THESIS ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: IMPACT OF WISDOM PSALMS 1, 73, 90, AND 107 ON WORSHIP: AN EXEGETICAL-THEOLOGICAL STUDY

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Most scholars recognize the complexity and value of studying Wisdom Psalms, yet their connection to worship remains underexplored. While the identification of Wisdom Psalms is well-established, their specific content and message related to worship require further examination. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing how the psalmists use wisdom language and imagery in Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 to enhance worship and deepen devotion to God, offering valuable insights for contemporary believers. This study does not attempt to redefine the identification of Wisdom Psalms but focuses on understanding the wisdom-worship relationship within the selected Wisdom Psalms. Utilizing an exegetical approach under the historical-grammatical method, the study researches into the poetic language of the Wisdom Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 to extract their meaning and relevance for contemporary believers, providing valuable insights for preachers,

teachers, and translators in communicating these messages of wisdom. These Wisdom Psalms indicate that true worship goes beyond rituals; it is a lifestyle rooted in wisdom and a deep relationship with God. They teach that worship involves meditating on God's word, trusting in His justice, acknowledging our dependence on Him, and living humbly in pursuit of wisdom. Ultimately, worship is a continuous process of aligning our lives with God's will, shaped by the wisdom we gain through our relationship with Him.

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A thesis

presented in partial fulfillment

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Master of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies

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I dedicate this research work especially to my household.

To my loving and supportive wife, Janet Flavian

Massawe, my children, Charis, Pistis,

Elpis and their cousin Baraka.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In interacting with Ernest Wendland in analyzing Psalms it is evident that the topical content of the book of Psalms, the several subjects, themes, and motifs appear as an integrated theological system. The themes in Psalms are related to each other and give a unity that helps and enables today's preacher, teacher, and translator to communicate more effectively the messages of Psalms.[1]

Lee Martin suggests that Gunkel has made a vital contribution to the scholarship of Psalms where he identified types of Psalms which has been a great help in understanding the earliest role of the Psalter and various contexts (Sitze im Leben) about specific Psalms.[2] Even with that great work still, others consider wisdom psalms to be very dense. Yeol Kim confesses that dealing with wisdom psalms is a complicated duty. Despite many attempts still, there is no harmony concerning matters of meaning, nature, and context of wisdom literature.[3]

This advocates that, though it is difficult, the job of undertaking wisdom Psalms is valuable. Steven Dunn suggests that when great effort is put into studying and understanding the psalms we can come to realize a great benefit. It will help for

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[1] Ernst R. Wendland, *Analyzing the Psalms: With Exercises for Bible Students and Translators*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2002), 183.

[2] Lee Martin, "The Contribution of the Book of Psalms to a Pentecostal Theology of Worship," *Pharos Journal of Theology* 96 (2015): 1-2.

[3] Yeol Kim, "A Study of Wisdom Psalms in the Old Testament" (MA thesis, The North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa, 2008), 219.

separate and mutual prayer, devotion, and reflection because the Psalms communicate all people's feelings and practices.[4]

There is a need to explore wisdom psalms from another angle because many scholars have done a lot of work in identifying the wisdom psalm. Kim asserts that the matter about particular content and message of wisdom psalms are successively ignored. Then there is a need to continue interacting with the wisdom of Psalms to acquire their theological implications for contemporary believers.[5] Donn Morgan suggests that the Psalms comprehend vivid marks of wisdom literary forms and teaching.[6] Then this affirms that wisdom psalms are worthy to be studied.

John D. W. Watts displays that some of the psalms were used in worship during the first temple, Psalms continued to be sung after the exile, and even after the destruction of the temple psalms continued to be used in synagogues. Christians also used psalms (in Greek), and the early church fathers and the martyrs sang psalms, also psalm was used during the reformation with the reformers.[7] Then there is a need to look on what are the implications of the connection between wisdom and worship in Psalms meant for contemporary worship and spirituality.

Don Tuttle suggests that worship should be approached from a biblical viewpoint. He adds a comment from the Meyerhoff project which discourses a necessity for additional data from a scriptural, practical, and historical viewpoint on

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[4] Steven Dunn, "Wisdom Editing in the Book of Psalms: Vocabulary, Themes, and Structures" (PhD diss., Marquette University, 2009), 333, accessed 7 May 2023, http://epublications.marquette.edu/dissertations_mu/13.

[5] Y. Kim, "A Study of Wisdom Psalms in the Old Testament," 220.

[6] Donn F. Morgan, *Wisdom in the Old Testament Traditions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), 125.

[7] John D. W. Watts, "A History of the Use and Interpretation of the Psalms," in *An Introduction to Wisdom Literature and the Psalms: Festschrift Marvin E. Tate*, ed. Marvin E. Tate, Harold Wayne Ballard, and W. Dennis Tucker (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000), 21-24.

the matter of Christian communal worship.[8] Martin narrates that it is important to consider the whole Bible when attempting to develop a theology of worship. He narrates that inspiration and directions for worship can be noticed from Cain and Abel in Genesis 4 and concludes with the command to worship God in Revelation 22:9. Then the book of Psalms should be taken seriously due to its constant consideration of worship. He adds that the general form of the book of Psalms depicts the life of faith as active rather than stagnant, and it denotes worship as an exercise that produces advancement concerning spiritual progression and development.[9] Phillip McMillion asserts that psalms will help us to express different moods and themes of our worship.[10]

Hyung Sim shows that there is a debate in deciding the number and category of wisdom Psalms.[11] This has been done since Gunkel first suggested the presence of this category of wisdom in Psalms.[12] Kim asserts that the task of dealing with wisdom Psalms is complex for there is no real consensus among scholars.[13] Lorenzo Carraro says that types of Psalms can be identified by their genre. He argues that three

[8] Don Wesley Tuttle, "A Strategy for Identifying the Necessary Elements of a Worship Studies Program" (DMin diss., Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia, 1999), 153, accessed 8 May 2023, https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/174/.

[9] Martin, "The Contribution of the Book of Psalms to a Pentecostal Theology of Worship," 1.

[10] Phillip McMillion, "Worship in the Old Testament," *Leaven* 6, no. 1 (1998): 1-5, accessed 8 May 2023, https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/vol6/iss1/4.

[11] Hyung Guen Sim, "Wisdom Psalms? Or Wisdom Psalter?" PDF file, n.d., accessed 23 November 2023, https://skt.scd.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/04/08-%EC%8B%AC%ED%98%95%EA%B6%8C204-232.pdf.

[12] Starts Weeks, "Wisdom Psalms," 2005, 1, accessed 23 November 2023, https://www.academia.edu ›Wisdo.

[13] Y. Kim, "A Study of Wisdom Psalms in the Old Testament," 219.

elements need to be considered: content, the existential situation, and the form/style.[14] Carraro argues that wisdom Psalms have different compositions and usually focus on man. They comprise a meditation on the law, the destiny of the just and the evil one, the suffering of the just, retribution of the evil person.[15] Wendland talks not on components but on stylistic features comprising the following: strong contrast, comparative saying (righteous against wicked), warning to the wicked, admonition to listen, picturesque similes, rhetorical questions, and representative speech of the wicked.[16] Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 have been selected from wisdom Psalms as identified by Wendland, Sim, and Carraro by considering their above-mentioned elements.[17]

Studying these Psalms is beneficial because they introduce Books I, III, IV, and V of the Psalter, making them key to understanding the structure and theological progression of the Psalms. Each highlights wisdom themes: Psalm 1 contrasts the righteous and wicked, Psalm 73 wrestles with faith amid suffering, Psalm 90 reflects on human frailty and God's eternity, and Psalm 107 celebrates divine deliverance.[18] As opening Psalms, they set the tone for their respective sections, offering a broad perspective on the wisdom, theology, and literary design of the Psalter. Book II (Ps 42-72) is often left out in structural discussions because it lacks a clear wisdom-themed introductory Psalm. Psalms 42-43, often treated as one, focus on lament and

[14] Lorenzo Carraro, *The Book of Psalms (Study Notes)*, PDF file, n.d., accessed November 22, 2023, https://www.comboni.org/app-data/files/allegati/3398.pdf.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Wendland, *Analyzing the Psalms*, 59.

[17] Ibid., 60.

[18] Gerald Henry Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, Dissertation Series 76 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 155-160.

longing for God rather than setting a broad theological tone. This book transitions from Davidic laments to national themes, acting as a bridge between personal devotion (Book I) and communal concerns (Book III). Unlike Books I, III, IV, and V, Book II does not have a distinct "gateway" Psalm, making it less prominent in thematic studies.[19] These Psalms reflect the teaching of the law and how a person can remain on good terms with God. They touch on the central point of worship which is God himself and present imagery language which when exegetically exposed will bring benefit to the contemporary worshipers. Hence the researcher wants to seek the relationship between wisdom and worship in wisdom Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 as they present their instruction in a poetic language.

The reason behind choosing Psalm 1 to be studied is its didactic nature. Simeon Kehinde based on the background of the psalm suggests that the Psalm addresses the righteous as a specific group of people who are separated from the wicked.[20] Brian Russell asserts that Psalm 1 has been identified as a model psalm of orientation. It has troubled some interpreters due to its emphasis on the Torah for securing a blessed future. The Psalm has five special allusions, that is to Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Joshua 1:8; Genesis 39:3, 23; Jeremiah 17:5-8; and Ezekiel 47:12.[21] To be blessed someone needs to follow a given way which Torah is the guiding principle. Philippus Botha in his conclusion suggests there is a separation between the wicked and the righteous affected by the Torah where the righteous and the wicked relate

[19] Robert L. Cole. *Psalms 1–2: A Gateway to the Psalter*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013.

[20] Simeon Folorunso Kehinde, "A Lexico-Semantic Analysis of Metaphors in Psalm 1 and Its Ethical Implications Light in a Once-Dark World," *American Journal of Biblical Theology* 3 (November 2020): 348, accessed 22 November 2023, https://www.biblicaltheology.com.

[21] Brian Russe, "Psalm 1 as an Interpreter of Scripture," *Irish Biblical Studies* 26, no. 4 (2005): 170–71. Accessed 7 June 2023, https://biblicalstudies.org.uk.

with God without a direct or personal relation to each other depicted by the Torah.[22] The psalmist uses the metaphor of the way in v. 1 and 6, similes of the righteous as a tree and wicked as chaff, metonym of meditation in v. 2 and judgment in v. 5, merism of day and night in v.2, and the anthropomorphism of the watching LORD in v. 6. These poetic techniques used in Psalm 1 have triggered the researcher to study Psalm 1. The study will help the believers to choose the wisest way in their lives.

Psalm 73 is selected to be studied because it is a wisdom psalm that addresses the common dilemma found in wisdom literature. This dilemma is the prosperity of the wicked. It does not end there but it reflects on how the psalmist overcame this problem renewed God's truth and strengthened his faith.[23] Terry Smith suggests that Psalm 73 is a remarkable witness to the strength concerning personal living of faith in Israel and gives an influential witness to a conflict that is battled inside a person.[24] The psalmist uses special poetic techniques to address this situation.

While being puzzled in a life of faith, a person needs to win the battle within his/her soul and this calls him/her to seek wisdom for time is limited on the side of man. Marlene Go suggests that, people need to live a life considering God's view of time. The simile of a thousand years as a day shows life is very short and it runs quickly.[25] Aron Pinker in his conclusion suggests Psalm 90 to be a prayer that

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[22] Philippus Jacobus Botha, "The Junction of the Two Ways: The Structure and Theology of Psalm 1," *Old Testament Essays* 4, no. 3 (1991): 395, accessed July 6, 2023, https://journals.co.za › doi › pdf › AJA10109919_1085.

[23] Clive Norman Ashby, "Explication of Psalm 73," accessed July 6, 2023, https://www.academia.edu ›.

[24] Terry L. Smith, "A Crisis in Faith: An Exegesis of Psalm 73," *Restoration Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (1974): 162. Accessed 7 August 2023, https://biblicalelearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Smith-Ps73-RQ.pdf.

[25] Marlene Lim Go, "An Exegetical Paper on Psalm 90 Hermeneutics and Theological Reflection," October 6, 2012, accessed 8 September 2023, https://www.academia.edu/5965253/Psalm_90_hermeneutics_final_paper.

searches for God's help.[26] Kim asserts Psalm 90 is a prayer of Moses and suggests that Psalm 90 uses poetic devices in different ways.[27] These poetic devices need to be studied to bring awareness to believers and help them shape their worship. The last psalm to be given attention in this study is Psalm 107 due to its call to the redeemed to give thanks to the LORD showing that the LORD has intervened in the dilemma concerning the righteous. The LORD is the savior; God alone is capable of saving or taking away his persons from any type of hazard or tragedy. Psalm 107's initial lines appeal to individuals from all courses to worship and praise God for redemption. Because He only could have provided. God is rewarding the good and rebukes the evil in v. 42 and in v. 43 the psalmist concludes with a call to all the wise to observe all things the LORD has done and understand the goodness of the LORD. While the wise are needed to do that, Wilt affirms that the Hebrew language has many poetic forms or words for salvation. Then the need to study Psalm 107 arises with the quest of looking at the poetic language used to expose the redeemed to understand and be able to give thanks to the LORD.[28]

The semantic relations between parallel lines, figures of speech, and distant parallelism are techniques that can easily be observed but they need a deeper study to extract their valuable wisdom. The researcher intended to expose the interpretation and meaning of metaphors, similes, imageries, hyperboles, and anthropomorphisms used in these psalms. This was done to help the believers to sharpen their worship life.

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[26] Aron Pinker, "Psalm 90:10," *Old Testament Essays* 28, no. 2 (2015): 497, accessed 13 July 2023, https://www.researchgate.net.

[27] Hyung Jun Kim, "A Study of Psalm 90" (MA thesis, The University of South Africa, Pretoria, 1998), 61, accessed 20 July 2023, http://hdl.handle.net/10500/16985.

[28] Ibid., 7.

This is vital because still people are puzzled and need to know the dilemma about the success of the evil people and the misery of the good people.

Statement of the Problem

Most scholars agree that an attempt to deal with wisdom psalms is very dense and complex but also worthwhile. While much has been done in identifying the wisdom Psalms, the matter of the particular content and message of wisdom Psalms, as related to worship, has not been properly addressed. There is a need to continue interacting with wisdom texts to explore their message and theological value. The Psalms under study use wisdom language and imagery which once exegetically exposed can be useful to contemporary worshipers. Therefore, this study strives to examine how the psalmists use wisdom language and imagery to deepen worship and devotion to God in Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to study Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 to grasp their constructive insights and perspectives on worship. To seek what are the implications for contemporary worship in shaping the spiritual lives of contemporary believers. To know the used wisdom language and imagery in Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 and expose their interpretation.

Significance of the Study

The study depicts the implications of the impact of wisdom Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 which contribute to contemporary worship and spirituality among the believers. The study helps to know the wisdom language and imagery in Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 which help to deepen worship and devotion to God. The study exposes the interpretation of Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 which help to shape the spiritual lives

of contemporary believers. The study adds knowledge to today's preachers, teachers, and translators to communicate more effectively the messages of wisdom.

Delimitation

The research does not seek to add one more to the many attempts at identifying wisdom Psalms in the Psalter. This study seeks to discover and understand the impact of wisdom psalms on worship by delimiting the already identified wisdom psalms, particularly Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107. The study took a look at the use of wisdom language and imagery in Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 which help to deepen worship and devotion to God.

Methodology

This is an exegetical study that used the historical-grammatical method to pursue the task of finding the meaning and implications. The study exegetically engaged in the process of analyzing the poetic language used in Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 to extract the fullest meaning and answer the research issue. The research applies Conceptual Metaphor Theory as the dominant framework across all four Psalms, while also incorporating Comparison Theory in Psalms 1 and 90 and Interaction Theory in Psalms 73 and 107.[29] This paper comprises five chapters.

[29] Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. "*Metaphors We Live By"*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.) also Ian Scott, "Metaphor Theory and Theology: From Substitution to Conceptual Metaphors," *Didaskalia* 30 (2019): 109, https://digitalcollections.tyndale.ca/bitstream/handle/20.500.12730/1746/Scott_Ian_2019a.pdf. Lakoff and Johnson argue in their conceptual metaphor theory that human thought is fundamentally structured by metaphors. They propose that most ideas stem from underlying conceptual metaphors grounded in physical and cultural experiences. They suggest that new metaphors can reshape how we perceive reality. Ian Scott discusses the application of CMT in theology. In his article "Metaphor Theory and Theology: From Substitution to Conceptual Metaphors," Scott examines how CMT has influenced theological studies. He notes that since the 1980s, following the work of Lakoff and Johnson, there has been a shift in understanding metaphors not merely as linguistic expressions but as fundamental to human thought and experience.

Chapter One comprises the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, delimitation, and methodology. Chapter Two is a literature review where primary and secondary sources from different scholar's books, commentaries, journals, and other beneficial sources were consulted by the researcher. This enhanced the understanding of Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 views from different authors. Chapter Three comprises a contextual analysis of Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 where Historical Cultural Context also Literary Structures were examined. It has taken a look at the Semantic Analysis of the Key Words and Syntactical analysis, Chapter Four focused on the Theological analysis and Interpretation of Psalms 1, 73, 90, And 107. It shows the relevance of the study to the contemporary worship and spirituality among the believers. Chapter Five summarizes and gives a conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of literature on key themes such as wisdom, the Book of Psalms, and worship, with a focus on their biblical and theological significance. It explores how wisdom is portrayed in the Bible, particularly through the Hebrew concept of *khokmah*, and discusses the structure, composition, and authorship of Psalms, highlighting their role in worship and expression of faith. The chapter also explores into the ancient and modern interpretations of worship, linking it to reverence for God and the centrality of His covenant relationship with humankind. In summary this "Review of Literature," explores the concept of wisdom, its biblical foundation, the significance of the Book of Psalms, types of wisdom Psalms, and the role of worship in both ancient and contemporary settings, highlighting the centrality of God in wisdom and worship.

Wisdom

Martin Klingbeil explains wisdom separating it from the realm of theory and philosophy. His explanation of wisdom gives the understanding that wisdom is a correct understanding of the elementary truths of life, God's connections with humankind, and the task of people as moral mediators.[1] *Khokmah* is a Hebrew word recognized as wisdom. It has other translations like aptitude, skill, experience, good

[1] Martin G. Klingbeil, "Poetry and Wisdom Books," *Andrews Bible Commentary, Old Testament: Light, Depth, Truth*, ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez et al. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2020), 621.

sense, and many other meanings. The word is found 18 times in the book of Job, 39 times in the book of Proverbs, and 28 times in the book of Ecclesiastes. Understanding (*Binah*) and success (*tushiyyah*) are some other close words to wisdom cited in Proverb 1:2; 2:7.[2]

Robert Bradshaw suggests that wisdom can be understood as the ability to make choices and those choices must be Godly choices. He argues that many ancient kings employed people to gather and record wise sayings. This was done to help them and their people to make good decisions. Bradshaw differentiates the wisdom of the Bible and wisdom from the work of the kings.[3] He declares that the Bible puts God at the center and that a relationship with Him is the key to wisdom. He supports his argument with Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7; 2:1-4; 9:10; Job 28:28; and Ecclesiastes 12:13.[4] Bruce asserts that in the Old Testament wisdom means practical morals with spiritual content. Hence wisdom is to interpret life in reverence towards God.[5] According to Edward Curtis, wisdom is the capacity to use the principles of life aiming to advance godly character.[6]

The Book of Psalms

Peter Craigie asserts that Psalm is the book well-known, most frequently quoted book in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Its popularity is also

[2] Klingbeil, "Poetry and Wisdom Books," 621.

[3] Robert I. Bradshaw, *Interpreting the Biblical Wisdom Literature*, PDF file, January 28, 2002, https://biblicalstudies.org.uk › pdf › rib › wisdom.

[4] Ibid.

[5] F.F. Bruce, "The Wisdom Literature of the Bible: Introduction," *The Bible Student* ns 22, no. 1 (January 1951): 5-8, accessed 1 February 2024, https://biblicalstudies.org.uk › wisdom-1_bruce.

