

## THE OUTWORKING OF THE ANSWER IN BOOK FIVE

### I. CONVERGENCE OF ABRAHAMIC AND NEW COVENANTS IN THEIR FULFILMENT (PSALM 107:1-3)

Ps 107:1-3 cf. Ps. 106:47

Book 5: new-covenant fulfilment converges with Abrahamic-covenant fulfilment and Davidic-covenant fulfilment (and even, though less prominently, Noahic-covenant fulfilment and Levitical-covenant fulfilment)

### II. ABRAHAMIC-COVENANT FULFILMENT IN PSALM 118 AND IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING CONTEXT

We believe that the group in verse 4 that celebrates YHWH's covenant loyalty, 'those who fear YHWH', encompasses non-Jews. The scholarly debate<sup>1</sup> regarding the referent of this phrase continues. For many, it designates the totality of Israelites – or godly Israelites –, without alluding to proselytes. In view of the use of the phrase elsewhere (Ps. 22:24 H/23 E; cf. Ps. 34:8 H/7 E), this may be right.<sup>2</sup> We believe, however, that at this point in Book 5, the referent is broader and that the links with preceding ('Egyptian Hallel') psalms<sup>3</sup> clarify the matter. The trio that is the object of the exhortation in Psalm 118:2-4 ('Israel', 'house of Aaron', 'those who fear YHWH') features twice in Psalm 115 (vv. 9-11; vv. 12-13).<sup>4</sup> The latter psalm begins (v. 1) by highlighting the faithfulness (*hesed*) and loyalty (*'emet*) which should inspire praise of YHWH (cf. v. 15-18). The shortest psalm in the psalter (Ps. 117), which constitutes the context that immediately precedes the verses that we are considering at the start of Psalm 118, issues an appeal to the nations to praise YHWH for his faithfulness (*hesed*) and loyalty (*'emet*), thus echoing Psalm 115 and suggesting to the psalter reader that the nations should be included amongst the trio of Psalm 115. By the time we reach Psalm 118:1-4, whose appeal is similar to that of Psalm 117, the matter is settled in the psalter reader's mind. When, in addition, one notes the links that bind Psalms 116 and 118 at the level of content,<sup>5</sup> thus further supporting the unity of the sequence from Psalm 115 to Psalm 118, it becomes clear that the burden of proof lies with those who would exclude the nations from 'those who fear YHWH'

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<sup>1</sup> For a summary of the debate, see M. D. Goulder (1998), *The Psalms of the Return (Book V, Psalms 107-150)* (JSOTSupp 258), Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 170.

<sup>2</sup> Eveson vol. II, 297.

<sup>3</sup> For remarks concerning the coherence of this group, see Kidner 1975: 401; cf. also M. Berder (1996), *La Pierre rejetée par les bâtisseurs »: Psaume 118,22-23 et son emploi dans les traditions juives et dans le Nouveau Testament* (Etudes Bibliques nouvelle série 31), 92-95 (to his list could be added the transcendence of God in Pss 113:4 and 115:3); G.T.M. Prinsloo (2006), 'Šerôl→Yerûšalayim←Šamayim: spatial orientation in the Egyptian Hallel (Psalms 113-118)', *OTE* 19: 739-760. E. Hayes (1999), 'The Unity of the Egyptian Hallel: Psalms 113-118 », *BBR* 9, 148, rightly mentions the strikingly high density of the use of terms for God in this group (more than one occurrence per verse on average).

<sup>4</sup> The syntax of verse 13 may not strengthen our position. If the second part of the verse, 'small and great alike' (a. t.) explicates 'those who fear YHWH', it needs to be admitted that it does so without specifying a universal dimension.

