh as subject often. When Yahweh is its subject, he either comes down to judge⁹² or to save.⁹³ The language of verse 5 resonates with Exodus 19 (cf. Ps 18:19; Isa 64:3). At the exodus, Yahweh comes down (ירד) to deliver (נצל) his people and enter into covenant with them (Exod 3:8; 19:11, 20) just as he comes down (ירד) in Psalm 144 to deliver (נצל) (vv. 5–7).

In both Exodus 19 and our psalm, Yahweh’s coming down is accompanied by natural phenomena: the mountains smoking (v.5b; Exod 19:18)⁹⁴ and lightning flashing (v. 6; Exod 19:16). This colossal display of Yahweh’s theophanic presence takes place to

Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 542–3; Mays, *Psalms*, 436; Goulder, *The Psalms of the Return (book V, Psalms 107-150)*, 273–75; Thijs Booij, “Psalm 144: Hope of Davidic Welfare,” *VT* 59, no. 2 (2009): 174.

⁹⁰V. 6 shares exact words with 18:15 but vary in word order:

וישלח חציו ויפיצם וברקם רב ויהמם Ps 18:15

ברוק ברק ותפיצם שלח חציו ויהמם Ps 144:6

⁹¹Because of the parallels between Ps 18 and 2 Sam 22, Ps 144 also relates to 2 Sam 22. See discussion on Ps 18 for similarities between Ps 18 and 2 Sam 22.

⁹²Cf. Gen 11:5, 7; 18:21; Num 11:17, 25; 12:5; 2 Sam 22:10; Ps 18:9; Isa 31:4; Mic 1:3.

⁹³Cf. Gen 46:4; Exod 3:8; Exod 19:11, 18, 20; 34:5; Neh 9:13; Isa 63:14; 64:3.

⁹⁴The exact clause נגע בקרבים ויעשנו occurs in Ps 104:32.

rescue the psalmist from his enemies (v. 7).

In verse 7 the phrase מִיַּד בְּנֵי נָכָר מִמַּיִם רַבִּים mirrors מִיַּד בְּנֵי נָכָר (cf. v 11), illustrating David's enemies (cf. Ps 69:15).⁹⁵ The similarities that the entire psalm shares with Psalm 18 suggest that the deliverance is akin to the rescue from mighty waters, human foes, in Psalm 18. Analogous to Psalm 18, the mighty waters in Psalm 144, which figuratively describe foreign armies, are typified after the Red Sea rescue. King David longs for a theophanic rescue from mighty waves of enemies, which would save him like it did at the Red Sea. The rescue at the Red Sea was paradigmatic for future deliverances, including that of David.

Outcome of the Rescue from Mighty Waters

Like in Psalm 18, David resolves that if Yahweh rescues, "I will sing a new song to you, God; upon a ten-stringed harp I will play to you, who gives victory to kings, who rescues David his servant from the cruel sword" (Ps 144:9–10).⁹⁶ Moreover, David demonstrates that his release will have national effects based on his prayer in verses 12–14.⁹⁷ The deliverance in verses 1–11 results in the congregation's welfare.⁹⁸ Verses 12–

⁹⁵Allen observes, "The aggressive "hand" or grip (vv. 7b, 11) of the king's enemies is soon to meet the king's "hands" (v. 1)—but the latter have been trained by Yahweh, and it is hoped that the divine "hands" (v. 7a) will reach down in reprisal and rescue" (Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:363).

⁹⁶Keel takes the ten-stringed harp in v. 9 as a large model of the lyre with a jar-shaped sound box (Keel, *Symbolism*, 348–49).

⁹⁷Some regard these verses as independent text or a later addition to a psalm that ended with v. 11; See Klaus D. Seybold, "Zur Geschichte Des Vierten DavidPsalters (Pss 138–145)," in *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception*, ed. Peter W Flint et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 376; Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21:362. Kirkpatrick argues that the last part of the psalm was taken from an already existing psalm (Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 808–10). While all of these views are possible, there is nothing in the psalm to support these proposals. It is better to interpret the last section as part of the original psalm, which pictures that the author's understanding of the effect of the king's rescue on the covenant community.