[6] Edward M. Curtis, *Interpreting the Wisdom Books: An Exegetical Handbook*, Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2017), 194.

found in Jewish writings from Qumran. It was popular in ancient and has not lost its popularity in the current world today.[7] Psalms are identified to be poetically composed. They were orally composed and some were formally literary composed.[8] Poetry is an extraordinary way of speaking and communicating a message. It is very important way supported by the fact that the biblical context of the Old Testament is almost a half or third in poetic form. Poetry expresses the aspects of human experiences and aspects of knowledge of God more deeply and simply than prose can express.[9]

Klingbeil comments that Psalm is among poetic books like Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Lamentation. These poetic books are found in the section of the Hebrew Bible known as writing (*ketubim*). Job, Psalms, and Proverbs are called books of truth *(sipre 'eme).*[10]

Craigie comments that the title of this collection in Hebrew is *Tehillim or sepher tehillim,* meaning praises or book of praises. There is another known title in Hebrew called *Tephilloth* meaning prayers. These words describe the overall character of Psalms. Psalms are worshipful and particularly intended to establish the praises of God.[11] In the Septuagint the book is called p*salmos* meaning a poem to be sung to a stringed instrument, but appropriately *psalmoi*.[12] Klingbeil says that the

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[7] Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, Word Biblical Commentary 19 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 57-63.

[8] Ibid., 35.

[9] Ibid., 36.

[10] Klingbeil, "Poetry and Wisdom Books," 614.

[11] Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*.

[12] H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, preface to "The Psalms," *The Pulpit Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), 8:1-2.

word *mizmo*r from Hebrew has the same meaning as *psalmoi* as used in Septuagint (LXX) (in Ps 3:1, 4:1, 5:1). He continues to comment that 73 psalms are credited to the authorship of David, and the phrase used is *ledawid* meaning to/for/of David. Continuing to interact with Klingbeil we find that Psalm authorship is also accredited to the following: Sons of Korah (Ps 42-49; 84-85; 87-88), Asaph (Ps 50; 73-83) Solomon (Ps 72; 127), Heman the Ezrahite (Ps 88), Ethan the Ezrahite (Ps 89) and Moses (Ps 90).[13]

Different authors have tried to identify types of psalms. Among many authors is Wendland who identified the following five major types of Psalms: Petition Psalms, Thanksgiving Psalms, Praise Psalms, Instructional Psalms/Wisdom Psalms, and Profession of Trust Psalms.[14] In trying to date the Psalms, Klingbeil asserts that Psalms dating is not an easy task because of the available debate. But when a combination of the extra-Biblical materials and looking at the linguistic structures used, personal names stated, and historical situations declared in the titles, we can get assistance.[15] With that assistance, we get convinced that the bulk of Psalms were authored during the Israelite monarchy, and after the exile, the work of scribes like Ezra helped to have the final compilation. It is knowledgeable that Psalms' historical background is rich in diversity being recorded starting from exodus to exile. There are five divisions of Psalms (1-41; 42-72; 73-89;90-106; 107-150) divided by following the five-fold division of the Pentateuch.[16]

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[13] Klingbeil, "Psalms," *Andrews Bible Commentary, Old Testament: Light, Depth, Truth*, ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez et al. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2020), 658.

[14] Wendland, *Analyzing the Psalms*, 60.

[15] Klingbeil, "Psalms," 660.

[16] Ibid., 658.

Wisdom Psalms

Carraro argues that wisdom Psalms have different compositions and usually focus on man. They comprise a meditation on the law, the destiny of the just and the evil one, the suffering of the just, retribution of the evil person.[17] He lists the following Psalms under the category of wisdom: Psalms 1, 37, 49, 73, 91, 112, 119, 127, 128, 133, and 139.[18]

Wendland talks not about components but about stylistic features. The features comprise the following: strong contrast, comparative saying (righteous against wicked), warning to the wicked, admonition to listen, picturesque similes, rhetorical questions, and representative speech of the wicked.[19] Wendland continues to show that the main purpose of the wisdom Psalms is to teach people how they might live a life that pleases God their King by observing His gracious covenant terms stipulated in the law. This can be used to consider that the wisdom Psalms are meditative and devotional in style. He lists the following Psalms under the category of wisdom: Psalms 1, 14, 15, 19, 36, 37, 49, 50, 53, 73, 78, 112, 119, 127,128, and 133.[20]

Sim suggests the following Psalms to be under the category of wisdom: Psalms 1, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 18, 19, 24, 25,27, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 39, 40, 47, 49, 51, 52, 53, 62, 73, 78, 84, 86, 90, 91, 92, 94, 101, 104, 105, 106, 107, 111, 112, 119, 127, 128, 131, 133, 139, 144, 145 and 146. Book 1 has 19 wisdom Psalms, book II has 6

[17] Carraro, *The Book of Psalms*, PDF file.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Wendland, *Analyzing the Psalms*, 59.

[20] Ibid., 60.

wisdom Psalms, book III has 4 wisdom Psalms, book IV has 8 wisdom Psalms and Book V has 12 wisdom Psalms.[21]

Psalm 1

Various scholars describe that Psalm 1 should be taken as an introduction to the book of Psalms. Garland comments that this psalm introduces the whole Psalm because of the proclamation of blessings to every person who acts in conformity to the covenant of God.[22] Klingbeil comments that this psalm is about the two ways of life. These ways are separated by the judgment of God. Torah is depicted to be the way of life in which the righteous person follows in contrast to the way of the wicked, the way that rejects the Torah. These ways are explained in the imagery of a tree for righteous people and a smile of chaff for wicked people. Each person's destiny is decided in his/her chosen way. The righteous will prosper but the wicked will perish.[23] Wintle comments that Psalm 1 shows that our destiny is not governed by chance. Everything we do counts to our fate. The blessings are limited to the meditation of God's law. Everyone has control over his/her behavior and our acts will determine what to receive. The blessings are not only an anticipation of a coming life but also benefit the current life.[24]

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[21] Sim Hyung Guen, *Wisdom and Salvation History in the Wisdom Psalms* (PhD diss., Sydney College of Divinity, 2008), 204–232, https://repository.nwu.ac.za/handle/10394/1844.

[22] VanGemeren, Willem A. "*Psalms*." *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Rev. Edition, Volume 5, edited by Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008. 76

[23] Klingbeil, "Psalms," 662.

[24] Augustine Pagolu et al., "Psalms," *South Asia Bible Commentary*, ed. Brian Wintle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 617.

Psalm 73

Wendland comments that several features of Psalm 73 act as a key to the Biblical composition. Psalm 73 is at the center of the book of Psalms and the first psalm in book III. For it to be at the center it gives a picture of it being a summary of theology of the Psalms. From Psalm 1 to 72 then from 74 to 150 is a journey from wailings and grievances to thanksgiving song and cheering. Psalm 73 is a true life experience articulated from the wisdom values of Psalm 1 and invokes the enthusiastic praise of Psalm 150 as a conclusion of the Psalm. The didactic message of Psalm 73 is also a miniature of Old Testament theology.[25]

Jiri Moskala argues that the psalmist shows his theological problem but expresses it openly. He asks why he doesn't see prosperity in the righteous people who obey the LORD but see the wicked have all the benefits while living arrogant lives against God. His faith was jeopardized but, in the sanctuary, he was revived. He envied no more the wicked. Envy is a problem in the life of faith. Even when the wicked prosper it's for temporary. Significant prosperity is found in the sanctuary of God where the end of all the wicked is shown and the prosperity of the righteous is shown. The pure in heart will stay with the LORD and enjoy life in His presence with them.[26] The sanctuary highlights and culminates all things. The sanctuary is vital because it serves as the cosmic command center where God's plan of salvation is revealed and where one discovers His character. In the sanctuary, believers find answers to life's problems, gain insight into God's ultimate judgment, and see the end from God's perspective. It is in the sanctuary that Asaph gains clarity on issues he

[25] Ernst. R. Wendland, "Aspects of the Structure, Style, and Transmission of Psalm 73," *The Bible Translator* 50, no. 1 (January 1999): 135, https://journals.sagepub.com › doi › pd.

[26] Jirí Moskala, "Psalm 73–Its Structure and Theology: I Delight in God's Goodness in Spite of Devastating Problems," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 27, no. 1-2 (2016): 153-74.

couldn't resolve on his own, understanding God's plan for dealing with sin and the coming divine judgment.[27] In his conclusion, Moskala explains that God's judgment is the fundamental component for comprehending the mysteries of life. In this psalm, we see three chief characters: God, the pure in heart, and the wicked. The psalmist concludes with a declaration that it is better to be on God's side for He is good and the strong point of his life. The Psalmist's wailings are changed into the greatest lovely and influential declaration of faith.[28]

Psalm 90

This is the psalm that many Christians read during funeral services. John Goldingay states that some churches' current liturgical reduces this psalm and removes words that speak about the wrath of God and prayer in the last part of the psalm. This is not consistent with the message of a complete psalm. Because the last is the main theme of the psalm.[29] Speaking of the last part of Psalm 90 Goldingay accepts Martin Luther's comment that Psalm 90 is the chief part of the psalm. It parallels Psalm 85, it overlaps with the prayers of Ezra 9, Nehemiah 1 and 9, and Daniel 9. It has similar prayer features to Psalms of prayer. Verses 1-5 state how things were, 6-12 state a contrast of how things are now, and 13-17 is a prayer to God to restore the blessings.[30] George Rawlinson comments that this psalm shows that all things depend on God. He alone is an unchangeable, self-independent being,

[27] Moskala, "Psalm 73–Its Structure and Theology," 165-67.

[28] Ibid., 172-73.

[29] John Goldingay, *Psalms, Volume 3: Psalms 90-150,* Baker Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 21-22.

[30] Ibid. See *Classically Luther: Selected Psalms* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 2:73-141. Goldingay in his discussion of Psalm 90 refers to Luther's commentary in his interpretive commentary on Psalm 90, noting "Selected Psalms, 2:130" when discussing Luther's approach to verses near Psalm 90:12.

independent of time. This psalm shows the failure of philosophy to make man not believe in creation. It gives us the courage to face painful moments in life.[31]

Psalm 107

Some commentators explain that Psalm 107 calls those who returned from exile in Babylon. A call is made by the music leader inviting every person to join in thanking the LORD. Because these people were in exile they were delivered and made free back to their land. Then this psalm may touch some hard parts of our lives and what difficulties we have experienced in life. But God has taken us and made us free from various hard situations we have experienced.[32] Craig Broyles identifies four groups (desert travelers, prisoners, the sick, and sailors) that are mentioned in this psalm shortly after the invitation to praise the LORD. He argues that there is a big lesson from this for narratives. Life suffering from time to time can be from God's judgment on sin, other times not but God saves when people call upon Him. Some occasions are specified with their open causes of misery but some are not.[33]

Worship

In defining worship, let us look at the following scenario from Mesopotamia. The ancient Mesopotamian story presents Marduk deciding to make human beings. The aim was that human beings were to help gods so that they get time to relax and make themselves tired from work. For a man to be charged for the work of gods gives

[31] George Rawlinson, "The Psalms: Exposition," *The Pulpit Commentary*, ed. Joseph S. Exell and H. D. M. Spence-Jones (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, ca. 1890), 8:256-258.

[32] Tokunboh Adeyemo, ed., *Africa Bible Commentary* (Nairobi: WorldAlive Publishers, 2006), 712.

[33] Craig C. Broyles, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: Psalms* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), 409.

a picture that man was to be a slave of gods.[34] Man was to make gods enjoy and relax from labor. So, man was to worship gods by meeting these activities and gods depended on man.[35] From that situation of the Mesopotamian creation epic John Burkhart comments that God as He has revealed Himself to Hebrews does not require such service. God does not depend on humans but our worship of Him is by his right to be God and He provides everything to us. It is because He is worthy and we see His goodness act on us so we worship Him[36]

Worship can be understood as engagements driven by an attitude that respects esteems, or designates the worthiness of another person or thing. Context of the Old Testament and New Testament describes specifically to reverence God.[37] Hebrew and Greek do not have a corresponding word to worship as English does. Prostrate oneself (*Shahah*) is a Hebrew word used to mean worship also *abad* is a verb denoting worship activity. *Proskuneo* (kiss toward) is a Greek word often meaning worship as used in the New Testament. The worshiper was to prostrate oneself before the one worshiped and kiss the ground, feet of that person or the edge of his clothing. It was seen during the Persians and Greeks when they practiced this in honoring their kings, idols, or hallowed objects.[38]

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[34] James Bennett Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, vol. 1, *An Anthology of Texts and Pictures Volume* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), 36-40.

[35] Truth for Today, *The Meaning of Worship*, PDF file, 2003, http://www.biblecourses.com/English/en_lessons/EN_200303_01.pdf .

[36] John E. Burkhart, *Worship* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1982), 16-17.

[37] Charles F. Pfeiffer, "Worship," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 4:1117-1122. This entry discusses various Hebrew and Greek terms translated as "worship," such as *shachah*, *latreuo*, and *proskuneo*, and examines their usage in different biblical contexts. The article also delves into the forms and practices of worship in both the Old and New Testaments, highlighting the evolution of worship from ancient rituals to early Christian practices.

[38] Truth for Today, *The Meaning of Worship*, PDF file.

Tuttle in his dissertation states that there is a necessity to deal with worship predominantly from a scriptural viewpoint, with stress on the significance of readiness of heart and the useful components of a time of worship.[39] He adds by taking a comment from Meyerhoff's project which addresses a need for more information from a biblical, practical, and historical perspective on the subject of Christian corporate worship. Tuttle continues to say that some people are serving in churches with a more customary worship style.[40] There is a need to modernize or amalgamate worship style. But leaders don't know what they can do to change that in their churches. He adds that even seminaries have not been able to emphasize and concentrate on that. Also again he adds a comment from Robert Webber who states that pastors have not been well equipped to lead worship.[41] McMillion asserts that worship should be fixed towards God. It should be resulted from the thankfulness reply for what the Lord has done. Psalms can best lead us to express various moods and themes of our worship.[42] This will be achieved because the book of Psalms reveals the life of faith as a lively act rather than stagnant, and it signifies worship as an exercise that produces growth to spiritual development and maturity.[43]

Wendland identifies ten themes. Where the nine themes (covenant, kingship, judgment, warfare, sin, community, peace, faith, deliverance) have only one practical end which is worship to God in all its functional aspects of thanksgiving, petition, praise, profession of trust, and acts of sacrificial devotion. Worship is the tenth theme

[39] Tuttle, "A Strategy for Identifying the Necessary Elements of a Worship Studies Program," 153.

[40] Ibid., 153.

[41] Ibid., 3.

[42] McMillion, "Worship in the Old Testament," 1-2.

[43] Martin, "The Contribution of the Book of Psalms to a Pentecostal Theology of Worship."

and it's where other themes find their practical aspects. Wendland continues to assert that it is significant to underline that the LORD is the central point of worship. He is the dominant theme of the book of Psalms the one from which all other topics and themes originate their significance and applicability. God is the one who is the King and graciously has established his chosen covenant community.[44]

Melak Tsegaw comments that when the worshiper understands the attributes of God will be inspired in his/her actions and attitudes toward worship. The worshiper needs to understand the greatness and goodness of YHWH to have the correct experience of worship. Greatness of God is depicted by His holiness (Ps 99:3,9: 22:4;30:5), wonderful works (Ps 96:5; 95:3-6; 100:3; 135:6-7; 26:7; 86:8-10), and kingship (Ps 5:3,8; 22:28-29; 95:3; 96:4,10; 99:1; 149:2-3). The goodness of God is His loving kindness, faithfulness, benevolence, grace, and how He relates with His creation (Ps 86:5,15; 100:5; 118:2-4; 22:25; 99:6-8; 106; 22:20).[45]

Again Tsegaw describes the attitude of the worshipper which are imparted by the attributes of YHWH to be the following: reverence (Ps 65:6; 66:4-5; 5:822:24; 135:20; 99:5), honesty (Ps 24:3-5; 22:28; 65:4; 118:19; 26:4-5), thankfulness 9Ps 43:4; 100:4; 134:1,2, 135:1-3;150:6) and rejoicing (Lev 23:40; Deut 12:7,1218; 16:11; Ps 5:12; 84:2; 95:1; 96:12. These attitude will lead a worshiper into actions cultivated from the important consciousness of presence of God (Ps 122:1; 24:1138:2-3).[46]

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[44] Wendland, *Analyzing the Psalms*, 190-91.

[45] Melak Alemayehu Tsegaw, *Whole Body Gestures with the Context of Worship in the Book of Psalms* (Beau Bassin, Mauritius: Scholars' Press, 2019), 230-35.

[46] Ibid., 239-46.

Worship in the Old Testament

The patriarchs built altars in the name of God in every place they settled (Gen 8:20, 12:7-8; 13:4, 18; 26:25; 35:7, Exod 17:5). The Tabernacle was built in directions given by God (Exod 25-31; 31:1-6, 35- 40; 36:1-2, Num 14:10). Later on, King David united the tribes and chose Jerusalem as the capital. He gathered materials for temple building and arranged temple music services (1 Chr 25). King Solomon built the temple in Zion (1 Kgs 9:1-23). Then Israel went into exile and the temple was destroyed. During times of exile and postexile synagogues were found to facilitate worship. They did not sacrifice in synagogues only prayers, scripture exposition, and reading also singing of psalms were worship activities done.[47]

McMillion asserts that in biblical view worship starts with God. We need to accept His presence and nature. God is worshiped because of who He is and his nature gives us aspects that lead us to worship.[48] Israel knew the following facts about God. They understood God is holy (Lev 11:44-45; 19:1) and He is exceptional not to be compared to gods or common matters (1 Sam 2:2) and in Isaiah chapter 6 the holiness of God is spoken when the seraphim worship Him. God is jealous it is well depicted in the Ten Commandments (Exod 20:5; 34:14).[49] God forbade Israel from worshipping other gods. It is an exceptional love for His people and a language to desire a distinctive relationship with His people. God is steadfast in love. The Hebrew word *hesed* is used to describe this love which denotes that God is present and keeps His covenantal promises to his people (Exod 34:6-7, Num 14:18-19). The word is

[47] Dani D., *Worship in the Old Testament: Reliance… Reverence… Response… Reference… Relevance…*, PDF file, February 2017, https://daniprakash.files.wordpress.com › 2017/02.

[48] McMillion, "Worship in the Old Testament," 1-2.

[49] Ibid.

used 170 in other Old Testament books and 120 times in Psalms only. Through Psalms, we can learn something important in worship for they had a great role in Israel's worship.[50]

Worship in the Old Testament was done in various ways. Dani D. comments that it could be seen in purification acts (Lev 14:9; 15:11; 17:15-16, Num 19, and Deut 21:1-9). The dietary laws also showed the worship of people of Israel when we read in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 12:16; 14:4. Another prominent way was during sacrificing, tithing and various types of offerings (Exod 13:11; Lev 1-7; 27:30-33; Num 5:9; 15:18; 18:8, 28; Deut 12:17; 14:22-29; 15:19; 24:19-21; 26:1-14).[51] We can also see worship in Sabbath observance and other stipulated holy days in the calendar. Another area that can bring us to see worship in the Old Testament is festivals, where it was the time of joy, prayers, and people coming together to worship God and be happy together (Lev 23).

From McMillion, we get highlights that God's acts were vital in Israel's worship and Old Testament worship recognized acts of God and worshiped Him remembering what great things He has done to them.[52] They remembered Abraham and worshiped God for His love and protection. They remembered the promise of God to Abraham and how He kept His covenant they worshiped Him for His steadfast love. They remembered the exodus and how God manifested His majestic power and delivered them from Egypt, they worshiped Him for His strong arm of deliverance. The acts of God were crucial for their worship.[53] In his conclusion, McMillion asserts

[50] McMillion, "Worship in the Old Testament," 1-2

[51] Dani D., *Worship in the Old Testament*, PDF file.