<sup>5</sup> In both psalms, a sacrifice of praise/thanksgiving is offered at the temple following deliverance, in the face of death, that is orchestrated by YHWH.

in Psalm 118:4. Finally, we should observe that Psalm 117 echoes Psalm 100 which also presupposes the salvation of the nations, as we have seen. There is even a strong case to be made for understanding the referent of the first person plural in Psalm 117:2 to encompass non-Jews ('for great is his *hesed* towards us'), in line with what we concluded for the equivalent phenomenon in Psalm 100, but since this vexed question is not critical to our thesis at this point regarding the identity of 'those who fear YHWH' in Psalm 118:4, it need not concern us at this point.

In short, the 'Abrahamic' 'all nations' theme is indeed present in this group of psalms: to revisit the perspective of Psalm 107:43, we may affirm that representatives of the nations are among those who prove to be wise in heeding the faithfulness of YHWH – and this means that they participate the new exodus. Although it is ancillary to our demonstration, we submit that this is precisely what the juxtaposition of Psalms 114 and 115 also suggests. In this Book 5 context, mention of Israel's exodus from Egypt (Ps. 114:1) serves not simply to recall that event: it also thrusts the psalter reader's mind forward to its antitype, the new exodus, in which (all) 'those who fear YHWH' (Ps. 115:11, 13) take part.

### III. CONVERGENCE OF ABRAHAMIC-, DAVIDIC- AND NEW-COVENANT FULFILMENT CONFIRMED (PSALM 136 AND IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING CONTEXT)

New covenant fulfilled

New-covenant formula

First person plural (cf. Ps. 106:47; [also 106:6])

Second refrain in Psalm 107 connects with Psalm 106 and anticipates Psalm 136

Concatenation Ps. 134→Ps. 135→Ps. 136

Abrahamic covenant fulfilled

Ps. 135:20: 'those who fear YHWH'

Sinaitic conditionality observed (Psalm 133)

Cf. Deut. 30:19-20

Return from exile presupposed (also permanence)

Spiritual circumcision presupposed in Ps. 119<sup>6</sup> (cf. Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 11:19-20; 36:26-27)

New covenant fulfilled in stages

In Ps. 119, pilgrim who undertakes the journey portrayed by the Songs of Ascents?

Terminus at 'house of YHWH' (Jer. 33:11; Ps. 134:1; Ps. 135:2)

Inauguration vs. consummation cf. Pss 126; 130

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<sup>6</sup> Vv. 2, 10, 11, 34, 36, 58, 69, 80, 111, 112, 145, 161; also commandments as the psalmist's 'delight' (v. 24, 77, 92, 143, 174).

Representatives of the nations make the journey to Zion cf. Isa. 2:3; Mic 4:2

Davidic covenant fulfilled, with conditionality satisfied (Psalm 132)

'Of David' (Pss 122, 124, 127, 131, 133)

Concern for Zion as YHWH's desired dwelling place (v. 13) and the locus of his blessing (vv. 15-16; Pss 133:3; 134:3)

2 Sam. 6-7 in background

v. 14 cf. Pss 133:3; 134; 135:2, 21

v. 15 cf. Pss 133:3; 134:3

v. 16 cf. refrain of Psalm 136

v. 18 cf. Pss 135:7-11; 136:10, 17-20

Ps. 132:17	'There I will cause a horn to sprout up for David; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed one.' (NRSV)
Ps. 133:3b	'For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.' (ESV)

V. 12: dynastic promise, though inviolable, will come to realisation only in a messiah who upholds the stipulations of the Sinaitic covenant, cf.

Ps. 132:17a	Jer. 33:15
There I will <b>cause</b> a horn to <b>sprout up for David</b> ... (NRSV)	In those days and at that time I will <b>cause</b> a Righteous Branch to <b>sprout up for David</b> , and He will administer justice and righteousness in the land. (HCSB)

Davidic crown, though 'defiled...in the dust' (Ps. 89:40 H/39 E [ESV]), will be restored (Ps. 132:18)

King should be only *implicitly* present in Psalms 133-136: why?