⁹⁸Although one may not agree with Booij that David is not the one who speaks in this psalm, he rightly argues that the deliverance, which result in covenant blessings on the community, is often associated with David in prophetic texts (Booij, "Psalm 144," 178–80).

15 use the first person plural and depict covenantal blessings on the entire community.⁹⁹ First, the king's rescue results in family blessings, particularly on its rising generation; sons will "be like plants nurtured in their youth" and daughters "will be like pillars carved to adorn a palace" (v. 12 NIV). Second, it brings material blessings; granaries, sheep, cattle will prosper and distress will vanish from the land, and there will be no more the destruction, no outcry, no fruitlessness and hardship (v. 13–14) because Yahweh has delivered the king, David, from many waters as he once did at the Red Sea for Israel. For David, those whose God can rescue and bless in this way are truly blessed (v. 15; cf. Deut 33:29; Ps 33:12).

Echoes of Creation (Ps 146)

In Psalm 146 the author marries creation and redemption as in the previous psalms examined in this chapter. He describes God as the covenantal God of Jacob who frees the imprisoned and gives justice to the oppressed (Ps 146:5, 7–9) and as the Creator of the world (v. 6). Verse 6 describes Yahweh as the one who made the heaven, earth, the sea, and all that is in them. This alludes to Genesis 1, the creation of all things. In a psalm that celebrates Yahweh as Savior, the allusion to creation implies a soteriology that is understood in light of creation.¹⁰⁰

The phrase "God of Jacob" is covenantal, recalling the Abrahamic covenant. The psalmist's use of this phrase suggests that the redemption in this psalm is based on the Abrahamic covenant.¹⁰¹ The depiction of the God of Jacob as "the Maker of the

⁹⁹For a discussion on the way that vv. 1–11 relate to the final part of the psalm, see Pierre Auffret, "O Bonheurs Du Peuple Dont Yhwh Est Le Dieu Nouvelle Étude Structurale Du Psaume 144," *VT* 60, no. 4 (2010): 505–17.

¹⁰⁰The call to praise Yahweh frames the psalm (vv. 1a, 10b). In vv. 1b–2 the author commits himself to praise Yahweh, then in vv. 3–4 he warns against trust in man—man is a false source of hope. He pronounces blessed those who trust in the God of Jacob (v. 5) and then with nine participles he describes who the God of Jacob is (vv. 5–9a). God will destroy the way of the wicked and reign forever (vv. 9b–10a).

¹⁰¹The phrase "God of Jacob" is mostly used in poetic texts (2 Sam 23:1; Pss 20:2; 24:6; 46:8,

heavens and earth, the seas and all that is in them” (v. 6) stereotypically refers to the totality of God’s creative work in Genesis 1.¹⁰² While the *qal* participle עֹשֶׂה does not occur in Genesis 1–2, the perfect עָשָׂה is used with בָּרָא and יָצַר for God’s work of creation. The making of the sea refers to the separation of the waters from the dry ground (Gen 1:10; cf. Ps 95:5; Jonah 1:9; Acts 4:24; 14:15), and the content of the sea refers to water creatures in Genesis 1:21–22 (cf. Gen 1:26, 28), while the “heavens and earth” recalls Genesis 1:1: “God made the heavens and the earth.”

Psalm 146:6 has very close wording with Exodus 20:11

עֹשֶׂה יְהוָה אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֶת־הַיָּם וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּם Exod 20:11

עֹשֶׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ אֶת־הַיָּם וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּם Ps 146:6

Apart from the direct object marker אֶת, יְהוָה, and the difference in verb form, the two verses are exactly the same. In Exodus 20 the assertion is set within a covenantal context, as God commands Israel to keep the Sabbath because he is the one who created heaven and earth and rested on the seventh day. Thus, God’s work of creation has implications for his redemptive work. The psalmist also sets God’s work of creation in a covenant context. In fact, the God who created is first called “the God of Jacob,” a covenantal illustration of Yahweh’s relationship with Israel. The phrase “הַשֹּׁמֵר אֶמְתָּ לְעוֹלָם” refers to his eternal covenantal commitment to his people.¹⁰³

For the psalmist, two things are eternal: Yahweh’s covenant fidelity and his reign (vv. 6, 10). Yahweh will be faithful to his covenant forever and will reign as Zion’s God forever. The author uses the same participle (עֹשֶׂה) for Yahweh’s creation of the

12; 75:10; 76:7; 81:2, 5; 84:9; 94:7; 114:7; 146:5; Isa 2:3; Mic 4:2) as the short form of “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (cf. Exod 3:6, 15; 4:5).