[52] McMillion, "Worship in the Old Testament."

[53] Ibid., 1-2.

that we can get only significant principles from ancient Israel worship but it is not clear an exalt design of worship back in time. The true worship must be centered on God and be our reply of appreciation for what He has done for us.[54]

Burkhat comments that for Israel, worship is not directed to an unknown God, but to the definite God of the covenant. It is like a relationship with a friend, not like that of a slave and master. Worship is a response to God's past, present, and future actions, and is motivated by gratitude for His gracious acts, not by obligation.[55]

In contemporary worship settings, the role of wisdom Psalms remains underexplored, particularly in their influence on worship practices, preaching, and personal devotion. While some scholars note that pastors and worship leaders may lack adequate preparation for leading worship, wisdom Psalms could offer guidance on leadership, structure, and theology. The portrayal of God's attributes in these Psalms also shapes the attitudes and experiences of worshippers. Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 contribute to a broader theology of worship and wisdom within the Psalter, with Psalm 73 bridging themes of wisdom, suffering, and divine justice, and Psalm 90 shaping Christian perspectives on life, death, and judgment. Despite extensive literary and theological studies on wisdom Psalms, their direct impact on worship remains insufficiently examined, as existing research often prioritizes their ethical and didactic functions. By addressing these gaps, this study provides a fresh exegetical and theological analysis of Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 in relation to worship, contributes to biblical scholarship by examining their influence on worship and offers practical insights for worship leaders, theologians, and believers on integrating wisdom Psalms into modern worship contexts.

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[54] McMillion, "Worship in the Old Testament," 1-2.

[55] Burkhart, *Worship*, 16-17.

Summary

This chapter has examined the multifaceted nature of wisdom, particularly its biblical dimensions that connect moral living with a relationship with God. It explored the Psalms as a key literary and theological component of Scripture, emphasizing their poetic form, varied authorship, and central role in expressing worship, faith, and human experiences. Finally, the chapter addressed the evolution of worship practices, tracing them from Old Testament sacrifices and rituals to a deeper understanding of worship as a heartfelt response to God's nature and acts. The unifying theme across these topics is the centrality of God in shaping wisdom, worship, and life's purpose according to biblical teachings. The chapter covers key ideas: wisdom as a reflection of godly living (Klingbeil, Bradshaw), the Psalms' poetic depth and their role in worship (Craigie), the importance of wisdom Psalms in guiding a godly life (Carraro, Wendland), and how Old Testament worship focused on God's character and acts (McMillion, Tsegaw). Each section emphasizes the centrality of God in shaping moral choices, worship practices, and the understanding of life's meaning.

While scholars have worked on identifying wisdom Psalms, their theological value and contribution to worship remain underexplored. Still there is a gap of the lack of focus on the specific content and message of wisdom Psalms in relation to worship. This study addresses this gap by examining how wisdom language and imagery in Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 enhance worship and devotion to God. Despite the lack of direct literature on wisdom Psalms in worship, this study is essential for addressing a significant gap in biblical scholarship. This research provides fresh insights into how Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 shape worship which is an area that remains underexplored. Additionally, it has practical implications for pastors, worship

leaders, and believers, as wisdom Psalms may offer essential guidance for worship leadership and theology. Finally, this study lays the foundation for future research, encouraging further exploration of the connection between wisdom Psalms and worship, ultimately contributing to both biblical scholarship and practical worship applications.

CHAPTER 3

CONTEXT AND GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS OF WISDOM PSALMS 1, 73, 90, AND 107

Historical and Literal Structure of Psalms

Chapter 3 provides a detailed contextual analysis of key Wisdom Psalms, examining their historical, cultural, literary backgrounds and it explores the semantic nuances, syntactical patterns offering a comprehensive examination of their key words and structure. The Psalms are shown to have been composed over a broad historical period, often reflecting Israel's experiences from the time of Moses to the post-exilic era. The chapter explores debates around authorship, particularly the traditional association of some psalms with figures like David and Moses, and how modern scholarship has shifted these views. The significance of the Psalms' relationship to wisdom literature, especially in Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107, is discussed, highlighting how they deal with themes like the Torah, divine justice, and human mortality. Parallelism and other literary devices are analyzed, showing how they contribute to the structure and message of the psalms.

The Psalter has numerous psalms collected from diverse historical sources. It is said to take about one thousand years. Counted from Moses 1400 BC to 450 BC when people of God came from exile.[1] Psalms were not composed in one background. The superscript of a psalm added more information about the psalm. It is noticed in

[1] Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Psalms: 2024 Edition*, PDF file, n.d., accessed March 8, 2024, https://planobiblechapel.org › tcon › notes › pdf.

Septuagint, Vulgate, and Peshita, they expand titles or add titles to the psalms which have no titles. These titles though not original with the definite psalm, inform the reader about the procedure of compilation.[2] Habitually people viewed psalms as the work of King David.

The compiler worked to find events that led David to compose that particular psalm. This view of authorship was rejected later. Because the Psalms were composed out of specific experiences of the nation and also a person. This proves there were multiple authors in different histories of the nation.[3] Ross advocates that in appreciating the Psalms each Psalm needs to be considered independently and traditional or modern theories of authorship be well discussed.[4]

According to Wendland, Parallelism is the literary device used to mark the text boundaries in Psalter.[5] It is not to be considered only within a verse but the parallel bicolas and tricolars may be merged to form clusters that will form larger units of the whole psalm. That parallelism helps to demarcate boundaries and thematic peaks within the psalm as a whole. The related parallel lines need to be disconnected from one another by several verses and placed in a place where they can make a complete poetic message.[6] It is called recursion resulting from the principle of selecting and positioning recurrence. This assisted people to follow the psalm when

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[2] Casparus Johannes Adam Vos, *Theopoetry of the Psalms* (London New York: T & T Clark international, 2005), 45.

[3] Arnold Albert Anderson, ed., *The Book of Psalms, Volume 1: Psalms 1 - 72*, New Century Bible Commentary 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 29.

[4] Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2011), 45-47.

[5] Wendland, *Analyzing the Psalms*, 108.

[6] Ibid., 109.

sung, chanted, or recited in public worship. It makes us today see the bigger organization of the psalm and the message the psalmist is expressing.[7]

Hence, we are going to consider the four main devices (inclusion, junction, aperture, and closure) that the Hebrew poet uses to show boundaries and other significant ideas in a psalm. Also, alongside the parallelism, we will use convergence and harmony to assist in the process of identifying the literary unit of the Psalms. Figures of speech, rhetorical questions, shifts in word order, emphatic utterance, and direct speech are used to highlight the boundaries and help to know the beginning and the ending of the unit.[8]

Historical and Literary Structure of Psalm 1

Historical Context of Psalm 1

The exact time of the Psalm's composition is uncertain. While some suggest a link to 2 Chronicles 22:5, it is clear that it predates Jeremiah, as he was familiar with it and adapted its themes in Jeremiah 17:5-8. Jeremiah often reshaped earlier prophecies, including Psalms, to fit his own style and context. His use of the Psalm in reference to Jehoiakim suggests it was written before his time. However, the Psalm is not older than Solomon's era, as the word *leetsiym*, found only here in Psalms, became common during the wisdom literature period (e.g., Proverbs 21:24). Since it lacks historical markers, pinpointing its date is difficult, and some

[7] Wendland, *Analyzing the Psalms*, 108-35.

[8] Ibid.

argue against forced historical connections.[9] This suggests the Psalm 1 to be dated in the pre-exilic period.

Literary Structure of Psalm 1

Wilson provides three units of Psalm 1 (1:1-2, 3-4, 5-6) describing the lifestyle, consequences, and divine evaluation of the two ways.[10] Bullock somehow differently divides and gives three units of Ps 1 (1:1-3, 4, 5-6) where the structure gives the comparative of the two ways according to God's perspective.[11] Anderson divides Psalm 1 into two units (1:1-3, 4-6) to portray the attractiveness of the godly life and the definitive vainness of the godless life.[12]

The research suggests two units of Ps 1 using the assistance of parallel devices. Due to the distant parallelism existing in v. 1 to v. 4 because of the present repetition of the word wicked in v. 1 and 5. Hence v. 1 to v. 4 acts as the inclusion of the first unit of Psalm 1. Then v. 5 to v. 6 is another unit of the Psalm. This is because of the repetition of the words righteous and wicked in v. 5 and v. 6. So, this is another inclusion marking the beginning and the end of the second unit of Psalm 1. Therefore, Psalm 1 has two literary units evidenced by the shown inclusions. The two inclusions mark the outer boundaries of Psalm 1.

Evidence of the two units is found in Verse 5 which acts as a junction (anadiplosis) and it is there to show the border between the two discourse units of

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[9] C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament: New Updated Edition* (Electronic Database) (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996).

[10] Gerald Henry Wilson, *Psalms, Volume 1*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 93-98.

[11] C. Hassell Bullock, *Psalms, Volume 1: Psalms 1-72*, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2015), 14.

[12] Anderson, *The Book of Psalms*, 1:58.

Psalm 1. It marks the ending and the beginning of these adjacent units. This helps to give a summary of the message of the Psalm 1. This junction shows the same concept about the wicked which was stated at the end of the first unit. So v. 1 and 5 act as the apertures of the two units of Psalm 1. They are being used to mark the starting points of the units where v. 1 is where the first unit starts and v. 5 is where the second unit starts. These anaphoric verses help in developing the themes and show the shift at the beginning of the final psalm unit.

For Psalm 1, a staircase structure works well. This approach emphasizes the divergence between the two ways of living. The step-by-step highlights progression of each path: The path of the righteous versus the path of the wicked. Viewing Psalm 1 as a staircase makes it easier to visualize the divergence between the righteous and the wicked and helps illustrate how each choice affects the ultimate outcome.[13]

A1-v.1 The Character of the Righteous

B1-v.2 They Delight in God's Law

C1-v.3 The Fruitfulness of the Righteous

A2-v.4 The Nature of the Wicked

B2-v.5 The Fate of the Wicked

C2-v.6 The Divergence of Paths

[13] Psalm 1 follows a staircase structure, emphasizing the contrast between the righteous and the wicked by showing their step-by-step progression toward different outcomes. The psalm begins with the character of the righteous (v.1), describing their avoidance of evil influences. Their wisdom is seen in how they delight in God's law (v.2), leading to fruitfulness and stability (v.3). In contrast, the wicked are described as unstable and without foundation (v.4). Their fate is destruction (v.5), while the righteous enjoy God's guidance and blessing (v.6). The structure highlights the clear divergence between these two paths one leading to wisdom and worship, the other to ruin. This psalm reinforces the biblical theme that true wisdom is found in following God's law, and worship is the result of a life rooted in righteousness

Semantic and Syntactical Analysis of Psalm 1

Semantic Analysis of the Key Words of Psalm 1

Some words have been selected in this psalm as the keywords for understanding the whole psalm. The psalmist uses the metaphor of the way וּבְדֶרֶךְ (*derek*) in v. 1 and 6, similes of the righteous as a tree כְּעֵץ (*ets*) in v. 3 and wicked הָרְשָׁעִים (*harashaiym*) as chaff כַּמֹּץ (*kamots*) in v. 4 metonym of meditation יֶהְגֶּה (*hagah*) in v. 2 and judgment בַּמִּשְׁפָּט (*mishpat*) in v. 5, merism of day and night יוֹמָם וָלָיְלָה (*yowmam and walayilah*) in v.2, and the anthropomorphism of the watching LORD כִּי־יוֹדֵעַ יְהוָה (*kiy yowdea YHWH*) in v. 6.

The word דֶּרֶךְ (*derek)* can have the meaning of tread, march, bend the bow, press. In nominative it means way, road, distance, journey, manner, custom, behavior, mode of life, and condition. This nominative *derek* has the occurrence of more than 700 in a figurative manner.[14] This word has been used metaphorically to denote the behavior or the customary mode of acting in life. This act can be of God or man. This can be seen in Exodus 32:8, Deuteronomy 5:33, and Job 16:22.[15] The term "*derek*" (meaning "way" or "path") in the Bible is often used as a metaphor for life's journey and one's relationship with God.[16] It highlights the covenant between God and His people, where following God's instructions (Torah) leads to life, and ignoring those leads to death. The concept is emphasized in Psalms, Proverbs, and the Prophets,

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[14] Merrill C. Tenney, ed., *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary* (1963), s.v. “Way.”

[15] Ibid.

[16] Bruce K. Waltke, “Psalms,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis* (*NIDOTTE*), ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 1:989.

where the "way" symbolizes living according to God's will.[17] The Bible contrasts the paths of the righteous and the wicked, with God guiding those who follow His way. The metaphor also reflects God's expectations and the importance of living a life aligned with divine wisdom.[18]

Now let us see the similes of the righteous as a tree and the wicked as chaff. A tree עֵץ (*ets*) in nominative means wood, tree. In ANE common Semitic root means trees, wood, lumber, and timber sticks. Trees were common in ANE their products were used and their imagery was verified. In the Old Testament trees were identified for food, building material, and a shade (Ezek 47:12; Isa 10:18; 33-34; 35:1-2; 41:19). David selected a supervisor for safekeeping the olive and sycamore-fig trees (1 Chr 27:28).[19] In ancient Palestine, trees were rare and highly valued, symbolizing luxury and significance. Using wood to build a house was seen as a mark of wealth, and mentioning a tree in a burial or planting was considered important.[20]

In the Old Testament, trees symbolize people, prosperity, and blessing. They often represent the righteous, but can also refer to the wicked, kings, or powerful individuals. Prophets use trees to illustrate restoration, abundance, and beauty, and sometimes difficult situations.[21] Trees in the Bible symbolize life, strength, and God's care. They represent those who trust in the Lord, thriving even in hard times. Trees

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[17] Leland Ryken, James Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman, eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (*DBI*) (2005), s.v. "Path."

[18] Ibid.

[19] Waltke, "Psalms," *NIDOTTE,* 1:989-992.

[20] Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, *DBI,* s.v. "Tree."

[21] Waltke, "Psalms," *NIDOTTE,* 1:989, 990-92.

also show God's provision and permanence. The Bible even portrays God as the source of all life and fruitfulness.[22]

The word chaff מֹץ occurs more than eight times in the Old Testament. It is related to the Arab word *maus* meaning straw; it is also found in Aram (*mosa)* with the same meaning. The LXX uses the word *chnous* meaning chaff meaning definite from the context of passages in Psalm 1:4 and Hosea 13:3. Chaff means a part of grain removed when tossed to the air because it is worthless and it was to be separated from useful peelings of grain. The Bible has used the word to liken the wicked to the worthlessness of chaff that is taken away by the wind (Job 21:18; Ps 1:4; 35:5; Hos 13:3). It is the word found in oracles of judgment also in wisdom sayings (Hos 13:3; Zeph 2:2; Ps 1:4). This word refers to the brevity and worthlessness of evil active person.[23] Metaphorically chaff is used as an image of something not worth keeping, to be burned by fire, stubbles (*qas*) (Exod 5:12; 5:7; Isa 5:24). This imagery speaks also about judgment.[24]

The metonym of meditating: In the Old Testament meditate הגה (*hagah*) as a verb, it occurs 25 times where 19 times in qal imperfect, 3 times in qal perfect (Josh 1:8; Ps 77:12, 13; 143:5), and 2 times in qal infinitive absolute (Asa 59:11, 13) and 1 time in hiphil (Isa 8:19). *Hagah* in qal stem means groan, moan, sigh, utter, speak, meditate, muse, imagine, devise, in hiphil means chirp, mutter. As a noun *hegeh* means rumbling, growling, moaning, *hagut* means meditation, musing.[25] In Qumran material, the verb hgh is cited in 1QH11:21 meaning muttering. In ANE the word has

[22] Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, *DBI*, s.v. "Tree."

[23] Willem A. VanGemeren, "Chaff," *NIDOTTE,* 2:1060-61.

[24] Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, *DBI*, s.v. "Chaff."

[25] Miles V. Van Pelt and Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "הגה," *NIDOTTE*, 1:1006.

the following meaning: Aram *haga* a verb refers to think, meditate, murmur, and speak. In nominative *hegyona* it is reading, thinking, and meditating. In Syriac, *hega* means to meditate. In Arab *haga* means mock, deride, ridicule, and in Ugar *hg* means count, reckon.[26]

The verb הגה *hagah* may refer to the act of meditation or planning. Meditation is a deep, reflective thought occurring repetitively. It is linked with adverbials like day and night, and during the watches of the night (Josh 1:8; Ps 1:2; 63:6-70). The meditation is the work of the righteous focusing on the law, the LORD, and His wonderful work (Prov 15:28; Josh 1:8; Ps 1:2; 63:6-70; 77:12-13; 143:5). They do that for encouragement and to make their life to conform to the meditation. Meditation can also be negative when is linked with the meaning of plan, devise, or scheme which is the work of the wicked (Ps 2:1; 38:12, 13; Prov 24:2).[27]

Judgment מִשְׁפָּט (*mishpat*) when taken Biblically appears to cover both the human side and the divine side. A judgment is a work to appropriately distinguish wrong from right, resulting in a conclusion that is produced from witnessed practice and the priority of the law. A justice is made, defining the unbiased payment of somebody's act.[28]

Finally, God will take the task of both prosecutor and judge of the wicked (Ps 1:5; 5:5). The Bible shows God's punishments in history as hints of what the final judgment will be like. It is like God is delivering judgment in installments. But God's current punishments on groups and people are meant to warn them to turn away from

[26] Van Pelt and Kaiser Jr., "הגה," 1007.

[27] Ibid., 1006-1008.

[28] Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, *DBI*, s.v. "Judgement."

evil and follow God (Amos 4:6-13).[29] The Bible talks about the final day of punishment as the coming wrath. For those who have not changed their ways, this Day of Judgment is terrifying and horrible.[30]

Syntactical Analysis of Psalm 1

The syntactical analysis of Psalm 1 offers a deeper understanding of its key metaphors, similes, and literary structures. Through an examination of specific verses, the analysis reveals how the Psalm's language constructs contrasting paths for the righteous and the wicked. By focusing on the metaphor of "the way" and the parallelisms found in verses 1 and 6, as well as similes in verses 3 and 4, the text creates a vivid depiction of both the blessings of righteousness and the fleeting nature of wickedness. This section highlights the syntactical devices that reinforce these themes.

Verse 1 and 6 metaphor of the way וּבְדֶרֶךְ its conjunction links the action of avoiding sinful behaviors. The construct state links "the way" with its corresponding actors (righteous/wicked), deepening the parallelism by clearly defining the conditions. This is a synonymous parallelism[31] shown through its structure and the repetition of similar ideas. Verse 1 presents three parallel clauses (walking, standing, sitting), each representing stages of increasing association with sinful behavior. The use of the verb "walk" is followed by "stand" and "sit," showing progression in involvement, from casual association to deeper entrenchment. The different actions (walking, standing, sitting) metaphorically describe avoiding different levels of

[29] Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, *DBI*, s.v. “Judgement.”

[30] Ibid.

[31] Botha, “The Junction of the Two Ways,” 387.

participation in sinful activities. This creates a synonymous parallelism, where each clause reinforces the same basic idea of avoiding sin by using different metaphors. In verse 6 the "way" is a metaphor for the lifestyle or path one follows. The verse contrasts the "way" of the righteous and the wicked, further enhancing the parallelism seen in verse 1. It uses a construct state, where "the way" is linked to the righteous and wicked, providing a clear comparison between the two. The preposition subordinating the clause introduces the contrasting paths, reinforcing the result of each choice (life vs. perishing). Overall, these verses demonstrate synonymous parallelism by repeating the theme of avoiding sin using different images (walking, standing, sitting), and the gradual intensification of sense (anabasis) shows how the behavior deepens. The focus remains on how the "way" of a person determines their alignment with or against God's righteousness.