#### IV. DAVID RECAPITULATED IN A SUPERIOR ANTITYPE (PSALMS 108-110; 138-145)

*l'edawid* psalms frame Book 5 (Pss 108-110; 138-145)

Book 2 psalms recalled

Victory and suffering intensified

It is instructive to study these 'reworkings' in their new context. Psalm 57 is picked up not only in Psalm 108 – the opening 'Of David' psalm in Book 5 – but also in Psalm 142. If the latter were to be considered without reference to psalter context, it could be taken to be an exception to the rule that historical information relating to David, son of Jesse, is absent from the titles of Book 5. Indeed, we are told that this psalm concerns the time 'when he was in the cave' (Ps. 142:1 H/heading E). Given, however, that this title echoes that of Psalm 57 which itself undergoes a transposition in the first Davidic psalm of Book 5, and is also picked up in subsequent *l'edawid* psalms in this book,<sup>7</sup> the psalter reader is sensitised to interpret Psalm 142 intertextually.

<sup>7</sup> Ps. 138:8 (cf. Ps. 57:3 H/2 E); Ps. 140:4 H/3 E (cf. Ps 57:5 H/4 E); Ps. 140:6 H/5 E (cf. Ps 57:7 H/6 E).

The transposition in Psalm 108 works as follows. Five of Psalm 57's verses (out of eleven, or twelve including the title) are quoted in Psalm 108. By omitting the other verses,<sup>8</sup> Psalm 108 removes all reference to individual distress,<sup>9</sup> retaining only the notes of confidence and victory. 'While Psalm 57 is an individual lament and Psalm 60 a corporate lament, Psalm 108 is a psalm of assurance that reapplies the previous psalms to produce a prayer "for Yahweh's final, eschatological 'day of vengeance' when he establishes his lordship among the nations.'"<sup>10</sup> Indeed, in Psalm 108, 'David' celebrates YHWH's faithfulness (*hesed*) and loyalty (*'emet*) and thus reaffirms what had been called into question in Psalm 89 regarding the dynastic promise. He proclaims these realities amongst the nations, a move which lies in the trajectory of the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise of blessing for all nations (vv. 3-5 H/vv. 2-4 E). At the same time, to the extent that the nations are his adversaries, this king will crush them and lay claim to their territories (vv. 8-14 H/7-13 E).

By contrast, in Psalm 142, we encounter distress of an intensity that is, in places, comparable to that of Psalm 88 ('...my spirit grows faint within me, ... no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life' [Ps. 142:3-4 NIV]) and outstrips that of the psalm of David 'in the cave' (Ps. 57:1) from Book 2. Thus the recapitulation operates on a higher plane relative to the experience of the David of 1000 BC and does so in both directions: in Psalm 108, total victory over the enemies is envisaged, while in Psalm 142, the distress is magnified.

By this stage in our study, it is unsurprising that there should be such an escalation between the David of Books 1-2 and the David of Book 5. Indeed, it seems significant that the mention of Saul in the title of Psalm 57 does not fetch up in the title of Psalm 142. This chimes in with our understanding that the historical episode in the cave that David (immediate son of Jesse) experienced has been recast for a new context in which the 'David' of Book 5 exhibits features of the antitype. For this new David – who is tied, according to the context of this final book, to the new exodus and the new covenant –, the victory takes on a new dimension, but so too does the suffering. So, inasmuch as Psalm 142 sets forth a recapitulated David, antitype of the David of the generation immediately following Jesse, this psalm is no exception to the rule that Book 5 does not present historical information in the titles.

Strongest imprecations in Book 5 (Pss 109, 137) – other side of coin – one of messiah's roles

Ps 138 borrow from a number of David psalms from Books 1 and 2;<sup>11</sup> echo of new-covenant formula

King combined with righteous suffering servant

Link between suffering and sin?