¹⁰²Compare a similar clause in Pss 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3; Neh 9:6; 2 Chr 2:11. See also Pierre Auffret, “YHWH Aimant Les Justes: Étude Structurale Du Psaume 146,” *ScEs* 57, no. 1 (2005): 52.

¹⁰³Vv. 7–9 explicate this summary: Yahweh is a keeper of covenant fidelity forever in that it is he who works justices for the oppressed, gives bread to the hungry, liberates the bound, gives sight to the blind, raises the lowly, loves the righteous ones, keeps the stranger, and upholds orphans and widows.

world and his working of justice (vv. 6, 7). This insinuates that for the psalmist the same God who created re-creates. With the work of re-creation in Book 5 of the Psalter being the restoration from exile, the close link between creation and redemption shows that the author perceives the restoration as a work similar to the creation of the world (cf. Ps 114).

Creation Praises the Creator (Ps 148)

In Psalm 148:7, the serpentine sea monster and all deeps (כָּל־תְּהוֹמוֹת) are invited to praise Yahweh. This verse and the entire psalm, I will argue, depend on Genesis 1.¹⁰⁴ The water in Psalm 148 is reminiscent of creation in Genesis 1. In Genesis 1 Yahweh creates; in our psalm, Yahweh receives praise from his creation, both heavenly (vv. 1–6) and earthly (vv. 7–14).

Praise Yahweh from the Heavens

The clause הִלְלוּ אֶת־יְהוָה מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם (v. 1) parallels הִלְלוּ אֶת־יְהוָה מִן־הָאָרֶץ (v. 7). Structurally, each clause invites the praise of the two main spheres of creation. Following this structural division, verses 1–6 tackle praise in the heavenly realm. In the heavens, angelic beings (v. 2) and inanimate objects—sun, moon, stars of light, heavens of the heavens, waters above the heavens (vv. 3–4)—are called to praise Yahweh’s name because by his word they were created (vv. 5–6). The sun and moon refer to the greater and lesser lights, while the stars of light refer to stars in Genesis 1:16.¹⁰⁵ The superlative “heaven of heavens” expresses the highest created realm (1 Kgs 8:27; Neh 9:6; 2 Chr 2:5;

¹⁰⁴This is contrary to von Rad who suggests a dependence on Egyptian nature wisdom. See G. von Rad, “Hiob 38 Und Die Altägyptische Weisheit,” in *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, ed. M. Noth and D. W. Thomas, vol. 3, VTSup (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), 293–301.

¹⁰⁵Newman observes that the stars were created to worship (Ps 148:3–6), “perhaps by their brightness (Dan 12:3; Ps 136:9), purity (Job 25:5), height (22:12), and number (e.g., Gen 15:5)” (Robert C. Newman, “כּוֹכָב,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997]).

6:18).¹⁰⁶ The “water above the heavens” reflects Genesis 1:7, which says, “God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse.” These links to Genesis 1 reveal that the psalmist is reflecting on that narrative. In addition to the above, the high frequency of prose particles (אֲשֶׁר, fourfold אֶת, and sevenfold הֵן) point in the same direction.¹⁰⁷

Praise Yahweh from the Earth

As noted above, הִלְלוּ אֶת־יְהוָה מִן־הָאָרֶץ corresponds to the praise from heaven (v. 1) and introduces worship in the earthly realm. The phrase “הַיָּם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל הַשָּׁמַיִם” mirrors כָּל־תְּהוֹמוֹת, which is combined with תַּנִּינִים in verse 7.¹⁰⁸ The noun תַּנִּינִים is similar to הַתַּנִּינִים in Genesis 1:21, which in Psalm 148:7 refers all sea creatures. The תְּהוֹמוֹת in this context connotes the sea in which the תַּנִּינִים lives (cf. Gen 1:21).¹⁰⁹ The seas (הַיָּם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל הַשָּׁמַיִם) and כָּל־תְּהוֹמוֹת are participants with the created order, partaking in the universal praise of their Maker.