Verse 3 is a simile where the righteous are compared to a tree. The preposition כְּ ("like") expresses similarity or comparison, indicating that the righteous person shares the characteristics of a tree. This verse demonstrates synthetic parallelism, where the initial simile ("like a tree planted by streams of water") is expanded with additional details. The metaphor is built upon by describing the tree's productivity ("yields its fruit in season"), resilience ("leaf does not wither"), and success ("whatever he does prospers"). Each subsequent clause elaborates on the initial idea, enhancing the imagery of the righteous person as flourishing and fruitful in all aspects of life. Holistic Image: The progression in this verse creates a vivid and holistic picture of the righteous individual, not only as rooted and stable but also as continuously productive and blessed in their endeavors. The fruit and leaf are symbolic of spiritual vitality and unwavering faithfulness, while prosperity signifies overall well-being and alignment with God's will. This synthetic parallelism in verse 3

deepens the understanding of the righteous, connecting wisdom and worship to a life that is steadfast, fruitful, and blessed in all seasons.

Verse 4 gives the simile of the wicked as chaff. The preposition כְּ ("like") introduces the simile, means that the preposition כְּ ("like") is functioning in a way that modifies the clause, often indicating manner or comparison. The preposition introduces a subordinate relationship by linking the noun "chaff" to the main action or subject in a descriptive way. Essentially, it subordinates the phrase ("like chaff") to the main clause, providing additional information that functions similarly to an adverb, clarifying how the wicked are being described. It sets up the contrast between the righteous (represented as a strong, fruitful tree) and the wicked (represented as weightless, useless chaff). The conjunction links the clause to the previous statements about the righteous. It is a contrastive conjunction, further emphasizing the difference between the wicked and the righteous. The syntax is straightforward, with a clear contrast set up by conjunctions and a simile that reinforces the theme of instability and impermanence. The verse gives a contrast parallelism[32] where the condition of the wicked is directly contrasted with the previous description of the righteous. This simile serves to highlight the ultimate fate of the wicked in contrast to the stability and prosperity of the righteous, tying directly into the themes of wisdom and worship. The righteous, grounded in God, are productive and enduring, while the wicked, detached from divine guidance, are easily swept away.

In Verse 2 we find the metonym of meditation with its analysis as Qal Imperfect, 3rd person, Masculine, Singular verb. The Qal stem indicates that the subject actively performs the action, emphasizing the continuous, repetitive nature of

[32] Botha, “The Junction of the Two Ways,” 387.

the meditation. The imperfect tense reflects an ongoing, habitual action, suggesting that the act of meditating on God's law is unceasing and a regular practice in the life of the righteous. The subject of this sentence is the righteous person (from the context of verse 2), who is actively and continuously meditating on God's law. The choice of verb form highlights that this meditation is not a one-time event but a sustained and habitual engagement with divine wisdom. This analysis emphasizes the deep connection between wisdom and worship, as the righteous person's continual meditation on God's word reflects a life shaped by ongoing devotion and spiritual reflection. This is synthetic pararallelism where the second half of the verse ("and in His law, he meditates day and night") builds on and expands the first half ("his delight is in the law of the LORD"), emphasizing the continuous and deep engagement of the righteous with God’s law.

In verse 2 again, we find the merism of day and night consisting of an adverb, conjunction, and common noun in the masculine, singular, absolute form. The adverb specifies the time frame in which the action of meditation takes place, while the absolute state of the noun indicates its independence, suggesting that this time frame should be understood in its entirety. The phrase presents a temporal scope, emphasizing the extent of the meditation as continuous and unceasing, covering the full span of time (both day and night). The word being analyzed here is "day and night." This merism underscores the idea that the meditation of the righteous person occurs persistently, throughout all periods of time, reinforcing the themes of dedication and devotion in worship. The use of this merism highlights the constant and ongoing nature of the righteous person's engagement with God's law, symbolizing wisdom through a life of continuous reflection and worship.

In Verse 5, the metonym of judgment where the preposition functions adverbially, subordinating the clause by indicating the specific context judgment in which the wicked will be unable to stand. This prepositional phrase points to a scene of divine or final judgment, suggesting the ultimate accountability and separation of the wicked from the righteous. The verse is structured as a cause-and-effect statement, showing the consequences for the wicked and sinners where the second part of the verse builds on the first part. The first clause discusses the wicked's inability to stand in judgment, while the second clause expands the idea by stating that sinners will not be included in the assembly of the righteous. The word being analyzed is "judgment". This metonym shifts the focus from a specific event to the broader concept of divine justice, underscoring the inevitable consequences of the wicked's actions in the context of wisdom and worship.

In Verse 6, the anthropomorphism of the watching LORD. The Qal stem is active, indicating that God is the subject, and the participle conveys a continuous, ongoing action expressing God's unceasing, intimate awareness and care for the righteous. The verb in the absolute state emphasizes that God's knowledge is definitive and complete. The conjunction introduces a reason or explanation for the contrast between the fate of the righteous and the wicked presented in the preceding verses. The verse expresses God's ongoing, personal knowledge and relationship with the righteous, indicating His continual oversight and care. God is the subject, actively "knowing" (watching over or caring for) the way of the righteous. The parallelism in this verse is antithetical. [33] It contrasts God's knowledge and care for the righteous with the ultimate destruction of the wicked, presenting two opposing outcomes for the

[33] Botha, “The Junction of the Two Ways,” 387.

two lifestyles mentioned throughout the psalm. The first and second parts of the verse present opposite ideas. The "way of the righteous" is known and cared for by the LORD, implying safety and blessing, while the "way of the wicked" will "perish," indicating destruction and loss. This structure highlights the divergent destinies of the two groups based on their moral and spiritual choices.

In the syntactical breakdown of Psalm 1 we find it enriching our comprehension of its central message, particularly through its use of metaphors, similes, and parallelism. The Psalm intricately compares the righteous, who are like a strong, fruitful tree, with the wicked, who are like weightless chaff. By analyzing these elements in terms of structure and meaning, we gain insight into the moral and spiritual consequences of one's path in life. Psalm 1, through its syntactical precision, emphasizes the eternal wisdom of choosing righteousness and the inevitable downfall awaiting those who turn away from God's guidance.

Historical and Literary Structure of Psalm 73

Historical Context of Psalm 73

This is the psalm among the Asaphite's psalms (50, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 82, 83). They were the temple officials with the task of performing music in the temple.[34] Psalm 73 is among the only two Asaphite psalms identified as wisdom psalms. Psalm 73 gives its didactic material through the psalmist's own real-life and spiritual experience while Psalm 78 uses history to give its wisdom by citing historical events.[35] The author might be Asaph himself or Asaphites because it has the

[34] Vos, *Theopoetry of the Psalms*, 154.

[35] Jeung Yeoul Bang, "Escatological Prospect in Psalm 78:65-72: 'Rejecion and Election' Pattern," accessed July 6, 2023, https://www.academia.edu › Esch.

ascription [sal. We can have some information from 1 Chronicles 15:17-19; 16:4-5, 37; 25:1-2 to help us know Asaph and Asaphites.

King David appointed Asaph to be the chief musician of the temple services. His sons were also consecrated for this service. Through songs they prophesized and they also worked as scribes to bring God to remembrance of his people's dilemma so that He can rescue them. There is no harmony about the period of the psalm. But there is a suggestion that it may be during the end of Babylonian exile and the translation of the LXX. Influenced with the hope that the LORD will intervene and Israel will be restored.[36] Vos suggests it was during the 5th and 4th BC.[37] McCullough suggests the psalm to be dated during the period of Jeremiah around 598-587 B.C, and Mowinckel also Oesterley, as cited in Smith, are in favor of a late date due to "language and theological attitude."[38]

Literary Structure of Psalm 73

McCann offers three units (73:1-12, 13-17, 18-28) with the emphasis on v. 13-17 as the central section. He argues it is the midpoint of the psalm presenting a direct address to God and verses are linked with the repetition of good.[39] Klingbeil suggests four units (73:1-12, 13-16, 17-20, 21-28) where the didactic psalm emphasizes the goodness of God and answering the theodicy and the psalmist stands on firm ground in the presence of God.[40] Though recognizing that more than thirteen literary patterns

[36] Bang, "Escatological Prospect in Psalm 78:65-72."

[37] Vos, *Theopoetry of the Psalms*, 154.

[38] W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Psalms* (London: S. P. C. K., 1955), 341, quoted in Smith, "A Crisis in Faith," 167; Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), 1:31, quoted in Smith, "A Crisis in Faith," 167.

[39] J. Clinton McCann, Jr, "The Book of Psalms," *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 4:968.

[40] Klingbeil, "Psalms," 710.

for Psalm 73 are already provided, Tate still offers his pattern comprising eight units (73:1, 2-3, 4-12, 13-16, 17, 18-20, 21-27, 28).[41]

Discussed scholars have proposed possible units of Psalm 73 but this research with the help of parallelism devices suggests the following possible structure. This psalm comprises four units that bring the psalm into its context. It is suggested that v. 1-v. 12 is the first unit with the topic of the prosperity of the wicked. There is no change in the speaker, there is no change in the setting time because the time-based is in the present and the mode of speaking is direct speech. They are explained by the imagery of neck chains, garments, hearts, and minds. The community is the addressee. The intensification of "behold" in v.12 is the ending mark to culminate in the prosperity of the wicked.

The second unit starts at v. 13- v. 17 where there is a change in topic, now the psalmist is talking about his testimony. He uses the first person to give his testimony. The Asyndeton "until" in verse v. 17 marks the end of this unit. The third unit starts at v. 18-v. 20. The start is marked by the change of topic, there is a change of the addressee. Here God is the addressee. The vocative mention of the divine name marks the end of the unit in v. 20.

There is evidence of the fourth unit starting from v. 21-28. The psalmist now is talking about himself after being taught in the sanctuary. He saw his ignorance before the LORD and is strengthened in trusting the LORD. This change in content marks the beginning of this unit. There is a shift in the addressee where the psalmist now is talking to the congregation explaining his lesson and his regained trust unto the

[41] Marvin Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, Word Biblical Commentary 20 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2015), 232-33.

LORD. The strong contrast between those who are far from the LORD and those who are near to the LORD marks the end of this unit.

Psalm 73 can suggest as having a chiastic structure because its message fits into a pattern of reflection that starts with a struggle and returns to a resolution, with the turning point in the middle. This chiastic pattern shows the movement from struggle and doubt to understanding and trust in God's ultimate justice and guidance. Another important reason for viewing Psalm 73 as a chiastic structure is that it helps emphasize the central message or turning point of the psalm, making it easier to understand its core meaning. In Psalm 73, the turning point (verses 15-17) occurs when the psalmist enters the sanctuary of God and gains divine insight into the fate of the wicked.

A. 1-3 The psalmist's initial struggle: Envy of the prosperity of the wicked.

B. 4-12 The ease/prosperity and arrogance of the wicked

C. 13-14 The psalmist's doubts

D. 15-17 Turning point: Entering God's sanctuary, gaining perspective.

C'. 18-20 Realization of the fate of the wicked: Their ultimate downfall.

B'. 21-22 The psalmist's personal transformation: Realizing his own foolishness.

A'. 23-28 Renewed trust in God: Confidence in God's justice and the joy of His presence.[42]

[42] Psalm 73 follows a chiastic structure that highlights the psalmist's transformation from doubt to faith, emphasizing the themes of wisdom and worship. Initially, he struggles with envy (vv. 1-3) as he observes the prosperity of the wicked (vv. 4-12). This leads to deep doubts (vv. 13-14), questioning whether righteousness has any reward. However, the turning point (vv. 15-17) occurs when he enters God's sanctuary, where he gains divine insight into the true fate of the wicked. This wisdom allows him to see that their success is fleeting, and God's justice will prevail (vv. 18-20). As a result, the psalmist undergoes a personal transformation, realizing his earlier foolishness (vv. 21-22). He then renews his trust in God, recognizing the joy of His presence and justice (vv. 23-28). This structure reinforces the psalm's central lesson: true wisdom comes from seeking God's perspective, and worship is the natural response to understanding His justice.

Semantic and Syntactical Analysis of Psalm 73

Semantic Analysis of the Key Words of Psalm 73

In this psalm, the following are chosen keywords to understand Psalm 73. Metaphors: pure heart לְבָבִי לְבָרֵי (*lebarey levav)* in verse 1, stumbled נָטוּי(natah*)* and slipped שֶׁפְכוּ(*shaphak) in* v. 2, being fat וּבָרִיא*(ubariya)* מֵחֶלֶב*(mekhelev)* verses 4 and 7, set their mouth against heaven שַׁתּוּ בַשָּׁמַיִם פִּיהֶם(*shathath bashamayim piyhem*), their tongue walketh through the earth וּלְשׁוֹנָם תִּהֲלַךְ בָּאָרֶץ(*uleshonam tihalak baerets)* in v. 9, cleansed my heart זִכִּיתִי לְבָבִי(*zikiytiy levaviy)* and washed my hands' וָאֶרְחַץ בְּנִקָּיוֹן כַּפָּי (*waerchats beniqayown kafay)* in verse 13, slippery places בַּחֲלָקוֹת(*bachelaqt)* in verse 18. Similes of a necklace/chain עֲנָקָתְמוֹ(*anaqatmow)* garment *(shiyth*) verse 6, moment (*keraga)* inverse 19, a dream as a beast (*behemoth)* in verse 22.

The word *lev,* לֵבָב *(levav)* is translated as heart. The word *levav* in Niphal means become intelegent and the Piel means fascinate. In the Old Testament, the word denotes mind, chest, and conscience. It has a metaphorical meaning of the center of human physical and spiritual life, to the entire inner life of a person.[43] The word in the Old Testament occurs 599 as *lev* and occurs 252 as *levav*. The *levav* with the meaning "become intelligent" and "fascinate" has only two occurrences in the Old Testament (Job 11:12. Niphal) and Songs 4:9 (piel). In ANE there is a metaphorical, literal, and religious usages of the word heart. We find in Akkadian *livvu, in* Ugar i*s lv,* in Aram is *lvv,* and in Syriac is *lvv.* In the LXX is *kardia* with 718 occurrences and *dianoia* with 51 occurrences.[44]

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[43] Willem A. VanGemeren, "לֵבָב," *NIDOTTE,* 2:749-751.

[44] VanGemeren, "לֵבָב," *NIDOTTE*, 2:748-749.

The heart in the Bible represents personality, intellect, desires, emotions, and memory. It reflects human character, showing qualities like humility or pride, and can be metaphorically described as uncircumcised, new, or stony to indicate disobedience or reverence for God. God judges based on the heart, which encompasses thinking, feeling, and will. The heart is also linked to emotions like joy, fear, and anger, as well as desires and the power to choose, as seen in the hard-heartedness of Pharaoh. The heart also reflects God's nature as our creator.[45]

Pure[46] בַּר is the word that its meaning means "clean."[47] Clean and unclean is a very important aspect of the Old Testament and important in the Hebrew religion. The LORD is worshiped only by people with a pure, clean heart. People had to be physically, ritually, and ceremonially, morally clean (Exod 19:10-14; 30:18-21; Lev 14-15; Ps 51:7)

Stumble נָטוּי(natah*)* is a misstep of the feet. The Old Testament Bible shows the imagery and use of the word in different ways. It is shown in the battlefield (Lev 26:37; Jer 46:6, 12, 16). In daily life, people were told not to make the blind stumble (Lev 19:14). In a spiritual way the priests have restricted to use of alcohol so that they do not stumble in decision-making (Isa 28:7; 59:10).[48] In Hebrew poetry life is a metaphor of a walk and to explain it uses the imagery of stumbling to show a backdrop (Prov 3:23; 4:12). The law illuminates the the walk of the wise and they do

[45] Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, *DBI*, s.v. "Heart."

[46] Douglas, J. D. and Merrill C. Tenney, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (2011), s.v. "Pure."

[47] Ibid., s.v. "Clean."

[48] Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, *DBI*, s.v. "Stumble."

not stumble but the wicked stumbles (Prov 4:19; Ps 119:165; Hos 14:9; Isa 26:7, Ezek 14:3,4,7). The LORD Himself protects the righteous from stumbling (Ps 56:13).[49]

The words וּבָרִיא (*ubariya*), מֵחֶלֶב (*mekhelev*) in verses 4 and 7 means fat, this appears in the Old Testament with different imagery ways to mean God's blessing or unpleasant prosperity. Fat is a way to speak about God's blessing (Gen 27:28, 45:1839; Job 36:16; Ps 36:8; 63:5; 65:11; 92:15; Isa 30:23; Jer 31:14;). Also, we need to understand that fat meant for the best part of a gift or sacrifice (Gen 4:4; Lev 3:16). Another way is when fat is used to mean to turn away from God (Neh 9:25, Deut 31:20; 32:15). Then the fat is used to show God's blessing in abundance or prospering of wickedness. [50]

The word mouth פֶּה *(peh)* is found in the metaphor in verse 9 which is about setting their mouth against heaven שַׁתּוּ בַשָּׁמַיִם פִּיהֶם (*shathath bashamayim piyhem*). The word mouth *(peh)* used as the imagery occurring 300 times. The concept of the "mouth" in biblical texts is symbolic, representing the inner person and revealing the heart. It is a metonym for speech (Exod 4:14-15) and is linked to both verbal sins like dishonesty and arrogance (Ps 5:9; 144:8; 17:10; 73:9) and to thought and knowledge (Josh 1:8; Deut 30:14). [51] The mouth reveals moral character (Isa 6:7), inner emotions (Ps 40:3; 63:5), and is often used synonymously with the heart in Hebrew poetry (Ps 19:14). It is associated with oaths and testimony in society (Deut 19:15; Eccl 5:2). A false mouth misrepresents the inner being (Jer 12:2; Isa 29:13), while the righteous

[49] Leland Ryken, Jim Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman, eds., *A Study of Wisdom Psalms in the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 822-23.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

speak to defend the oppressed (Prov 31:8-9). Ultimately, the mouth reveals the inner being, leading either to ruin or life (Prov 13:3; 18:7).[52]

The term לָשׁוֹן (*lashon*) implies tongue in imagery language. It is taken from the metaphor speaking of "their tongue walketh through the earth" לְשׁוֹנָם תִּהֲלַךְ בָּאָרֶץ (*uleshonam tihalak baerets)* in v. 9. It expresses a metonym language used by the tongue, the speaker, and the shape of an object, and conveys nonverbal messages. When tongue *(lashan)* used as a verb it gives a negative connection for it means to slander (Prov 30:10). Tongue as language is used to distinguish a group of people (Gen 11; Ps 114:1; Esth 1:22; Isa 2:11).[53] Tongue as utterance represents the person in a whole (Prov 17:2o; Ps 39:3) also a person's lifestyle and acts (Ps 52:2,4). The tongue is linked to the instrument for harm (Ps 57:4; 64:3; 140:3; Jer 9:8) but also a healing device (Prov 12:18; 15:4). That is the tongue can bring life or death (Prov 18:21). The tongue can praise God Ps 51:14; 126:2; Isa 45:23). Tongue as gesture is a sign of being rude toward God (Isa 57:4) and as a shape it can refer to Nile river (Isa 11:15).[54]

In the expression וְאָרְחַץ בְּנִקָּיוֹן כַּפָּי *(waerchats beniqayown kafay)* in verse 13, *Kaf is* a noun meaning hand, hollow hand. In ANE it is given as *kp* in ugar meaning hand, in Akkadian is *kappu* meaning hand, in Egypt *kp* meaning cut-off hands of enemies. It has 193 occurrences in the Old Testament with that meaning.[55] Hand gives the image expression of blessings, grace, power even curse. It refers to the part of the body known as a palm at the end of an arm (Deut 8:17; 9:26; Exod 3:19-20; 6:1). In

[52] Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, *DBI*, s.v. "Mouth."

[53] Ibid., s.v. "Tongue."

[54] Ibid.