Levitical covenant fulfilled by the superior priesthood (Psalm 110)

Ps. 2 recalled

Cf. need, that emerges from Ps. 106, for intercession that is total in its scope, permanent in its effectiveness and sin-free in its administration

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<sup>8</sup> There is one verse in Psalm 57 amongst those that are omitted by Psalm 108 whose outlook is positive (v. 6 H/5 E), but it corresponds to the refrain which recurs in verse 12 H/11 E and is picked up in Psalm 108:6 H/5 E.

<sup>9</sup> As C. C. Broyles remarks (1999), *Psalms* (NIBC), Peabody [Massachusetts]/Carlisle: Hendrickson/Paternoster, {411}. Likewise, the lament of Psalm 60 does not fetch up in Psalm 108.

<sup>10</sup> Longman 2014: 378, citing Broyles 1999: {252}.

<sup>11</sup> K. Schaefer (2001), *Psalms* (Berit Olam), Collegeville [Minnesota]: Liturgical Press, 324.

Offices of king and priest combined: Levitical-covenantal order fulfilled and transcended

Blessings democratised (Psalm 144)

Psalm 18 picked up – with transposition

No further exile!

Vv. 12-14 cf. Amos 9:11-15; Ps. 72:16; Ps. 132:13-15 which reflect the convergence between the fulfilment of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants

Double 'happy'

YHWH's 'Abrahamic' *hesed* reiterated in the last 'David' psalm (Psalm 145)

V. 8 cf. Exod. 34:6 again...

## V. CONVERGENCE OF NOAHIC-, ABRAHAMIC-, DAVIDIC- AND NEW-COVENANT FULFILMENT CONFIRMED (PSALMS 146-150)

We have been observing, again and again in Book 5, that the Abrahamic, Davidic and new covenants converge in their fulfilment. This is also what we find in the psalter's concluding doxology (or 'Final Hallel'; Pss 146-150).<sup>12</sup> These psalms seem to express praise to YHWH from the standpoint of a people who have been gathered into a Zion that is at least partially rebuilt (Pss 146:10; 147:2-3, 12-13; 149:1-2; 150:1). This, then, is a new-covenant scenario, and, indeed, the blessings of Psalm 144:12-15 have come to a certain degree of fruition (Ps. 147:13-14). But arrival in Zion does not always equate in a simplistic fashion to the terminus of the new exodus, for here, at least, the ultimate goal has not yet been reached (to couch this in the typological terms of these psalms, the rebuilding of Zion must go on through to completion). In particular, the final judgment – the 'judgment decreed' (Ps. 149:9 HCSB) in, for example, Psalm 2:8-9<sup>13</sup> – still lies in the future. Psalm 149 informs us that all YHWH's 'godly ones' (v. 9; cf. vv. 1, 5) will take part in this judgment: royal responsibilities are to some extent democratised under the new covenant (vv. 6-9) – as also appears to be the case for priestly responsibilities (already touched on).

Who are these 'godly ones'? Some of the data point in the direction of the '(sons of) Israel', so named as the privileged recipients of his special revelation (Ps. 147:19-20), the people who are 'near to him' (Ps. 148:14). Indeed, the judgment of Psalm 149 is executed *against the nations* (vv. 7-9). By this stage, it is, however, difficult for the psalter reader to cast aside all the information regarding the identity of the new-covenant people that has been set forth; we are attuned to the possibility that the language of the type (in this case, ethnic Israel) is being used to designate its antitype. Certainly, other data in this concluding doxology reinforce the perspective that we have seen from Books 2, 4 and 5 by way of realisation of the Abrahamic covenant: the people of God are drawn from all nations. Thus we read that '...the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his' *'hesed'* (Ps. 147:11 ESV), loving the righteous, protecting the foreigners, but bringing the wicked down to the ground (Pss 146:8-9; 147,6); and, in Psalm 148, the injunction to praise YHWH is addressed, amongst others, to 'kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all judges of the earth'

<sup>12</sup> Snearly 2016: 173 explains that '[t]he most popular proposal is that Psalms 146-150 are the conclusion to the Psalter.' He provides a defence for the cohesion of this group in ch. 11, 171-184.