Not only are the sea monsters and all deeps called to praise Yahweh, but also inanimate (fire, hail, snow, mist, wind, mountains, hills, fruit trees, cedars, the waters

¹⁰⁶Similarly Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 563; Dahood, *Psalms III*, 3:142. Paul also expresses the idea of successive layers in heaven when he says “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows” (2 Cor 12:2).

¹⁰⁷Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 209.

¹⁰⁸The use of כָּל־תְּהוֹמוֹת does not suggest any mythic battle as Terrien argues (see Samuel L. Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003], 921). Similarly, “all the deeps,” contra Dahood, does not convey a mythic battle (Dahood, *Psalms III*, 205–6). These elements of creation are listed to praise their Creator without any battle motif in context. The text does not insinuate battle; the idea of a conflict between creation and God is foreign to this passage. Such an idea is derived primarily from the assumption that ANE mythologies were behind the psalmists’ use of the water imagery. If we, however, take the psalmists as biblical theologians, men who were informed by earlier Scriptures, that would obliterate the argument for mythic conflicts between God and creation.

¹⁰⁹Similarly, Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 563; John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1930), 28; David Toshio Tsumura, *The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2: A Linguistic Investigation* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 77.

above the heavens and all the deeps) (vv. 4, 8–9) and animate creation (beasts and livestock, creeping things and flying birds) (v. 10). All peoples of the earth are also invited to worship Yahweh because of the exclusivity his name and his majesty and because he has raised a horn for his people.

The clause, “he has raised a horn for his people” (Ps 148:14), depicts Yahweh’s military victory for his godly ones who are called to praise him (Ps 149:5). Yahweh, through the hands of his godly ones, as at the conquest of Canaan (Gen 15:16; Deut 9:4–5; Josh 10:16–28; 12:1–24), has executed vengeance on the nations (Ps 149:7) and on their kings (v. 8–9) to restore his people from exile to a new Promised Land. The kings who were warned and advised to kiss the Davidic King lest he be angry (Ps 2:2, 10–12) and the nations who raged against the King (Ps 2:1) have now met his wrath (Ps 149:6–9), but the people of the King now rejoice as the theocracy is established and their Maker reigns over them (Ps 149:1–5).

Conclusion

Because God’s work of redemption—the restoration from exile, which is the new exodus—is complete, all of creation in the heavens and the earth celebrates the redemption of the sons and daughters of God. Redemption is complete, and the curse on the earth is removed so that the entire creation can resound in praise to her Maker, the Redeemer of Israel. This new age calls for a new song (Ps 149:1), as Yahweh reigns over his people (Ps 149:2). Hence, “Let everything that has breath praise Yahweh” (Ps 150:6).

Conclusion

In this chapter we have observed that the eight psalms that use water imagery all contain allusions to earlier Scriptures and use water imagery to illustrate historic events. The creation and the passage of the Red Sea are the two major water allusions in Book 5. Only once is the use of water an allusion to the flood, which David also sees as a

paradigm for interpreting his trials.

For the psalmists of Book 5, the future restoration for which they hope takes its design after God's work in the past, mainly creation and the exodus. The creation account and the crossing of the Red Sea become the two paradigmatic events that shape the new exodus, as Israel journeys back to the Promised Land. Just as Adam and Eve were once exited from the Garden, so Israel and Judah are exited from the Promised Land because of their sins. According to the psalmists, their return is a type of the first exodus from Egypt.

Moreover, the departure from the Promised Land was also perceived as a de-creation, an unmaking of creation. The restoration is pictured as a re-creation, a remaking not only of God's people, but also of all things. The psalmists believed that the new exodus restoration would have cosmic effects. Because God's people are being brought back from exile, the natural world will be freed of the curse from the fall (Gen 3) and join with the redeemed to praise Yahweh, the Re-Maker of all things.