[55] Manfred Dreytza, "כַּף," *NIDOTTE*, 2:686.

many occurrences hands in the Bible have been used figuratively and metaphorically. Hands denote the gbessence of a person communicating all our attitudes and our actions. They have powerful message than our words because deeds of the hands originate from the heart. When hands perform their works, they can bring blessing and healing, or wickedness and bloodshed.[56]

The hands convey the condition of the owner (Gen 4:11; 2 Sam 4:11; Ezek 23:37, 45; 1 Sam 14:10; 26:18). The dirty hands present past mistakes while clean hands present repentance and a new start. In the temple washing of hands was done so that when ministering a person might not die because of past sins (Exod 30:17-21). The washing of hands was a sign of innocence and a demonstration of a pure heart (Deut 21:6; Job 17:9; 22:30; Ps 24:4; 26:6).[57]

Syntactical Analysis of Psalm 73

The syntactical analysis of Psalm 73 highlights the intricate use of Hebrew grammar and literary devices to convey the psalmist's reflections on divine justice, the prosperity of the wicked, and the righteous path. Through various forms of parallelism, metaphors, and similes, the psalm explores deep spiritual themes, focusing on moral purity, the arrogance of the wicked, and the ultimate realization of God's judgment. The structure of the text enhances its meaning, providing a clearer understanding of how the psalmist perceives the tensions between human experience and divine righteousness. The syntactical analysis of Psalm 73 reveals the psalmist's deep engagement with themes of wisdom and worship, using Hebrew grammar and literary techniques to reflect on divine justice and human experience. Through

[56] Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, *DBI*, s.v. "Hand."

[57] Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, *A Study of Wisdom Psalms in the Old Testament*, 360–62.

parallelism, metaphors, and similes, the psalm explores the tension between the apparent prosperity of the wicked and the ultimate reward for those who are "pure in heart." This journey toward understanding God's justice emphasizes the connection between moral purity, wisdom, and sincere worship, illustrating how true reverence for God arises from an inward transformation rather than external actions.

Verse 1 has the metaphor phrase translated as "pure in heart" (*levav lebarey)* Absolute state.[58] The noun refers to the heart, symbolizing the moral and spiritual center of a person. The absolute state of the noun shows independence from the adjective, emphasizing that "purity of heart" stands as a distinct and complete quality that a worshiper needs to have. The synonymous parallelism in this verse reinforces that true worship must come from a place of moral and spiritual purity. God desires the worship of those who are inwardly pure, not just those who perform outward acts of worship. The first clause is "Truly God is good to Israel." This is a general statement. It asserts God's benevolence toward His people, Israel. This reflects a foundational belief in God's goodness, a theme central to worship practices acknowledging God's kindness and care toward His chosen people. The second clause is "To those who are pure in heart" This clause narrows the scope, specifying that God's goodness is particularly experienced by those who are "pure in heart." The concept of wisdom **i**s linked here, as purity of heart. In worship, purity of heart aligns with the proper attitude one must have to approach God, showing that true worship is not only ritualistic but also moral and spiritual.

In Psalm 73:2, the verb "stumbled" is represented by the Hebrew word *nataу* Qal stem is typically active, it indicates the subject performing an action. Here, the

[58] Old Joe, January 16, 2009, 8:47 AM, comment on SermonIndex.net, "Discussion Forum: Scriptures and Doctrine: In the Beginning Gods Created the Heavens and the Earth," accessed July 27, 2025, https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=26923&forum=36.

passive participle suggests an action experienced by the subject, emphasizing the state of being caused by external factors. There are two clauses where the first clause states that the speaker's feet almost slipped, and the second clause further explains this by saying the speaker's steps were almost cast down. The repetition and expansion create a vivid image of the speaker's nearfall, both physically and spiritually.

The word "being fat" in verse 4 it describes the physical state of the wicked as the subject of the sentence, indicating their prosperity, health, and abundance. The synthetic parallelism[59] of the two clauses together paint a picture of the prosperity and ease that the wicked seem to enjoy, without suffering until death. This parallelism emphasizes the contrast between the perceived prosperity of the wicked and the struggles of the righteous. The two clauses together portray the wicked as living a life of ease, without the pain or suffering that others experience.

Verse 9 has the metaphor which says "their tongue walketh through the earth" where the word walk as a verb in Qal, Imperfect describes the action performed by their tongue, indicating a sense of pride or arrogance. The earth acts as a locative phrase, indicating where the tongue struts, symbolizing the pervasive influence of the wicked's words on earth. The wicked's speech is not only directed arrogantly against the heavens but also boasts and spreads arrogantly across the earth. The parallelism emphasizes the dual arrogance of the wicked, who boastfully speak both against God (in heaven) and among humans (on earth). The first clause highlights their blasphemous pride, while the second illustrates the widespread, arrogant influence of their words, symbolizing their unchecked power both in divine and earthly contexts

[59] Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook*, Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2007), 38.

Verse 13 has two metaphors expressed in two clauses within a verse. The first clause is “cleansed my heart” where the adverb “verily” in this verse emphasizes the statement that follows, indicating a sense of realization or frustration. The noun “vain” acts as the predicate, emphasizing the futility of the action described in the verse. The verb “cleansed” in Piel. Perfect, describes the action performed by the speaker, indicating an intentional effort to maintain purity.[60] Where the word heart acts as the direct object of the verb indicating what has been kept pure. This verse has a synthetic parallelism[61] where the second clause builds upon and complements the first. The first clause speaks of the speaker's efforts to maintain inner purity ("heart"), while the second clause extends this to include outward actions ("hands"). Both clauses together express a lament over the perceived futility of striving for purity and innocence.

The phrase "slippery places" This verse has two clauses where the first is "Surely you set them in slippery places." This clause introduces the idea that God places the wicked in dangerous, unstable positions, where their footing is uncertain. The "slippery places" serve as a metaphor for their unjustified moral and spiritual condition. The second clause is "You cast them down to ruin." This clause completes the thought by describing the inevitable outcome. The wicked will fall due to the treacherous circumstances they are placed in, symbolizing their ultimate destruction. The verse exhibits synthetic parallelism, [62] where the second clause builds upon the first. The first clause introduces the unstable position of the wicked, while the second explains their eventual ruin. The two clauses collectively convey the message of

[60] Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 38.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

divine justice though the wicked may temporarily seem secure, their downfall is inevitable due to their moral instability and God's intervention.

Verse 6 employs two similes to describe how negative traits (pride and violence) envelop the wicked, similar to how physical objects like a necklace or garment surround or cover a person. Simile of a necklace/chain: The verb *anaqatmow,* Simile of a garment: The verb *yataf* is in the Qal imperfect describing the action of violence covering the wicked. The two clauses are connected through synthetic parallelism, where the second clause builds upon the imagery in the first. The wicked are not only characterized by pride (which surrounds them like a necklace) but are also covered by violence (like a garment), showing the extent of their moral corruption. The conjunction at the beginning of the verse indicates that these traits are a direct consequence of the earlier description of the wicked's behavior.

The word "moment" is analyzed as a preposition "as" followed by a common noun in the masculine singular absolute state.[63] The word "as" introduces a simile, comparing the suddenness of the wicked's destruction to the briefness of a "moment." This is a prepositional phrase emphasizing the swiftness and unexpected nature of their desolation. The verse has two clauses where the first is "How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! The second clause is "They are utterly consumed with terrors." The verse gives a synonymous parallelism[64] where the second clause restates and intensifies the idea of the first. The first clause focuses on the suddenness of their destruction ("as in a moment"), while the second highlights the totality of the

[63] J. Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*, 2nd ed (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 25, 29, 45.

[64] Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 38.

devastation and fear that consumes them. Together, the two clauses emphasize the immediacy and completeness of divine judgment on the wicked.

The word "beast" is a common noun, feminine plural in the absolute state. The speaker uses this word in a simile, comparing themselves to a beast to emphasize their irrational and unreasoning behavior. Synonymous parallelism is noticed in this verse where the first clause expresses the speaker's foolishness and ignorance, while the second deepens this self-awareness by comparing them to a beast**,** a vivid metaphor for irrational behavior. The verse underscores the speaker's sense of humility and acknowledgment of their human limitations in contrast to God's infinite wisdom. In Psalm 73:22**,** the speaker's acknowledgment of being like a beast in God's presence connects to wisdom by showing the beginning of understanding through humility, and to worship by highlighting the posture of dependence on God. This recognition of human fallibility enhances the authenticity of worship, as it is grounded in the realization that true understanding and guidance come from God alone.

The syntactical analysis of Psalm 73 reveals a profound theological narrative that contrasts the transient success of the wicked with the lasting spiritual fulfillment of the righteous. The careful use of Hebrew grammar, including parallelism and vivid imagery, emphasizes the psalmist's journey from confusion to clarity. By recognizing human limitations and the ultimate justice of God, the psalm highlights the importance of humility, moral integrity, and trust in God's wisdom, offering hope for those who strive to remain pure in heart. The syntactical analysis of Psalm 73 illustrates how the psalmist's movement from confusion to clarity is a journey toward wisdom and genuine worship. Through the use of parallelism and vivid metaphors, the psalm underscores that wisdom begins with the acknowledgment of human limitations and God's ultimate justice. This recognition leads to a deeper, more

authentic form of worship, rooted in humility and trust in God's divine plan. The psalmist's realization that true worship is grounded in moral and spiritual purity highlights the close relationship between wisdom and worship, where understanding God's ways enhances the authenticity of one's devotion.

Historical and Literary Structure of Psalm 90

Historical Context of Psalm 90

This psalm is attributed to Moses. It is believed that he wrote when they were wandering in the wilderness especially when they were at Pisgah (Deut 34). That makes it the oldest psalm in the book. Others accept the attribution to Moses but comment that it is not necessarily authored by Moses.[65] Lioy adds the following that contributes to Moses' authorship. There are semantic relations between Psalm 90 and Deuteronomy (Ps 90:15 and Deut 32:4, 7; Ps 90:16 and Deut 33:11). There are thematic similarities when you look at Psalm 90 and Pentateuch (Gen 1-3 and Ps 90:2-3, Deut 32:7; 33:27 and Ps 90:2, 4, 9-10). Moses interceded for his people. This role is also found in Psalm 90 (Exod 32:11-13; 34:9; Num 14:13-19; Deut 9:25-29; Ps 99:6; Jer 15:1). Moses prayed to God to change His mind in Ps 90:13 the same as he did in Exodus 32:12[66]

Concerning the date of authorship there is still a debate continuing. Kraus supposes that despite the psalm having ancient stylistic elements still it is a compilation work of scribes during the post-exilic period.[67] Kim cites many scholars to show their different opinions. Those who support post-exilic dates like Von Rad

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[65] Constable, *Notes on Psalms*, PDF file.

[66] Dan Lioy, "Teach Us to Number Our Days: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis of Psalm 90," *The Journal of the South African Theological Seminary* 5 (March 2008): 89-91, accessed 25 March 2024, https://www.academia.edu › Teac.

[67] Ibid.

and Vawter, when looking at the attribution of the title, comment that the use of the word "servant" is highly used in the post-exilic period.[68] Also, the life span mentioned in Psalm 90:10, 70 years, or 80 years does not relate to Moses who lived 120 years. But Ross highlights that when Moses was 70 or 80 years understood that death was inevitable to him and to the Israelites who sinned against God in the wilderness. For them, life could not start over again but the young generation could make it hence Moses prayed for them in this psalm.[69] Maybe Ross was referring to Deuteronomy 111:32-40. Dahood is said to support the early date due to Psalm 90 resembling Deuteronomy 32 and Genesis 2:4.[70]

Ross suggests that we have a choice to choose whether to rely on the early date during wandering in the wilderness or post-exilic. But he continues to suggest the view of Moses being the author is more reasonable for the setting of the time the whole generation was to die due to their sin invokes the need for the new generation to seek God's kindness, learn to live wisely, ask the blessing of God and submit their ways to God. The post-exilic period did not experience such a scenario where the whole generation was to be swept.[71] As the above information is concerned this research suggests the early date with the authorship of Moses to be preferred. Despite some skepticism, there is ample evidence supporting the traditional belief that Moses authored Psalm 90. References from various scholars such as Calvin, Deffinbaugh, Hengstenberg, and Spurgeon affirm this association. The Aramaic Targum, a translation of the Hebrew Bible, explicitly attributes the psalm to Moses, stating it

[68] Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*.

[69] Ibid.

[70] H. Kim, "A Study of Psalm 90," 61.

[71] Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, 26-27.

was his prayer during Israel's wilderness journey. This suggests that toward the end of the forty-year period, Moses contemplated human mortality in contrast to God's eternal nature. The Hebrew text of Psalm 90 also labels it as a "prayer of Moses," consistent with other psalms similarly attributed.[72]

Literary Structure of Psalm 90

Kowalczuk's work is useful for understanding the literary context of Psalm 90, as he highlights the scholarly debate on its structure. While many experts, like Schreiner and Auffret, once agreed on a concentric structure with verses 11-12 at the center, recent views have started to question this perspective.[73] Terrien suggests dividing Psalm 90 into three parts (verses 3-6, 7-9, 11-15) with an introduction (verses 1-2) and conclusion (verses 16-17). Weber divides it into three parts (verses 1-6, 7-12, 13-17), with the second part at the center. Tułodziecki proposes similar divisions but places verse 12 in the last part due to its imperative verbs.[74] Van Der Lugt agrees with Weber but argues that the psalm's structure is more linear than concentric. These different interpretations come from the various methods each author uses to analyze Psalm 90. So far, experts have not agreed on the structure concerning Psalm 90. [75]

This research suggests that Psalm 90 can be divided into two units. The first unit starts in v. 1-v. 10 where the psalmist is speaking about the impermanence of human life in contrast to God who is eternal, existing from before the creation. Even

[72] Lioy, “Teach Us to Number Our Days,” 92.

[73] Marek Kowalczuk, “How to Gain Wisdom of Heart: The Meaning of the Rhetorical Structure of Psalm 90,” *Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej* 19 (2020): 146-147, https://doi.org/10.15290/rtk.2020.19.09.

[74] Ibid., 146.

[75] Ibid., 146-47.

though human lives are brief and end quickly, this same eternal God has been our refuge and safe place throughout all generations. The second unit starts in v. 11-v. 17 where the psalmist is petitioning for the restoration. The psalm when it reaches v. 11 shows the shift which entails the start of the new unit. There is a shift in mood where the psalmist moves from giving statements to questioning and requesting. There is a change in the subject spoken when the psalmist starts to pray for restoration while earlier he was speaking about the impermanence of human life. There is a shift in tone where the psalmist comes from the grief of the impermanence of life to the hope of restoration of life. The repetition “establish thou the work of our hands” in v. 17 marks the end of the second unit. The direct speech and the imagery “let the beauty of the LORD” can be used as evidence of the end mark of the unit.

Psalm 90 has a progressive structure rather than a chiastic one. It can be broken down into sequential parts that build upon each other. This step-by-step structure shows the psalm moving from recognition of God's power to reflection on human weakness, and finally to a hopeful petition for God's mercy.

A1 v. 1 God’s constant presence

B1 v. 2 Before creation

A2 v. 3 human mortality and frailty.

B2 v.4 God’s perspective on time compared to ours.

C2 v. 5 Human life is transient

D2 v. 6 brief and fleeting nature of human life.

A3 v. 7 seriousness of sin and divine judgment

B3 v. 8 God’s omniscient nature

C3 v. 9 man ultimately end in death.

D3 v.10 man lifespan is limited

E3 v. 11 God deserves reverence

A4 v. 12 A plea for God to teach and give us wisdom to value life

B4 v. 13 A call for God’s mercy

C4 v. 14 The request for God’s love to satisfy His people

D4 v. 15 Asking God to give us joy

E4 v.16 asking God to reveal His deeds and glory

F4 v. 17 A concluding plea for God’s favor[76]

[76] Psalm 90 follows a progressive structure rather than a chiastic one, meaning its themes build upon each other in a step-by-step manner. It moves from recognizing God’s eternal nature (A1, B1) to human frailty and mortality (A2–D3), emphasizing the seriousness of sin and divine judgment (A3–D3). The second half (A4–F4) shifts toward hopeful petitions, asking for wisdom, mercy, love, joy, and divine favor**.** This structure highlights a theological journey: from acknowledging God’s power, to reflecting on human limitations, and finally to seeking God’s grace and presence.

Psalm 90 connects wisdom and worship by contrasting God’s eternal nature with human frailty and urging people to seek His mercy. The psalm teaches wisdom by emphasizing the brevity of life and the consequences of sin, leading to the plea, "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" **(**v. 12). This recognition of human limitations fosters worship, as the psalm shifts from reflection on mortality to prayers for God’s compassion, joy, and favor. Through this progression, Psalm 90 shows that true wisdom comes from understanding life’s fleeting nature and depending on God, while worship is the proper response to His everlasting presence and mercy.

Semantic and Syntactical Analysis of Psalm 90

Semantic Analysis of the Key Words of Psalm 90

This section examines the poetic language in Psalm 90, focusing on its use of metaphor, simile, and merism to convey profound truths about wisdom and worship. The metaphor אֲדֹנָי מָעוֹן אַתָּה הָיִיתָ "LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place" in verse 1 emphasizes God's eternal refuge for humanity, while the metaphor of מָאוֹר light in verse 8 reveals His all-encompassing awareness of human actions. Similes in verse 4, comparing a millennium to "yesterday" כְּיוֹם אֶתְמוֹל and "a watch," כִּי יַעֲבָר וְאַשְׁמוּרָה highlight the fleeting nature of time from a divine perspective. Verse 5 uses similes such as time being like a tale, a flood, sleep, and grass to further illustrate life's transience. The merism of morning and evening in verse 6 symbolizes the full span of human existence, emphasizing the cycle of life and the need for wisdom in how we live. These poetic elements work together to deepen our understanding of the Psalm's message and its call to worship a God who transcends time and offers eternal stability.

Dwelling place אָדוֹן(*maon*) has the meaning of a den, haunt, refuge, and dwelling. In the Old Testament, the noun *maon* refers to the den of wild animals, especially lions (Job 37:8; 38:40; Ps 104:22; Songs 4:8; Amos 3:4; Nah 2:12, 13). It also describes a haunt of jackals, symbolizing a remote, desolate, and fearful place, often where cities once stood but are now uninhabited (Jer 9:10; 10:22; 49:22; 51:37). Another meaning of *maon* relates to divine and human dwelling, signifying a place of refuge where people seek shelter from enemies (Deut 33:27; Ps 71:3; 91:9; Jer 21:13). God is often depicted as this refuge, protecting His people (Deut 33:27; Ps 71:3; 91:9).[77] This meaning is paralleled with rock (*sur*), and fortress (*mesuda*). It is God

[77] VanGemeren, "אָדוֹן (māʿôn), 'dwelling'" *NIDOTTE*, 2:1015.

who is referred to as a refuge and protects his people against their enemies and distress (Deut 33:27; Ps 71:3; 91:9).[78] It emphasizes remoteness from usual human habitation. The noun denotes the domicile of God usually referring to heaven (Deut 26:15; 2 Chr 30:27; Jer 25). It aims to stress the transcendence of God spiritually. The holy Yahweh who because of the sin of His people is far but becomes their refuge in times of trouble (Nah 1:7). The idea of God's remote dwelling from His people is His holiness and the connected signs of power (Jer 25:30).[79]

The metaphor of light (*maor*) in verse 8. The word *maor* as a verb in qal means be light, bright, shine; in niphal: be light, bright; hiphil: give light, shine, cause to shine, kindle, enlighten, show favor. As a noun *maor* refers to light, daylight, dawn, and lightning, fire, east also denotes light-bearer.[80] In the Ancient Near East (ANE), the Akkadian word *urru* means "day" or "light," and a similar Ugaritic word is linked to seasons and fertility. In Sumerian beliefs, the god of air, associated with light, has two sons: the moon god (wisdom) and the sun god (judge). In Babylon and Egypt, light is tied to the sun god.[81] In the Old Testament, light is both physical and metaphorical, created by God (Gen 1:15,17). God's light will eventually replace the sun and moon (Isa 60:19; Ezek 32:7).[82] Lightning symbolizes God's presence (Ps 97:4), like the pillar of fire in the desert (Exod 13:21; 14:20). God's shining face brings blessings (Ps 105:39; Num 6:24-26) and life (Prov 29:13; Ps 13:3-4),

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[78] VanGemeren, "oram`," *NIDOTTE,* 2:1015

[79] Ibid.