<sup>13</sup> See also Pss 96:13 and 98:9, in line with L. C. Allen (2002<sup>2</sup>), *Psalms 101-150* (WBC), Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 400-401.

(Ps. 148:11 HCSB). The latter verse echoes Psalm 2:2, 10; we should recall that that introductory and programmatic psalm recognises ‘all’ those amongst the nations who repent as being ‘happy’ in a salvific sense (Ps. 2:12; cf. Ps. 144:15).<sup>14</sup>

Regarding the Davidic covenant, the structure of this concluding group of psalms is instructive. Whilst we should certainly view Psalm 150 as the psalter’s climax-of-the-climax, a good case can be made for considering Psalm 148 to be the centre of a concentric structure across the five psalms and thus of particular prominence and importance.<sup>15</sup> Sensitivity to this structural feature throws into sharper relief what is already (on any account of the shape of the Final Hallel) climactic in this long psalm, namely the reasons for praising YHWH as stated in the closing two verses: ‘his name alone is exalted’ (Ps. 148:13 ESV) and ‘He has raised up a horn for his people’ (Ps. 148:14 ESV).<sup>16</sup> With regard to the latter metaphor, Tremper Longman asks, ‘Does this refer to the strength of the people, or to God’s choice of an individual who would exercise strength on behalf of his people?’<sup>17</sup> There can be no doubting what answer the psalter reader gives. The construction is a throwback to Psalm 132:17 ‘I will cause a horn to sprout up for David’ (NRSV) (in both cases, a *hiphil*-conjugated verb with YHWH as subject is followed the noun ‘horn’, and then by the preposition ‘for’, followed by another noun indicating the beneficiary). In addition, the expression in Psalm 148:14 echoes the hope expressed regarding David in Psalm 89:25 H/24 E (‘his horn will be exalted’)<sup>18</sup> – hope that the psalmist feared had been dashed by the Babylonian exile. It is, of course, the case that ‘horn’ does not always designate a royal figure. But these intertextual links are of considerable importance in the design of the psalter, and this interpretation, though in the minority,<sup>19</sup> is most ‘satisfying’:<sup>20</sup> the culmination of the book of Psalms showcases the messiah and calls upon ‘the choir of creation’<sup>21</sup> to praise YHWH for him (Ps. 148; cf. Ps. 150:6). As this climactic note is sounded, the psalter reader knows that the definitive solution to the crisis of Psalm 89 has been provided and cannot but be caught up in the expression of praise.

There are, however, significant distinctions between Psalm 132:17 and Psalm 148:14. In context,<sup>22</sup> the former (‘I will cause ... to sprout up,’ NRSV) is promissory and the latter (‘He has raised up,’ ESV) declarative and retrospective; the former speaks of the dynastic promise as it will be fulfilled, the latter of the same promise following its fulfilment; the former expresses the theology of the Davidic covenant as a future contributor to new-covenant circumstances, the latter the theology of the Davidic covenant as it coincides with new-covenant circumstances. In the former case, the beneficiary of the ‘horn’ can be described as ‘David’, whereas, in the latter case, the beneficiary is the

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<sup>14</sup> For other suggestions of links between Psalms 2 and 149, consult F.-L. Hossfeld, E. Zenger (eds.) (1993), *Die Psalmen I: Psalm 1-50* (Die Neue Echter Bibel), Würzburg: Echter Verlag, p. 51 {and Snearly 2016: 178-181 who provides a large range of significant links between these two psalms as well as between Psalms 1-2 and Psalms 146-150 more broadly}.

<sup>15</sup> Following the table in E. Zenger (1997), ‘„Daß alles Fleisch den Namen seiner Heiligung segne“ (Ps 145,21). Die Komposition Ps 145-150 als Anstoß zu einer christlich-jüdischen Psalmenhermeneutik’, *BZ* 41, p. 18.

<sup>16</sup> The expression ‘horn of his people’ (KJV, Darby) would more naturally be conveyed by a straightforward genitival construction, without the preposition.