This chapter alongside the previous chapters has sustained the thesis that for the authors of the psalms, earlier Scripture was loaded with archetypes of God's future work of salvation. They employed water imagery to vividly capture that history, showing how it shaped the present and outlined the future—the future being for them an escalated replica of the past.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The previous chapters have aimed to prove that, based on verbal and thematic links with earlier Scriptures, the psalmists primarily employed water imagery to allude to four historic works of God—the waters of creation (Gen 1–2), the water in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:10–13), the flood (Gen 6–9), and the crossing of the Red Sea (Exod 14–15)—as paradigms for understanding their present and the future. In this final chapter, I will synthesize and briefly review the evidence offered to vindicate the thesis, and I will also propose a path of future research that can be pursued.

Following the five-part division of the Psalter as the structure of the chapters of this work, in each chapter I examined the psalms with water imagery. I discovered significant verbal and thematic links that confirmed that the authors of the Psalms were biblical theologians in that their worldviews were shaped by God’s past deeds recorded in their Scriptures. This Scripture-fashioned worldview informed the way that they interpreted God’s work in their own lives and the hope that they had for the future.

One great hope that they had was rooted in the Garden of Eden. Employing language from the Genesis account of the garden, they envisioned a day when the righteous would enjoy edenic fertility in a garden-like temple precinct (Ps 1:3), while the wicked would be cut off forever (Ps 1:6). The new Eden they anticipated would also be the sanctuary that houses the presence of Yahweh. A river would flow out of that house, like in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:8), and Yahweh would give drink to his covenant people from it (Ps 36:9). The new Eden would also be a city, the holy dwelling of Yahweh (Ps 46:5), which would never be moved (Ps 46:6). The psalmist again remarks

that it would have a river whose streams would bring delight to God's people (Ps 46:3). The psalmists also picture the new Eden as being cosmic in scope, a renewed creation, fruitful like the Garden of Eden (Pss 104:10–30; 107:37–38). This vision is the paradigm for John's in Revelation 21–22. Edenic satisfaction, however, is ultimately found in Yahweh who is like the spring of living water (Ps 63:1–2).

While the psalmists hoped for this great future, enemies surrounded them, attacked them, and overwhelmed them like the flood of Noah. The flood of Noah was for them as a metaphor for God's wrath (Pss 104; 124), and the destruction of Jerusalem by enemy armies was a similar expression of his wrath against his covenant breaking people (Pss 32:6–7; 46:1–2). They, however, had confidence that the flood would not consume them because Yahweh would reign over these flood-like enemies (Ps 29:10) and give strength to his people who would worship him in his cosmic-temple forever (Ps 29:9, 11).

Of the four key events in the Pentateuch that the psalmists alluded to with water imagery, creation and the exodus are the most echoed. The psalmists closely related the creation of the world (Gen 1–2) to God's work of redemption. They had a soteriological understanding of the work of creation and looked forward, especially in Book 5 of the Psalter, to the day when Yahweh would remake creation as he redeems his people.

The psalmists understood that when Adam fell all of creation fell under a curse. Likewise, they interpret the fall of the northern and southern kingdoms as an unmaking of creation (cf. Ps 114; Jer 4:23–24), and they see the restoration from exile as a re-creation of the de-created world at the fall.

The re-creation to which they looked would only happen after Yahweh brings his people through a new exodus (Ps 114). At that time, Yahweh would shepherd his people and provide for them as he did in the exodus from Egypt (cf. Pss 23; 107). This new exodus would have cosmic effects; the entire cosmos would be renewed with the

curse of Genesis 3 removed so that the entire created order would join in praising Yahweh their Maker for remaking his covenant people, restoring them to a better and cosmic Eden (cf. Pss 144; 148). This vision parallels Paul’s vision of creation’s freedom from the curse because of the redemption of the sons of God in Romans 8.