[80] VanGemeren, "oram`," *NIDOTTE,* 1:324.

[81] Sverre Aalen, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. Gerhard Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and John Thomas Willis, Rev. ed (Grand Rapids (Mich.): W. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 149.

[82] VanGemeren, "oram`," *NIDOTTE,* 1:326.

representing moral and spiritual understanding (Ps 19:8-9; 119:130). Light reveals God's divine nature (Ps 104:2; Dan 2:2), linked to covenant relationships, offering help and salvation to individuals (Ps 27:1; Mic 7:8) and the nation (Isa 10:17; 6:19-20). The Old Testament avoids linking light with sun worship, though Israel sometimes did (2 Kgs 23:11; Ezek 8:16). Only once is God compared to the sun of righteousness (Mal 4:2; Ps 84:11-12). Metaphorically, light represents living in a way that pleases God, seen in phrases like "see light" (Ps 36:9-10) and "walk in the light" (Ps 89:15-16).[83]

Syntactical Analysis of Psalm 90

The syntactical analysis of Psalm 90 reveals how the psalmist uses metaphors, similes, and parallelism to express the transient nature of human life compared to God’s eternal presence. Through these literary devices, the psalm communicates profound wisdom about time, sin, and mortality. It encourages readers to seek refuge in God's eternal nature, recognizing His role as both protector and judge. The language used in this psalm highlights the importance of understanding life’s brevity and turning to God for lasting security and guidance.

Verse 1 gives the metaphor "LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place" which portrays God as a constant source of refuge and safety for His people throughout all generations. The subject pronoun ("thou") emphasizes that God alone provides this protection, and the Qal perfect verb ("hast been") highlights that this care is a long-standing, completed action where God has always been their refuge, never failing them. The prepositional phrase "for us/our" personalizes this relationship, showing that God’s protection is not just theoretical but deeply intimate and sustaining. Psalm

[83] VanGemeren, “oram`,” *NIDOTTE,* 1:326-27.

90:1 does not exhibit parallelism in the traditional sense commonly found in Hebrew poetry. However, Psalm 90:1 is more of a declarative statement rather than a poetic parallel structure. It introduces the psalm with a title, "A prayer of Moses the man of God," and then makes a single, straightforward declaration: "Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. The metaphor gives us the wisdom about life's transience and the importance of seeking refuge in God's eternal nature. In worship, it encourages gratitude, trust, and dependence on God as the source of protection and stability. It calls for worship that flows from faith in God's enduring presence and care, knowing that He provides both earthly and spiritual refuge.

Verse 8 uses the metaphor of light to illustrate how God exposes human sins. The analysis of key words and phrases in the verse is as follows: the word *shatta* is a verb in the Qal perfect, indicating the main action of the sentence: "You have set." It refers to what God has done with the people's iniquities, emphasizing that God has actively placed their sins before Him. This metaphor of light emphasizes how nothing can be hidden from God. Even the secret, hidden sins are brought into the open and exposed by God's radiant presence. It conveys the idea of God's complete awareness and the transparency of human sin before Him. The verse demonstrates synthetic parallelism where the first clause "You have set our iniquities before You" introduces the main idea of God exposing human sins and the second clause "Our secret sins in the light of Your presence" elaborates on the first clause, specifying that even hidden sins are revealed and exposed by God's light. The synthetic parallelism in this verse deepens the message of God's comprehensive knowledge of human sin. The metaphor of light symbolizes God's power to expose all things, including hidden transgressions, making clear that humans are fully accountable before Him. This calls for wisdom in

living rightly and worship through acknowledging God's omniscience and seeking forgiveness.

Verse 4 uses two similes to highlight the brevity of time from God's perspective compared to human understanding. The word *ki* is a conjunction that introduces the reason or basis for the statement, connecting it to the previous verses. It means "For" and provides the rationale for God's eternal nature in contrast to human limitations. This verse 4 demonstrates synthetic parallelism where the first clause "For a thousand years in Your sight are as yesterday when it is past" introduces the first simile, comparing a thousand years to a single day, illustrating time's brevity. The second clause "And as a watch in the night" introduces a second simile, comparing a thousand years to an even shorter span, a watch in the night (a few hours), reinforcing the fleeting nature of time before God. Each clause builds upon the previous thought, with the second simile expanding the comparison further. This parallelism emphasizes the vast difference between human perception of time and God's eternal perspective, where even a thousand years is as brief as a single day or a night watch. It encourages reflection on the eternity of God and reminds us of the brevity of life, a key theme for gaining wisdom and fostering a sense of humility and worship before God's majesty.

Verse 5 has two clauses where the verse uses synthetic parallelism. The first clause describes the action of God sweeping people away, comparing them to sleep, emphasizing the brevity of life. The second clause builds upon this imagery with the simile of grass in the morning, further emphasizing the temporary and fleeting nature of life in contrast to God's eternal existence. The renewal of grass symbolizes a brief flourishing that soon passes. In its core, the verse invites a wise approach to life living with the understanding of its shortness and encourages worship by reminding us of our reliance on God's eternal power.

Verse 6 is a Merism where the verse uses synthetic parallelism, the second clause elaborates on the first. The first clause speaks of morning flourishing and growth, representing vitality and life's temporary flourishing. The second clause presents the evening decline, symbolizing life's fading or eventual end. The merism of morning and evening emphasizes the full cycle of life, its brief beauty and inevitable decline. Understanding the brevity of life, flourishing and declining in one day leads to wise living, prioritizing what truly matters before time passes. The verse emphasizes that life's vitality and decline are under God's control. This inspires worship, recognizing God as the giver and taker of life. The brief flourishing of life, followed by its decline, encourages gratitude for the gift of life and the opportunity to worship and serve God daily.

It can be noticed that Psalm 90's syntactical analysis offers wisdom on life's fleeting nature and the necessity of worshiping God with humility and trust. The metaphors and similes used in the psalm reinforce the human experience of time, sin, and mortality, while also pointing to God's eternal presence and omniscience. This deepens our understanding of worship as an expression of gratitude for God's protection and as a call to live wisely, acknowledging our dependence on His enduring care and judgment.

Historical and Literary Structure of Psalm 107

Historical Context of Psalm 107

This is identified as the psalm of return. It has been associated with communal thanksgiving where people thanked the LORD for the deliverance. Goulder comments it is speaking of the prophecy of Isaiah where Israel was punished because of her sins. But now the remnants have returned and they recall the goodness of the LORD who delivered them throughout the history. In the first return in Ezra 1-3 people thanked

the LORD, and the priests and the singers led people in the worship of thanksgiving. But Psalm 107 is termed as the event in the sixth century when the returning exiles thanked the LORD. Also, there is a reference from Jeremiah 32:37; 33:11 the return of God's people is mentioned.[84]

There are thematic and language correspondences between Psalm 107 and Deuteronomy-Isaiah also Job. Then due to this situation, there is a debate about the date of Psalm 107. Those who favor the early date say that Isaiah references influential imageries from the psalmist and those who favor the late date view the psalmist as quoting themes and language of Prophet Isaiah. The debate goes on to argue that maybe the language and imagery used were mutually shared because they had the same meaning in both cultures of their time to speak about the threat and deliverance.[85] This information gives this research to view this psalm to be of the late dates when people of God experienced deliverance and were happy to be brought back to their land. Similarity with Isaiah can be possible since he is a prominent prophet known and read by people.

Literary Structure of Psalm 107

Klingbeil divides Psalm 107 into four units (107:1-3, 4-32, 33-41, 42-43) where he gives the invitation to praise and thanksgiving, four experiences that motivate thanksgiving, Yahweh's transforming power, and wisdom exhortation.[86] But

[84] Michael D. Goulder, *The Psalms of the Return: Book V, Psalms 107-150* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 117-18.

[85] John Kartje, *Wisdom Epistemology in the Psalter: A Study of Psalms 1, 73, 90 and 107* (Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 148.

[86] Klingbeil, "Psalms," 731.

this research suggests that Psalm 107 can be divided into five units evidenced by the parallelism available in this psalm.

The first unit starts in v. 1-v. 8 where these verses act as the inclusion of the unit to mark its beginning and ending. The repetition of the goodness of the LORD is present in v. 1 and v.8 calling people to thank the LORD. This unit gives the emphasized theme in this unit to be thanking God's leadership unto His redeemed people. The second unit starts in v. 9-v. 15 still the repetition of the goodness of the LORD is repeated but with a different content of reason and theme of thanksgiving. Here the psalmist addresses the congregation to remember that they sinned against the LORD but he saved them when they called Him. So, v. 9 and 15 act as the inclusio to mark the beginning and ending of the second unit.

The third unit starts in v. 16-v. 21 where the psalmist reminds them about their murmuring for meat in the wilderness but the LORD forgave them against that sin. This is another call for Thanksgiving but with a different content of reason. The fourth unit starts in v. 22-v. 31 and these verses act as an inclusion of the unit to mark its beginning and ending. There is a shift here, now the psalmist is not giving the history of the work of God but speaks to the congregation to thank the LORD for his goodness in their daily activities. The LORD has shown them His goodness in their business and activities in the sea where He calmed the storm. The fifth unit starts at v. 32-v. 43 where they also act as the inclusion. The psalm closes at v. 43 with a call to be wise, to study carefully the acts of God.

Since the inclusion marks the boundary of the same unit we can observe the junctions to prove the five divisions of Psalm 107 for it is used to mark the ending and beginning of the adjacent units. The first unit and the second unit find their junction (anadiplosis) at v. 9 where there is repetition of the goodness of the LORD. The

second unit and the third unit find their junction at v. 16. The repetition is not easily found here but the work of the LORD that shows His goodness is shown in this verse which repeats the call to praise the LORD for his goodness and wonderful works as in v. 15. The separation of the third and the fourth unit is at v. 22 and the junction of the fourth unit and the fifth unit is at v. 32.

Psalm 107 can be suggested as having a staircase structure. Each cycle of distress and deliverance builds upon the previous one, gradually leading the reader to a fuller understanding of God's redemptive power. Viewing Psalm 107 as a staircase structure is important because it emphasizes the progression and cumulative impact of God’s deliverance across different scenarios, helping readers visualize how each step builds upon the previous one

A1 v. 1 Introduction/ A call to various groups give thanks to the LORD
B1 v. 2 the redeemed from trouble
C1. v. 3 the gathered ones
D1 v. 4 the wanderers
E1 v. 5 the hungry and thirsty
F1 v. 6 the distressed
G1 v. 7 those led to the city
H1 v. 8 a call to praise the LORD
I1 v. 9 reason to praise the LORD
A2 v. 10 the prisoners
B2 v. 11 reason for their imprisonment
C2 v. 12 they got into hard labor with no help
D2 v. 13 they called the LORD
E2 v. 14 the LORD helped them
F2 v. 15 a call to thank the LOR
G2 v. 16 reason to praise the LORD
A3 v. 17 they afflicted due to foolishness
B3 v. 18 disliking food and approaching death
C3 v. 19 they called the LORD
D3 v. 20 the LORD delivered them
E3 v. 21 a call to praise the LORD
F3 v. 22 reason to praise the LORD
A4 v. 23 The sailors
B4 v. 24 they saw the deeds of the LORD
C4 v. 25 facing a powerful storm at sea
D4 v. 26 their courage melted away
E4 v. 27 they were shocked

F4 v. 28 the cried to the LORD
G4 v. 29 God calms the storm
H4 v. 30 brought them to safety and were happy
I4 v. 31 a call to thank LORD
J4 v. 32 a call to praise the LORD
A5 v. 33 God's power to transform the environment
B5 v. 34 turns fruitful land into waste the
C5 v. 35 turns desert into pools of water
D5 v. 36 the hungry are fed and dwell
E5 v. 37 they do farming
F5 v. 38 they prosper
G5 v. 39 The reversal of prosperities
H5 v. 40 judgement
I5 v. 41 oppressed people are raised
J5 v. 42 the wicked are silenced.
K5 v.43 A concluding call for wise people to observe[87]

McCullough notices that commentators disagree on the unity of Psalm 107 and concludes that "the arguments on either side are not conclusive, and the question must be left an open one."[88]

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[87] Psalm 107 follows a staircase structure, where each section builds upon the previous one, emphasizing the progression of God's deliverance**.** The psalm begins with a call to thanksgiving **(**A1), followed by four major cycles where different groups: wanderers, prisoners, the afflicted, and sailors experience trouble, call upon the Lord, and receive His help (A2–J4). The final section (A5–K5) shifts to God's power over creation and human affairs, showing how He transforms circumstances, blesses the faithful, judges the wicked, and calls for wisdom. This structure highlights God's ongoing mercy and sovereignty, urging readers to recognize His works and respond with praise.

The staircase structure of Psalm 107 highlights the connection between wisdom and worship by showing how God's deliverance teaches trust and gratitude. Each group in the psalm gains wisdom through experience, as they suffer, cry out to God, and witness His salvation. The repeated cycles emphasize that true wisdom comes from recognizing and learning from God's intervention (v. 43). At the same time, the psalm repeatedly calls for worship and thanksgiving, showing that praising God is the natural response to His mercy and power. By recounting these acts of salvation, Psalm 107 encourages the community to remember, reflect, and celebrate God's faithfulness, reinforcing that understanding God's ways leads to worship, and worship deepens wisdom.

[88] W. Stewart McCullough, "Psalm 107: Exegesis," *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1955), 4:571.

Semantic and Syntactical Analysis of Psalm 107

Semantic Analysis of the Key Words of Psalm 107

This section explores the rich poetic language found in Psalm 107, focusing on its metaphors, similes, imagery, hyperbole, anthropomorphism, hendiadys, and synecdoche. The metaphor of thirst נֶפֶשׁ שֹׁקֵקָה and hunger וְנֶפֶשׁ רְעֵבָה in verse 9 symbolizes deep spiritual longing, while verse 10's imagery of people sitting in utter darkness יֹשְׁבֵי חֹשֶׁךְ וְצַלְמָוֶת and suffering in chains אֲסִירֵי עֳנִי וּבַרְזֶל portrays the depths of despair. Verse 20 uses the metaphor of "His word" שָׁלַח דְּבָרוֹ וַיִּרְפָּאֵם to emphasize the healing and life-giving power of God's command. Similes in verse 2 אֲשֶׁר גְּאָלָם מִיַּד־צָר compare the redeemed to those rescued from enemies, verse 27 likens the disorientation of people in a storm to that of a drunken man כַּשִּׁכּוֹר, and verse 32 compares praise to exaltation in the assembly. The imagery of individuals lost and wandering in a barren wilderness in verse 4 תָּעוּ בַמִּדְבָּר בִּישִׁימוֹן illustrates spiritual aimlessness. Hyperbole in verse 33, where rivers are turned into a wilderness יָשֵׂם נְהָרוֹת לְמִדְבָּר highlights God's sovereign power over creation. Anthropomorphism is used in verse 29 וַיַּחֲשֹׁו גַּלֵּיהֶם , where the sea's waves are described as being "hushed" by divine action, depicting God's control over nature. Additionally, the hendiadys in verse 8 combines חַסְדּוֹ "lovingkindness" and וְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו "wonders" to emphasize God's abundant mercy. The synecdoche in verse 22 וְיִזְבְּחוּ זִבְחֵי תוֹדָה "sacrifices of thanksgiving" represent all forms of gratitude and worship, underscores the comprehensive nature of worship. Together, these literary devices deepen our understanding of the Psalm's wisdom and its call to worship.

The metaphor of thirst נֶפֶשׁ שֹׁקֵקָה and hunger וְנֶפֶשׁ רְעֵבָה in verse. 9, People in ancient times, like those mentioned in the Bible, knew how hard it was to live in dry areas without water systems like we have today. In the Bible stories, being thirsty was

scary because it could mean death, unlike nowadays when it is just a temporary inconvenience. For example, in one story, the Israelites complained to Moses, asking why he took them away from Egypt only to let them die of thirst, along with their children and animals (Exod 17:3).[89] Thirst is often used to represent a strong desire for God or spiritual fulfillment. This kind of longing for God is seen as necessary for spiritual growth because people need to genuinely want God before they can truly receive Him. The Psalms beautifully express this soul thirst, comparing it to a deer searching desperately for water, symbolizing the soul's longing for God's presence and nourishment in a spiritually dry world (Ps 42:1-2, 63:1, 143:6-7).[90]

God wants people to turn to Him to fill their emotional and spiritual emptiness. In Isaiah 55:1-3, He invites those who are thirsty to come to Him and receive His grace freely. He urges people to listen to Him so that their souls may truly live. God doesn't condemn their thirst, but often people try to satisfy it with inadequate things. Jeremiah illustrates this by showing how Israel rejected God, who is like fresh spring water, in favor of idols, which are like broken cisterns that can't hold water (Jer 2:13).[91]

In the Old Testament, writers understand that God is the ultimate provider of what we need, including quenching our thirst. Usually, He does this through natural means like rain, springs, and the cycle of growth and harvest (Ps 104:10-15). Sometimes, though, He performs miracles, like bringing water from a rock in the desert (Exod 17:4-7). These miracles show that God alone is the source of all life's necessities. The Old Testament also warns that if people break their covenant with

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[89] Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, *DBI*, s.v. "שָׁקַק."

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

God, He can withhold these resources, leading to drought and thirst (Deut 28:47-48; Isa 5:12-13; Hos 2:2-3). Interestingly, physical thirst often leads people to turn to God in their distress, and when they do, He meets their needs (Judg 15:18; Ps 107:5-9; Jer 14:1-7).[92]

In ancient Near Eastern societies, hunger and famine were deeply ingrained fears due to their reliance on rainfall for successful harvests, especially in regions like Palestine. These fears are vividly portrayed in various biblical narratives involving figures like Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, the Israelites in Egypt and Sinai, David, Elijah, Elisha, and others (Gen 12:10, 26:1, 41:27, 54; 2 Sam 21:1, 1 Kgs 18:2; 2 Kgs 4:38; 8:1). The unpredictability of rainfall made hunger a constant threat, leading some to turn to Canaanite fertility gods in hopes of exerting control over agricultural outcomes, as seen in passages like 1 Kings 18:23-39.[93]

The pursuit of food is a significant theme in Israel's history, notably exemplified by their experience of hunger in the wilderness (Exod 16:3). This hunger serves as a powerful motif in Hebrew poetry (Ps 107:5, 9, 36; Neh 9:15), symbolizing various aspects of their journey and relationship with God. Furthermore, hunger is used metaphorically to represent the consequences of disobedience to God (1 Kgs 17:1; 18:17-18; Hag 1:6, 9-11; 2:16-17).[94] However, Deuteronomy emphasizes that physical sustenance alone is insufficient for the well-being of the Israelites, stressing the importance of spiritual nourishment: "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" (Deut 8:3).[95] Deuteronomy warns

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[92] Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, *DBI*, s.v. "שׁקקה."

[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid., s.v. "לעבה."

[95] Ibid., s.v. "לעבה."

Israel that if they disobey, they'll suffer from hunger (Deut 28:48; 32:24). Jeremiah and Amos express similar warnings in poetic ways, with Amos even talking about a famine of God's word (Amos 8:11-12). But there's hope too Amos predicts a time of great blessings (Amos 9:13). Isaiah extends this idea, linking physical suffering to spiritual salvation (Isa 41:17-20; 44:3).[96]

This section highlighted the profound syntactical and theological dimensions of Wisdom Psalms, revealing their timeless relevance. The exploration of metaphors, similes, and key words has shown how these Psalms encapsulate the tension between righteousness and wickedness, the fleeting nature of life, and the enduring presence of God as a refuge. These insights enrich both scholarly interpretations and everyday spiritual reflection, illustrating the ongoing significance of the Wisdom Psalms in modern worship and faith.