<sup>17</sup> Longman 2014: 474.

<sup>18</sup> The same verb *rîm*, though in the *qal* conjugation.

<sup>19</sup> See, in its favour, A. M. Harman (1998), *Commentary on the Psalms* (Mentor), Fearn [Ross-shire]: Christian Focus, 451, et F. D. Kidner (1975), *Psalms 73-150: A Commentary on Books III to V of the Psalms* (TOTC), Leicester/Downers Grove, IVP, 488; Eveson 2015: 495.

<sup>20</sup> Eveson’s term (*ibid.*) Ross 2016: 948 asserts that there is ‘no internal support,’ within the psalm, for the allusion to a king. But it seems to us that psalter context cannot be set aside in this case.

<sup>21</sup> Kidner’s phrase (1975: 487).

<sup>22</sup> We are not leaning on a notion of ‘tense’ in Hebrew, although it happens that a *qatal* form is attested here in a past context and a *yiqtol* in a future one.

people.<sup>23</sup> In other words, what was promised to David is ultimately (under the new covenant) of benefit for all YHWH's people. This fits with what we noted in relation to Psalm 72.<sup>24</sup>

We should notice that Davidic- (and new-)covenant fulfilment is partly predicated on the stability of the created order (Ps. 148:5-6). It would be unthinkable that YHWH should raise up a horn for his people without also undertaking not to destroy the earth. Verse 6 may allude to the covenant with Noah,<sup>25</sup> the necessary bedrock for covenants established thereafter: with regard to the 'waters above the heavens' and other created elements of heavens, YHWH 'established them forever and ever; he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away' (Ps. 148:4, 6 ESV). This may recall the equivalent allusion in Psalm 104, the stability of the creation being the indispensable condition for the theology of Psalms 105-106.<sup>26</sup>

The links that are widely acknowledged<sup>27</sup> between the end of Psalm 148 and the beginning of Psalm 149 (notably the recurrence of 'praise' and 'godly ones') require that we discern in the 'king' of Psalm 149:2 the same referent in the two psalms. Thus the 'new song' (Ps. 149:2) with which the people praise YHWH concerns the messiah's rule. Although full and final fulfilment of the programme of Psalm 2 is still future from the perspective of the Psalter's conclusion, the messiah has been installed on Zion (cf. Ps 2:6), and this is chief among the 'mighty deeds' (Ps. 150:2) that give rise to praise on the part of 'everything that has breath' (Ps. 150:6).<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> It should not, however, be suggested that the faithful people become the house of David (contra J.-M. Auwers (2000) who quotes 2 Maccabees 2:17 : *La Composition littéraire du Psautier: Un état de la question* [CRB 46], Paris: Gabalda, 120, including his note 20).

<sup>24</sup> See the diagram from Lecture 2.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Goldingay vol. 3: 731, and, less directly, Eveson 2015: 494.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. our earlier discussion of Ps. 104.

<sup>27</sup> E.g. by Kidner, *ibid.*, 489 ; B. Weber (2003), *Werkbuch Psalmen II: Die Psalmen 73 bis 150*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 383 ; J.-M. Auwers, 'Les voies de l'exégèse canonique du Psautier', in J.-M. Auwers, H. J. de Jonge (eds.) (2003), *The Biblical Canons* (BETL 163), Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003, 12, including his note 30 ; Hossfeld and Zenger 2012: 895 ; Searly 2016: 178 (leaning on Zenger); Vesco vol. 2: 1365-66.

<sup>28</sup> W. Brueggemann, *Israel's Praise: Doxology against Idolatry and Ideology*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988, 92, considers that Psalm 150 does not present reasons to praise YHWH. For a brief discussion and critique of his position, see J. Hely Hutchinson (2005), 'The Psalms and Praise', in P. S. Johnston, D. G. Firth (eds.), *Interpreting the Psalms*, Leicester: IVP, 92, 96.