Table 2: Water imagery in the Psalms categorized

| | CREATION | EDEN | RED SEA/EXODUS | FLOOD | NO CLEAR ALLUSION |
|-----------|--|---------------------|--|------------|----------------------|
| PS BOOK 1 | 24:2, 33:7 | | 18:4, 15–16; (42:1–2, 7) ¹ | 29; 32:6–7 | |
| PS BOOK 2 | 65:6–9; 72:7–8 | 46:3–4; 65:10–14 | 66:5–7; 68:22; 69:1–2, 14–15 | 46:1–2 | 63:1–3 |
| PS BOOK 3 | | | 74:12–15; 77:15–20; 78:13–16; 81:8; (88:6–7, 16–18); 89:10– 11; | | |
| PS BOOK 4 | 95:5; 96:11; 98:7–8; 104 | 104:10–30 | 93:3–4; 105:41; 106; | 104 | |
| PS BOOK 5 | 135:6; 136:4–9; 146:6; 148:4, 7 | 107:35–42 | (107:1–32); 114; 135:6–12; 136:10–22; 144:7 | (124) | |

Inner-biblical interpretation of the psalmists’ water imagery proves far superior to interpretation based on ANE mythology. The latter steals from biblical scholarship the richness of entering into the true, Bible-saturated worldview of the biblical authors. Moreover, when clear allusions to earlier Scriptures are ascribed to ANE mythology, the Scriptures are bereft of their primacy. The maxim, “interpret Scripture with Scripture,” is dismissed, making the OT stand in desperate need of mythology for clarity. It is

¹The parentheses indicate the psalms with allusions that are subtle but arguably present.

important also to note that this method of interpretation is new. Jesus, the apostles, the church fathers, and rabbinic interpreters did not depend on such mythologies. The psalmists were a people of the Book, and we must learn from them to be a people of the Book in the way we think and write.

The New Testament (NT) writers interpreted the water in the Pentateuch like the psalmists did. They read the water in the Pentateuch as archetypal of end time realities.

The early church fathers focused primarily on Christological interpretation of these psalms. When they did touch on the water imagery, they generally saw it as building on the past and pointing to the future, as did translators of the Targum Psalms.

Our best guides for biblical interpretation are the Old and the New Testament writers. Any hermeneutic that is not exemplified in the Scripture should be treated cautiously. This new approach of interpretation based on ANE mythology is foreign to the NT, and it may lead people to give meanings to texts that completely diverge from the author's intent and hinder the rich biblical theological understanding that they aimed to advance. If the authors of the Psalms were biblical theologians as I have endeavored to vindicate, then the best way to interpret their writing is with Scripture as their background.

The findings in this dissertation, mainly that the psalmists interpreted the events in their day and the future to which they hoped in light of God's past works as recorded in earlier Scripture, should move scholarship towards the same kind of hermeneutic so that the biblical theological worldview of the writers of Scriptures may become our worldview as we enter into their story and journey towards the new and better Promised Land, the cosmic Eden.

The psalms in Book 5 of the Psalter repeatedly fuse two themes, creation and the exodus, in ways that indicate a very close relationship between them. I think that this

is an area of Psalms studies that should be explored in greater depth. From my cursory exploration of these intermingled themes, it seems that there is gold to be mined in Book 5, as one explores how the psalmists viewed the exodus as a re-creation.

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ABSTRACT

THE WATER IMAGERY IN THE PSALMS: AN INNER- BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

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This dissertation examines the use of water imagery in the book of Psalms and argues that the psalmists primarily employed this imagery to allude to four accounts of God's works in the Pentateuch—the waters of creation, the water in the Garden of Eden, the flood, and the crossing of the Red Sea—as paradigms for understanding their present and the future.

Each chapter examines the use of the water motif in a particular book of the Psalms. In each chapter I attempt to prove, through verbal and thematic links, that the authors of the Psalms were biblical theologians in that the Pentateuch shaped their worldview. Because of their scripture-shaped worldview, they employed water imagery from earlier scriptures to interpret present-day events.

The psalmists' use of water imagery also pointed to the future. Through water imagery they alluded to the Garden of Eden to express hope for a new future Eden. For the psalmists the creation of the world was a model of how God would one day remake creation. The flood and the crossing of the Red Sea are also paradigmatic events that guided the psalmists' understanding of God's work of salvation and judgment in the present and the future. The psalmists' hope for a future of divine salvation and judgment took its design from the flood and the Red Sea.

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