Syntactical Analysis of Psalm 107

To introduce this section on the syntactical analysis of Psalm 107, we can focus on the structure and linguistic elements that highlight the psalm's deep meaning. Each verse uses a blend of metaphors, similes, and parallelism to express themes of human suffering, redemption, and God's provision. By breaking down the verses into their syntactical components, we can see how the psalm invites reflection on God's role as both sustainer and deliverer, drawing connections between wisdom, worship, and reliance on Him.

Verse 9 gives a metaphor which is explained in two clauses where the first cause is "For He satisfies the longing soul" the word *ki* is a conjunction that introduces the reason for what follows, meaning "for" or "because." It explains why

[96] Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, *DBI*, s.v. "כִּי־הִשְׂבִּיעַ;" s.v. "וְנֶפֶשׁ."

God is being praised in the broader context of the psalm. The word *hissbi'a* verb in Hiphil meaning "He satisfies" is the main action of the clause, performed by God, who is the subject. The second clause is "And the hungry soul He fills with goodness" the word *venefesh* is a noun in feminine singular absolute, meaning "and the soul," introducing the second subject. The conjunction ו (*ve*) connects this clause to the previous one, continuing the description of God's actions. This verse uses synonymous parallelism, where two related ideas are expressed in a balanced structure. The first clause speaks of satisfying the thirsty soul, while the second speaks of filling the hungry soul with goodness. Both clauses highlight God's provision for human needs, with a focus on satisfying both physical and spiritual longings. This verse draws attention to God's role as the sustainer of life, fostering wisdom by teaching reliance on Him, and encouraging worship through gratitude for His provision.

The metaphor in verse 10 is understood when we analyzed its two clauses. The first clause is "Some sat in darkness, in utter darkness". The word *yoshevei* is a verb in Qal participle, masculine plural construct, meaning "those who sit" or "dwell." It indicates the ongoing action of the subjects, describing their state of being. The second clause of verse 10 is "Prisoners suffering in iron chains," here the word *asirrei* is a noun, masculine plural construct, meaning "prisoners." This word introduces the next description of the subjects, emphasizing their captivity and bondage. This verse uses synthetic parallelism where the second line builds upon the imagery introduced in the first. The progression of thought deepens the understanding of the subjects' troubles, moving from a general state of darkness to a specific description of their affliction and captivity. This verse presents a vivid metaphor of human suffering and

bondage, leading to deeper wisdom in recognizing the need for God's deliverance and encouraging worship through gratitude and reverence for His power to save.

The two clauses in verse 20 highlights the metaphor of a sent word. The first clause "He sent His word and healed them" the word *yishlach* verb, Qal imperfect, 3rd person masculine singular, meaning "He will send" or "He sent." This is the main action performed by the subject (God). The second clause is "And delivered them from their destructions" the word *v'yimallet* is a conjunction and verb, Piel imperfect, 3rd person masculine singular, meaning "and delivered." This is the main verb of the second clause, indicating another action performed by the subject (God). The conjunction וְ (and) links this to the previous action. This verse exhibits synthetic parallelism where the first clause introduces the initial action of God sending His word and healing the people. The second clause builds upon the first by describing a further action of deliverance, specifying that God saved them from their destructions. The second clause expands the understanding of God's intervention, emphasizing the completeness of His care, healing and rescuing. This verse connects the themes of wisdom and worship by illustrating the power of God's word in healing and deliverance, which leads to a deeper understanding of His nature and inspires worship.

In Psalm 107:2 we find simile of the redeemed explained two clauses. In this verse, we observe synthetic parallelism where the relative clause functions to add depth to the main clause by specifying the act of redemption and describing the circumstances of deliverance. The main clause is "Let the redeemed of the LORD say so" (the command or wish) and the relative clause is "whom He has redeemed from the hand of the foe" (provides further explanation of who the redeemed are). Here, the Psalm 107:2 uses both a direct imperative and descriptive relative clause to invite the

redeemed to speak out, praising God's deliverance. The parallelism serves to emphasize the reason for their worship. This verse invites an act of public worship tying together their redemption and their response in wisdom and public acknowledgment of God's acts.

Psalm 107:27 portrays people in a state of severe distress, likened to a drunken person who is disoriented and unable to maintain balance. The verse features synthetic parallelism, where the second clause builds upon the first by adding further explanation or consequences. The first clause "They reel and stagger like a drunken man" (describes their physical disorientation) and the second clause "And all their wisdom is swallowed up" (builds on the first by describing the mental and emotional consequences). The two clauses together highlight both the physical and intellectual collapse of the subjects in their distress. Their staggering, a physical manifestation of their turmoil, leads to the complete loss of wisdom, emphasizing the totality of their helplessness. Their wisdom, once a source of strength, is overwhelmed and disappears in the face of the storm. The parallelism highlights the total collapse of both body and mind, and the verse calls readers to reflect on their reliance on God, particularly in times of hardship, reinforcing the themes of wisdom and worship.

Verse 32 is a smile that compare the praise to exaltation in the assembly. This verse displays a synthetic parallelism, where the second clause builds on the first. The first clause "Let them exalt Him in the congregation of the people" calls for exaltation in a general communal setting, referring to the people of God gathered together. The second clause "And in the assembly of the elders, let them praise Him" expands on the first by specifying another context for praise, the assembly of the elders, indicating the inclusion of respected leaders in worship. The parallelism highlights both the wider community (the people) and the leadership (the elders) as important

participants in the act of worship. Psalm 107:32 emphasizes the communal nature of worship through synthetic parallelism, calling for both the people and the elders to exalt and praise God. The verse highlights that wisdom, represented by the elders, plays a crucial role in leading worship. The collective exaltation of God, whether by the general congregation or by the wise elders, is an expression of deep reverence and acknowledgment of God's greatness.

Psalm 107:4 is about the image of individuals lost and wandering in a barren wilderness. The verse demonstrates synthetic parallelism where **t**he first clause sets the scene by describing the people's wandering in a desolate, barren land, while the second clause builds on that by explaining their inability to find a city of habitation. Psalm 107:4 vividly portrays the plight of individuals wandering aimlessly in a barren wilderness. Through synthetic parallelism, the verse contrasts their desolate journey with their failed search for a city of habitation. This verse illustrates the theme of helplessness and the need for divine intervention, connecting to both wisdom (guidance) and worship (dependence on God).

Psalm 107:33 contains two main clauses that work together to describe two related actions. In the first clause the verb (*yasem*) "He turns" is in qal, perfect, 3rd person singular, describing an action performed by the subject (God). It indicates a completed action that God turns or transforms something. This verse exhibits synthetic parallelism, where the second clause extends or develops the idea presented in the first clause. The first clause is "He turned rivers into a wilderness" describes a transformation from a fertile, life-sustaining environment (rivers) into a desolate wilderness. In the second clause the word (*u'motza'ei*) "And springs" consists of a conjunction and noun where the conjunction ו (*u*, "and") introduces the second clause. This elaborates on the desolation by adding that even the water springs are turned into

dry, unproductive ground. The progression from rivers to springs deepens the sense of desolation. Both clauses emphasize God's power to change the natural world, transforming places of abundance into places of barrenness, showing His control over nature and the consequences of His judgment. Psalm 107:33 uses vivid hyperbole to convey God's ability to transform lush, life-giving landscapes into barren wildernesses, reinforcing His sovereign control over creation. Through synthetic parallelism**,** the verse connects the desolation of rivers and springs, symbolizing a deeper message of divine judgment and the need for humility in the face of God's power. Wisdom involves recognizing this sovereignty, and worship is the appropriate response to God's ability to both sustain and withdraw the blessings of nature.

Psalm 107:29 consists of two main clauses the first clause is "He calms the storm to calmness" This clause describes God's direct intervention in the chaos of the storm, calming it completely. The use of hiphil suggests that God is actively controlling the elements, showing His power over nature. This verse demonstrates synthetic parallelism, where the second clause develops and expands on the first. The first clause describes God's direct action of calming the storm, using the powerful verb *yakem*, which emphasizes the causative force of God's will over nature. The second clause describes the consequence of this action where the waves are stilled. The clause continues the thought of the first, completing the picture of calmness and tranquility after God's intervention. This parallelism highlights the transition from chaos to peace through divine action. The stormy sea is a metaphor for danger and turmoil, and the stilling of the waves represents deliverance and peace. Psalm 107:29 uses the literary device of anthropomorphism to describe the waves of the sea as if they have been **s**tilled or quieted by divine action. Through synthetic parallelism, the verse shows God's power to transform the chaotic sea into calm waters, a metaphor

for His ability to bring peace to life's storms. This verse reflects both wisdom (God's control over nature) and worship (praising God for His mighty deeds), encouraging reverence for God's authority over all creation.

Psalm 107:8 contains two main clauses where first clause is "Let them give thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness." This clause expresses a command or exhortation for the people to give thanks to God, focusing on His covenantal love. The word (*yodu*) "Let them give thanks" is a verb analysed as hiphil, imperfect, 3rd person masculine plural, jussive. The hiphil stem indicates a causative action, while the jussive mood expresses a wish or command. The second clause is "And for His wonderful deeds to the children of men" where the clause adds another reason for praise, emphasizing God's miraculous works or wonders that benefit humanity. Psalm 107:8 uses synonymous parallelism to exhort the people to give thanks to God, focusing on two reasons: His lovingkindness (a steadfast, covenantal love) and His wonderful deeds performed for humanity. The verse reflects wisdom by calling for the recognition of God's grace and worship through thanksgiving. The hendiadys (the use of two terms to express one idea) in *chesed* and *niflao*t enriches the imagery of God's loving and miraculous nature, reinforcing the idea that He is both loving and actively involved in human affairs. The parallelism strengthens the message of thanksgiving by presenting complementary reasons for worship: God's steadfast love and His miraculous deeds.

Psalm 107:22 is a synecdoche contains two main clauses where the first clause is "Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving". This clause is a command or exhortation, encouraging the people to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving to God as an act of worship. The jussive form expresses a wish or command, making it the main verb of the first clause. It exhorts the people to offer sacrifices. Together, the two

clauses present a comprehensive picture of worship which involves both sacrifice and proclamation (verbally acknowledging God’s deeds), performed with joy. Psalm 107:22 uses synthetic parallelism to highlight two aspects of worship which are offering sacrifices of thanksgiving and proclaiming God's works with rejoicing. The **s**ynecdoche of thanksgiving sacrifices represents all forms of gratitude, while the proclamation of God's deeds emphasizes joyful praise. The verse connects wisdom and worship by showing that those who experience God's goodness should respond wisely with both tangible expressions of thanks and joyful declarations of His works, encompassing a full range of worship practices

The syntactical analysis of Psalm 107 reveals how its language enhances its theological message. Through the use of metaphors and parallelism, the psalm highlights the depth of human need and God's response, from satisfying the longing soul to delivering people from destruction. This analysis shows that the psalm not only celebrates God's acts of deliverance but also teaches worshippers to seek wisdom in acknowledging His power and care. Psalm 107 emphasizes the central themes of divine intervention, gratitude, and communal worship. Through the use of parallelism and vivid imagery, the psalm calls upon both the general congregation and respected elders to acknowledge God's sovereignty, whether in times of peril, deliverance, or blessing. Each verse reflects the importance of recognizing God's authority over nature and life, encouraging worshipers to respond with both sacrifices of thanksgiving and joyful proclamation of His deeds. Wisdom and worship are intertwined in this psalm, showing that understanding God's power leads to reverence and heartfelt praise. The call to exalt and thank God resonates as a powerful reminder of His steadfast love and miraculous works.

Summary

This chapter uncovers how the Psalms serve as a rich needle point of Israel's spiritual and historical life, composed by multiple authors over time. The analysis reveals that literary techniques like parallelism enhance the psalms' thematic depth, particularly in their reflection on wisdom, justice, and the human condition. The chapter also highlights ongoing scholarly debates on authorship and dating, ultimately suggesting that the Wisdom Psalms, regardless of their historical setting, continue to provide valuable insights into faith, divine intervention, and the moral life. This chapter contributes to the understanding of wisdom and worship by revealing how the Wisdom Psalms blend practical insights for righteous living with deep expressions of devotion to God. Through the exploration of Wisdom Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107, it demonstrates how wisdom is central to guiding the believer's life, focusing on the contrast between the righteous and the wicked, the fleeting nature of life, and the importance of obedience to God's law. These psalms not only teach moral lessons but also function as acts of worship, directing the community to reflect on God's justice, mercy, and eternal nature. The use of literary devices, such as parallelism and structure, also enhances their role in worship, helping believers engage more deeply with these themes during personal and communal worship practices. Thus, the chapter shows that wisdom and worship in the Psalms are intertwined, encouraging a life of thoughtful reflection, trust in God, and reverent praise.

The context and literary structure of these psalms demonstrate how wisdom shapes worship theology and practice. Psalm 1 establishes wisdom as the foundation of worship, Psalm 73 portrays worship as a place of spiritual reorientation, Psalm 90 highlights human dependence on divine wisdom, and Psalm 107 connects wisdom

with thanksgiving. Together, they provide an exegetical and theological framework for understanding the impact of wisdom Psalms on worship.

Psalm 1 establishes a wisdom framework for worship by contrasting the righteous and the wicked, emphasizing meditation on God's law as the key to a blessed life. Its parallelism and imagery (tree vs. chaff) highlight worship as a transformative discipline rooted in wisdom. Similarly, Psalm 73, a wisdom psalm of Asaph, explores the struggle of faith when the wicked prosper, presenting worship as the turning point for spiritual clarity. The psalmist moves from doubt to trust in God, resolved within the sanctuary, illustrating worship as a means of understanding divine justice. Its chiastic structure transitions from personal crisis (vv. 1-14) to a pivotal moment in worship (v. 17) and ends with renewed confidence in God's justice (vv. 18-28), emphasizing worship's role in reorienting the believer's perspective. Psalm 90, attributed to Moses, contrasts human mortality with God's eternal nature, calling worshippers to seek divine wisdom, acknowledge life's brevity, and depend on God's mercy. Its reflective structure moves from God's timelessness (vv. 1-4) to human frailty (vv. 5-11), concluding with a plea for wisdom and divine favor (vv. 12-17), framing worship as an act of humility and dependence. Psalm 107, a communal thanksgiving psalm, recounts God's redemptive acts, linking wisdom with worship through gratitude and reflection. Its cyclical structure distress, divine intervention, and thanksgiving (vv. 4-32) culminates in a wisdom reflection (vv. 33-43), reinforcing worship as a response to God's faithful acts and an acknowledgment of His wisdom. Together, these psalms illustrate how wisdom shapes worship, guiding believers in devotion, trust, humility, and gratitude.

CHAPTER 4

THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF WISDOM PSALMS 1, 73, 90, AND 107

This chapter gives the theological analysis of Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107, offering a comprehensive examination of their key themes within these Psalms, providing interpretations that highlight their significance for contemporary worship and spirituality. Through connecting ancient wisdom with modern faith practices, this analysis demonstrates the enduring relevance of these Psalms in shaping the spiritual lives of believers today. It demonstrates how these poetic works continue to guide believers, shaping their spiritual journey and understanding of God's nature and the human condition.

Theological Analysis of Psalm 1

In introducing the theology of Psalm 1 it can be observed that, Psalm 1 serves as a foundational theological reflection on the significance of living a life centered on God’s Word. It highlights the Torah as the ultimate source of wisdom, guiding the righteous toward prosperity, communion with God, and spiritual wholeness. The psalm contrasts the paths of the righteous and the wicked, presenting a clear choice between a life of wisdom and worship grounded in adherence to God’s law, and a life that disregards divine guidance, leading to destruction. Through its imagery and structure, Psalm 1 introduces the core principles of biblical wisdom and worship

Psalm 1 emphasizes the importance of studying and delighting in the Torah as the source of wisdom and prosperity for the righteous. This wisdom connects the

individual to Yahweh, who is likened to a tree flourishing by streams of water, symbolizing wholeness, joy, and communion with God. The Torah is not only a guide for life but also represents God's wisdom. The psalm contrasts the paths of the righteous and the wicked, with the righteous being led to a purposeful destination by the Torah, while the wicked's path leads to destruction. It portrays life as a spiritual journey, where success depends on adherence to the Torah, and God judges the paths we choose. Torah as a source of wisdom is no longer seen merely as a prerequisite for success, but as the cause of prosperity for the righteous. So, Psalm 1 presents two life styles with their destination where God considers the lifestyle of righteous but exterminates the way of the wicked. Psalm 1 is illustrating the foundation of wisdom and worship through the contrast of two distinct lifestyles, the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked. The Psalm portrays wisdom as choosing the righteous path, rooted in meditating on God's law, which leads to a blessed and fruitful life. In worship, this wisdom is expressed through a life aligned with God's will, avoiding the influence of the wicked, whose path ultimately leads to destruction. Thus, Psalm 1 teaches that true worship involves living wisely according to God's word, leading to divine favor, while the rejection of this wisdom results in separation from God.

In theological terms, it can be decided that Psalm 1 encapsulates the essence of a wise and worshipful life by illustrating two distinct ways of living. The righteous, who meditate on the Torah, are like flourishing trees rooted in God’s wisdom, while the wicked, disconnected from God’s law, face inevitable ruin. The psalm underscores that true worship is not only expressed in religious rituals but through a life that aligns with God's will, rooted in His wisdom. It teaches that divine favor comes through embracing the path of righteousness, while separation from God is the consequence of rejecting His guidance.

Interpretation of Psalm 1

Psalm 1 enriches its message of wisdom and worship, particularly by contrasting the righteous and the wicked. Metaphors, similes, metonyms, and anthropomorphism have been used to communicate spiritual truths about wisdom and worship. Psalm 1 can be interpreted through its rich use of metaphors, similes, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms where vividly contrasts the righteous and the wicked, emphasizing the importance of living a life rooted in God's wisdom. The metaphor of "the way" symbolizes the moral journey of individuals, while the similes of the righteous as a flourishing tree and the wicked as worthless chaff highlight the stark differences between the two paths. The psalm calls for continuous meditation on God's word, illustrating that true wisdom and worship are not momentary acts but lifelong commitments. Through poetic imagery, Psalm 1 reinforces that righteous living leads to God's protection and blessing, while the ungodly are destined for destruction, affirming that the pursuit of wisdom and a life aligned with God's will is the foundation of true worship.

Psalm 1 highlights the contrast between the righteous and the wicked, emphasizing that true wisdom comes from delighting in God's law. This theme aligns with Jesus' teaching in Matthew 7:13-14, where He speaks of two paths one leading to life and the other to destruction. Worship in this psalm is expressed through obedience and meditation on God's Word, similar to Jesus' teaching in John 15:7-8, where abiding in His Word leads to spiritual fruitfulness.

Theological Analysis of Psalm 73

Psalm 73 digs into the psalmist's personal crisis of faith, as he struggles to reconcile the prosperity of the wicked with the suffering of the righteous. Observing the success of the sinful, the psalmist grapples with doubts about God's justice, nearly

losing faith. However, his turning point comes when he enters God's sanctuary, gaining a deeper understanding of divine wisdom. This psalm explores the tension between human reasoning and spiritual insight, emphasizing the importance of seeking God’s presence to grasp the full truth of life’s complexities.

The psalmist grapples with a crisis of faith upon witnessing the prosperity of the wicked while the righteous suffer. Although the wicked live sinful lives without apparent consequence, the faithful endure burdens despite their purity. The psalmist nearly voiced his doubts publicly but remained silent to protect the faith of his community. Upon seeking insight in God's sanctuary, he realized that appearances are deceptive, and the wicked are ultimately on unstable ground, destined for a disastrous fate. The psalmist concludes that God's blessings are more valuable than any earthly possessions, affirming that having God is having everything. This realization underscores the importance of understanding and teaching God's ways accurately to avoid leading others astray. The psalmist's struggle and eventual certainty highlight that God is good to those who are faithful and loyal, even if their journey to this understanding is fraught with doubt.[1]

In Psalm 73, the author wrestles with a crisis of faith as he observes the apparent prosperity of the wicked contrasted with the struggles of the righteous. This challenges the belief in God's fairness and goodness towards the upright. The conflict is resolved when the author gains insight in God's sanctuary, understanding that the apparent success of the wicked is temporary and will ultimately lead to their downfall. Asaph finally understood that pure logic and reasoning were insufficient to explain life's complexities. His turning point came when he went to worship in God's

[1] Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 38.

sanctuary, where divine wisdom provided the deeper insight he needed. This experience taught him that human reasoning alone cannot grasp the full truth, but God's wisdom from His sanctuary offers clarity and resolution. Thus, Psalm 73 serves as a wisdom reflection on the complexities of faith and the ultimate justice of God that builds confidence in worshiping Him.

It can be decided that Psalm 73 reflects on the challenge of understanding God's justice in a world where the wicked seem to prosper while the righteous suffer. The psalmist's crisis is resolved through worship in God's sanctuary, where divine wisdom reveals the ultimate fate of the wicked and the enduring value of God's presence. The psalm teaches that human reasoning alone cannot comprehend life's complexities, but God's wisdom offers clarity and resolution. Through this journey of doubt and enlightenment, Psalm 73 emphasizes that true wisdom and confidence come from trusting in God's ultimate justice and faithfulness.

Interpretation of Psalm 73

Psalm 73 uses metaphors and similes to reflect the psalmist's journey from doubt to a deeper understanding of God's justice. Through poetic language, Psalm 73 explores the tension between appearances (the success of the wicked) and spiritual reality (God's faithfulness to the pure-hearted), ultimately leading the psalmist back to worship and trust in God's wisdom. It can be understood that Psalm 73 uses poetic devices to convey the psalmist's journey from doubt to renewed faith in God's justice. Through vivid metaphors and similes, the psalm explores the apparent prosperity of the wicked and the internal struggle of the righteous. The psalmist's imagery of stumbling, the "slippery places" of the wicked, and comparing himself to a senseless beast captures the emotional and spiritual tension of questioning God's fairness. Ultimately, the psalm resolves this tension by highlighting that human understanding

is limited, while God's wisdom and justice are steadfast. The psalmist finds peace in the realization that God's justice will prevail, leading him back to worship with deeper trust in God's ultimate judgment and faithfulness. It settles that true wisdom is understanding God's justice and eternal reward. This aligns with James 1:12, which speaks of the blessing of enduring trials. Worship in this psalm comes through a shift in perspective recognizing God's justice in His sanctuary. Jesus echoes this in the Beatitudes (Matt 5:3-12), teaching that those who suffer for righteousness will be blessed.

Theological Analysis of Psalm 90

In introduction Psalm 90 offers a profound reflection on the brevity of human life and the inevitability of death. It contrasts the fleeting nature of human existence with God's eternal and unchanging nature, emphasizing the fragility of life. The psalmist acknowledges human suffering, sin, and mortality, while seeking wisdom to navigate life's short span and expressing trust in God as a refuge. This psalm sets the tone for worship grounded in humility, reminding believers of their dependence on God's compassion and love in the face of life's transience.

Psalm 90 is a reflection on the shortness of human life and the inevitability of death. It expresses sorrow over human suffering and the fleeting nature of life. It highlights God's eternal and unchanging nature, contrasting it with the short and fragile human life. Humans are like dust and grass that withers quickly. The Psalm also seeks wisdom to navigate life's short span and expresses faith in God, who is eternal and can bring joy from sorrow and outlast death. God has always been and will always be a refuge and a safe place for people, even though human lives are brief and often troubled. The Psalm acknowledges human sin and God's anger, suggesting that suffering and mortality result from sin. It emphasizes the need for wisdom and

repentance due to life's brevity. Despite recognizing sin and God's wrath, the Psalm appeals for God's compassion, mercy, and steadfast love, asking Him to make people's efforts successful. In essence, it reflects on human mortality and sin while calling for reliance on God's eternal compassion and love. This shows a relation to wisdom and worship in Psalm 90 by emphasizing the recognition of human mortality and sin, which is central to wisdom. Psalm 90 contrasts the fleeting nature of human life with God's eternal nature, leading to a humble acknowledgment of our dependence on God's enduring compassion and love. This reflection deepens worship by encouraging believers to seek wisdom in understanding life's brevity and to trust in God's everlasting mercy, shaping a worship that is grounded in humility and reverence for God's eternal nature.

It can be commented that Psalm 90 emphasizes the importance of wisdom and repentance by acknowledging human mortality and sin. It highlights the contrast between the temporary nature of human life and the eternal nature of God, encouraging believers to seek divine wisdom in understanding life's brevity. Through this realization, worship is deepened, rooted in humility and reverence for God's enduring mercy. The psalm calls for trust in God's compassion and steadfast love, shaping a worship that honors God's eternal refuge in a world where human life is brief and fragile.

Interpretation of Psalm 90

Psalm 90 contains various literary devices that enrich its poetic imagery and deepen its meaning. Here's an analysis highlighting some of the devices highlighted in this research. The metaphor "LORD thou hast been our dwelling place" in verse 1, and light in verse 8, similies of the millennium as yesterday and as a watch in verse 4, time as a tale and as flood, as a sleep, like grass in verse 5. Merism of morning and

evening in verse 6. The poetic devices in this Psalm draw attention to the contrast between the eternal, unchanging nature of God and the fleeting, fragile nature of human life. They deepen the psalm's teachings on wisdom by reminding us to live with a sense of humility, awareness of our limitations, and alignment with God's eternal purposes. These same devices enhance worship by fostering a deeper reverence for God, encouraging trust in His sovereignty, and leading believers to live lives that honor Him, from morning to evening, throughout every stage of life.

The interpretation reveals that Psalm 90 uses rich poetic devices to emphasize the fleeting nature of human life and the eternal, unchanging nature of God. The metaphors, such as God being a "dwelling place" (v. 1) and light (v. 8), highlight God's protection and omniscience, calling believers to depend on Him and live with integrity. Similes like comparing a millennium to "yesterday" and human life to grass (v. 4, 5) stress the brevity of life, urging humility and a wise use of time. The merism of "morning and evening" (v. 6) captures the full cycle of life, reminding us of life's transience. Through these literary devices, the Psalm deepens its themes of wisdom and worship, encouraging believers to live with reverence, aware of human limitations, and aligned with God's eternal purposes.

Bringing into line with New Testament, Psalm 90 reflects on human frailty in contrast to God's eternal nature, teaching that wisdom is found in numbering our days rightly. Paul reinforces this idea in Ephesians 5:15-16, urging believers to walk wisely and redeem the time. Worship in this psalm acknowledges God's sovereignty and seeks His mercy, much like Jesus' declaration in John 11:25 that He is the resurrection and the life, offering hope beyond earthly limitations.

Theological Analysis of Psalm 107

Introducing the theology of Psalm 107 celebrates God's steadfast love and faithfulness by calling people to give thanks for His enduring goodness. The psalm recounts various instances of human suffering where individuals cry out to God, and He delivers them, demonstrating His unwavering readiness to save. It highlights God's sovereignty over nature and history, showing His power to calm storms and break barriers. Through this, the Psalm encourages a response of gratitude and praise from those whom God has rescued, illustrating a cycle of sin, suffering, repentance, and redemption.

Psalm 107 highlights God's steadfast love and faithfulness. It begins by urging gratitude for His enduring goodness. The Psalm describes various struggles—wandering, imprisonment, illness, and storms—where people cry out to God, and He rescues them, proving His reliable love. It emphasizes that God's help is available to all, regardless of their situation. The Psalm repeatedly calls for thanksgiving and praise from those He has saved. It portrays God as sovereign over nature and history, capable of calming storms and breaking barriers. The cycle of sin, suffering, repentance, and redemption shows His readiness to forgive and restore. It teaches that true wisdom involves recognizing God’s redemptive acts and responding with heartfelt worship. Through its recounting of various rescues, the Psalm teaches that worship is not just ritual but a thankful response to God's ongoing faithfulness, guiding believers to live in a way that reflects His goodness and mercy.

It can be mentioned that Psalm 107 underscores the importance of recognizing God's redemptive acts and responding with gratitude and praise. It contributes to wisdom by teaching that true understanding comes from acknowledging God's ongoing faithfulness and love. Worship, as portrayed in this psalm, is more than just a

ritual; it is a heartfelt response to God's constant deliverance. By recounting His acts of rescue, the psalm guides believers toward a life that reflects God's goodness and mercy, deepening both wisdom and worship.

Interpretation of Psalm 107

Psalm 107 is a call to praise that reflects on God's enduring love and the many ways He helps His people in times of trouble. The psalm shows how, in different situations of distress, being lost in a desert, imprisoned in darkness, suffering from foolishness, or caught in a storm at sea. God listens to cries for help and delivers those in need. Each time, the psalm calls for gratitude and worship, reminding believers of God's power to rescue and transform lives. The psalm also highlights God's ability to reverse difficult situations, turning punishment into blessing, and encourages people to live wisely and reflect on God's goodness.

It can be interpreted that Psalm 107 utilizes vivid poetic devices to emphasize God's enduring love, redemptive power, and the call to worship. The metaphors of thirst, hunger (v. 9), and imprisonment in darkness (v. 10) highlight both physical and spiritual desperation, underscoring the wisdom in seeking God's deliverance. Similes, such as comparing the redeemed to those rescued from enemies (v. 2) and the storm-tossed to drunken men (v. 27), illustrate the dramatic nature of God's salvation. The anthropomorphism of waves being "hushed" (v. 29) and hyperbolic imagery of rivers turned into wilderness (v. 33) highlight God's sovereignty over nature and life. Through these poetic expressions, the psalm calls for gratitude, reverence, and wisdom, reminding believers that God's rescue from distress should lead to lives of praise and thanksgiving.

Psalm 107 celebrates God's deliverance, illustrating that wisdom comes from recognizing His providence. This connects with Zechariah’s song in Luke 1:68-79,

which praises God for His redemption. Worship in this psalm is expressed through thanksgiving, a theme echoed in Jesus' healing of the ten lepers in Luke 17:11-19, where only one returns to give thanks, showing that true worship flows from a grateful heart.

Swahili Proverbs Connecting to Psalms 1, 73, 90 and 107 (Wisdom and Worship Themes)

Swahili is a strong choice to represent African proverbs because it is widely spoken, culturally diverse, and rich in wisdom that aligns with biblical themes. However, other African languages also have valuable proverbs. These Swahili proverbs and Psalms share deep wisdom about trusting God, responding to Him in worship, and making wise choices. Psalm 1 highlights the importance of choosing the right path, Psalm 73 teaches faith in God despite temporary injustices, Psalm 90 emphasizes the shortness of life, the value of wisdom, and the need to seek God, and Psalm 107 shows that hardship leads to gratitude. Each psalm reinforces the idea that true wisdom leads to worship, and worship deepens wisdom.

Psalm 1 is a wisdom in choosing the right path & worshiping God. Psalm 1 contrasts the wise, righteous person who follows God with the wicked who reject Him. These Kiswahili proverbs resemble this wisdom

1. "Mcha Mungu si mwoga." *(One who fears God is not a coward.)* Psalm 1:1-2 describes the blessed person who delights in God's law. This proverb connects fearing God with strength and wisdom.
2. "Samaki mkunje angali mbichi." *(Bend/curve a fish while it's still fresh.)* Psalm 1 encourages learning God's ways early in life. This proverb teaches that wisdom in adhering to torah should be developed from a young age.

3. “Mtoto wa nyoka ni nyoka.” *(A snake’s child is a snake.)* Psalm 1:6 warns that the wicked will perish. Just as character is passed down, this proverb shows that those who follow evil will reap destruction.
4. "Chovya chovya humaliza buyu la asali” (*Dipping little by little finishes the pot of honey)* also “Bandu bandu humaliza gogo" (*Chipping little by little finishes the log.)* Psalm 1:1 warns against walking with the wicked, showing that small compromises can lead to a complete sinful life. The Swahili proverbs both show how repeated small actions have big effects. Means that even small wrongdoings, done repeatedly, can slowly break down something strong like how constant exposure to sin can destroy a person’s character over time.

Psalm 73 is a wisdom in trusting God despite Life’s injustices. Psalm 73 wrestles with why the wicked prosper while the righteous suffer, concluding that true wisdom is trusting in God.

1. “Kila ndege huruka kwa bawa lake.” *(Each bird flies with its own wings.)* Psalm 73:2-3 shows the psalmist envying the wicked. This proverb teaches that everyone has their own journey, and we should not compare our path to others.
2. “Mpanda ngazi hushuka.” *(Whoever climbs a ladder must come down.)* Psalm 73:18-19 reveals that the wicked may prosper for a time, but they will eventually fall.
3. “Mungu hamtupi mja wake.” *(God does not abandon His servant.)* Psalm 73:23-26 reassures that God is always with the faithful, even in struggles. This proverb emphasizes trust in God’s care despite life's challenges.

Psalm 90's themes of wisdom and worship closely align with several Swahili proverbs that emphasize the brevity of life, the importance of seeking wisdom, and reliance on God.

1. "Hayawi hayawi, huwa." *(What is delayed will eventually happen.)* This connects to Psalm 90:4, where God's perspective on time is different from ours. It reminds us that while human life is short, God's plans unfold in His time.
2. "Mpanda ovyo huvuna ovyo." *(One who sows carelessly reaps carelessly.)* This relates to Psalm 90:7-9, which speaks of God's judgment on human sin. Just as careless actions lead to bad outcomes, failing to seek wisdom and live righteously brings consequences.
3. "Akili ni mali." *(Wisdom is wealth.)* Psalm 90:12 says, "Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom." This proverb reinforces that wisdom is more valuable than material riches and helps people live purposefully.
4. "Mungu si Athumani." *(God is not careless/random/human.)* Psalm 90 emphasizes God's sovereignty and the need to trust in Him. This proverb reminds us that God's actions have purpose, and worshiping Him brings guidance and stability.
5. "Bahati ya mwenzio usiilalie mlango wazi." *(Do not sleep with your door open, hoping for someone else's fortune.)* This ties to Psalm 90:17, where the psalmist asks for God's favor in their work. It teaches that rather than relying on luck, one should seek God's blessing through faith and diligence.

Psalm 107 –is a Wisdom from Experience & Worship in Gratitude. It highlights how people experience trouble, call on God, and receive His deliverance, teaching that wisdom comes from recognizing God's works and worship is the right response.

1. “Baada ya dhiki, faraja.” *(After hardship comes relief.)* This relates to Psalm 107:6, 13, 19, 28, where different groups suffer, cry to the Lord, and He saves them. The psalm shows that trials teach wisdom, and God’s help brings reason for worship.
2. “Shukrani ni mlango wa baraka.” *(Gratitude is the door to blessings.)* Psalm 107 repeatedly calls people to thank the Lord (v. 8, 15, 21, and 31). This proverb reinforces that recognizing God's goodness leads to more blessings and a heart of worship.
3. “subira huvuta heri.” *(A patient person attracts blessings.)* Many in Psalm 107 (like prisoners and sailors) endure hardship before experiencing God’s mercy, showing that patience and faith lead to redemption.

Summary

This chapter provides a theological analysis of Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107, highlighting their significance in wisdom, worship, and contemporary spirituality. Psalm 1 contrasts the righteous and the wicked, emphasizing the Torah as the source of wisdom. Those who meditate on God's law are like flourishing trees, while the wicked are like chaff blown away. True worship involves aligning life with God's wisdom. Similarly, Psalm 73 explores a crisis of faith as the psalmist struggles with the apparent prosperity of the wicked. His perspective shifts in God’s sanctuary, where he realizes that the wicked’s success is temporary, reaffirming that true wisdom comes from trusting in God's justice.

Psalm 90 reflects on human mortality, contrasting life's brevity with God's eternal nature. It calls for wisdom, repentance, and reliance on God's steadfast love, emphasizing that worship should be rooted in humility and awareness of human limitations. Lastly, Psalm 107 celebrates God's deliverance from suffering, illustrating His steadfast love. It recounts cycles of distress, repentance, and redemption, emphasizing that true wisdom involves recognizing God's faithfulness and responding with gratitude. Together, these Psalms teach that wisdom is found in trusting God's justice, meditating on His law, and worshiping Him with humility and thanksgiving.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND **CONCLUSION**

Summary

This is an exegetical study that used the historical-grammatical method to pursue the task of finding the meaning and implications. The study exegetically engaged in the process of analyzing the poetic language used in Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 to extract the fullest meaning and answer the research issue. This paper comprises five chapters. Chapter One comprises the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, delimitation, and methodology.

Chapter 2 provides an in-depth review of literature on the themes of wisdom, the Book of Psalms, and worship. It examines the biblical portrayal of wisdom, especially through the Hebrew concept of *khokmah*, linking moral living to a relationship with God. The chapter examines into the Psalms' structure, composition, and authorship, highlighting their theological significance and central role in worship and expressing faith. It also explores the evolution of worship practices, from Old Testament rituals to a heartfelt response to God’s character and actions, both in ancient and contemporary contexts. Overall, the chapter underscores God's centrality in shaping wisdom, worship, and life's purpose according to biblical teachings.

Chapter 3 offers a thorough contextual analysis of key Wisdom Psalms, focusing on their historical, cultural, literary backgrounds and syntactical analysis. It traces the composition of the Psalms across Israel's history, from the time of Moses to the post-exilic era, while addressing debates around traditional authorship. The

chapter explores the connection between Wisdom Psalms, such as Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107, and broader wisdom literature, examining themes like divine justice, Torah observance, and human mortality. Literary devices like parallelism are analyzed for their role in enhancing the psalms' structure and themes. Ultimately, the chapter reveals how the Wisdom Psalms blend moral instruction with worship, guiding believers in righteous living and deeper devotion to God. Through literary and thematic analysis, it highlights how wisdom and worship in the Psalms are interwoven, providing practical insights for life and deepening the community's reflection on God's justice, mercy, and eternal nature. Through semantic and syntactical analysis, the chapter highlights the use of literary devices like metaphors, similes, and parallelism, which deepen the spiritual and theological insights of these Psalms.

Chapter 4 provides a theological analysis of Wisdom Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107, Theological analysis reveals how the Psalms emphasize wisdom as a guide for righteous living and worship, urging believers to trust in God's justice, seek His wisdom, and respond with gratitude for His redemptive acts. Interpretive section plays a crucial role in breaking down the metaphors, similes, and other poetic devices to show how they communicate key themes such as the contrast between the righteous and wicked, the brevity of life, and God's eternal presence. Through detailed exploration of the theological dimensions, the chapter affirms the enduring relevance of Wisdom Psalms in shaping modern faith practices and worship.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107, it appears correct to suggest that these wisdom Psalms significantly deepen the understanding of worship and devotion to God. Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 deepen the understanding of worship

and devotion through vivid imagery and reflections on the human-divine relationship. Psalm 1 emphasizes strength through meditation on God's word, rooting believers in His teachings. Psalm 73 explores the struggle between doubt and faith, showing how worship transforms uncertainty into trust in God’s justice. Psalm 90 contrasts God’s eternity with human frailty, inspiring humility and the pursuit of wisdom. Psalm 107 highlights gratitude by depicting God’s redemptive acts, reinforcing His faithfulness. Together, these Psalms show how wisdom shapes worship, Psalm 1 through meditation, Psalm 73 through trust, Psalm 90 through humility, and Psalm 107 through thanksgiving. Through their literary structures and themes, these psalms show that worship is shaped by wisdom, guiding believers in devotion, trust, humility, and gratitude. Together, these Psalms show that worship is a dynamic journey intertwined with wisdom, not merely ritualistic acts but a way of life rooted in a deep, ongoing relationship with God, transforming how believers live, think, and relate to Him. Together, these elements enrich devotion, making it a holistic journey of understanding, trust, humility, and gratitude.

Besides the above findings, more study is still needed to expand knowledge related to Wisdom Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107. Sample of what can be explored includes: (1) the comparison between Ancient Near Eastern Wisdom Literature and Wisdom Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 on Worship; (2) Intertextual connections between other Old Testament Wisdom Literature and Wisdom Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107 on Worship.

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