

ABSTRACT

A Canonical Exegesis of the Eighth Psalm: YHWH's Maintenance of the Created Order through Divine Reversal

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This dissertation presents a canonical exegesis of Psalm 8. The dissertation seeks to contribute to two areas of scholarship: 1) literature on the canonical approach to exegesis carrying forward the emphases first articulated by Brevard Childs, and 2) literature grappling with the question of how one ought to interpret Psalm 8 as Christian Scripture. The first chapter of the study reassesses the canon exegetical approach, concluding that it is a viable and salutary means for interpreting the text theologically, while arguing for some refinements to the approach as it is now understood that clarify its theological underpinnings.

The rest of the dissertation then goes on to examine Psalm 8 in relation to the broader canon. In order to bring Psalm 8 into dialogue with the rest of the canon, the study attends to the literary context of the psalm (the Psalter) and utilizes key texts which relate to the psalm (Genesis 1; Job 7; Psalm 144; Matthew 21; 1 Corinthians 15; Ephesians 1; Hebrews 2) as entry points through which to connect Psalm 8 with the broader witness of Scripture. Thus, the study attends to the discreet witness of Psalm 8, the place of Psalm 8 in the shape of the Psalter, the relationship between Psalm 8 and the rest of the Old Testament, and the relationship between Psalm 8 and the New Testament witness.

The dissertation describes the place of Psalm 8 within the Christian canon as representing the intersection of three motifs or trajectories: 1) The distinct theological message of Psalm 8, summarized as the reversal motif; the psalm describes YHWH as making his name great in all of creation by exalting relatively insignificant things over and against seemingly superior things, as is seen most prominently in the exaltation of the human to the role of YHWH's vice-gerent. 2) The motif of the conflicted and conflicting human, which permeates the canon; humanity finds itself beset by troubles and prone to misconduct. 3) The motif of the redeeming Christ, who becomes the ultimate representation of the reversal motif and who alone violates the type of the conflicted and conflicting human.

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DEDICATION

To Jennifer
היפה בנשים

To Dorea Grace and Jameson Noble
נחלת יהוה

CHAPTER ONE

A Proposal for a Revised Canon-Exegetical Approach

Introduction

Beginning in the late 1960's a "fresh approach" to biblical exegesis began to emerge in the works of Brevard S. Childs which emphasized the role of the canon as the central context for interpretation of the Christian Scriptures.¹ Since then, the canonical approach to exegesis has grown beyond Childs, with many scholars carrying his work forward.² Nevertheless, the canonical approach has not been without its critics,³ and practitioners of the canon-exegetical approach still grapple with the methodological questions that, to quote Paul Noble, "are unlikely to develop fruitfully unless they are con-

¹ Childs began developing his exegetical program in articles ("Interpretation in Faith: The Theological Responsibility of an Old Testament Commentary," *Interpretation* 18 [1964]: 432-49; "Psalm 8 in the Context of the Christian Canon," *Interpretation* 23 [1969], 20-31; "Karl Barth as Interpreter of Scripture," in *Karl Barth and the Future of Theology: A Memorial Colloquium Held at Yale Divinity School January 28, 1969* [ed. D. L. Dickerman; New Haven: Yale Divinity School Association, 1969], 30-39). He developed the approach in *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), and *The Canonical Shape of the Pauline Corpus: The Church's Guide for Reading Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008). He also put his approach into practice in commentaries (*The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* [OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974]; *Isaiah: A Commentary* [OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 2001]).

² Books responding positively to Childs's work include Mark G. Brett, *Biblical Criticism in Crisis? The Impact of the Canonical Approach on Old Testament Studies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), Paul R. Noble, *The Canonical Approach: A Critical Reconstruction of the Hermeneutics of Brevard S. Childs* (BIS 16; New York: E. J. Brill, 1995), Charles J. Scalise, *Hermeneutics as Theological Prolegomena: A Canonical Approach*, (SiABH 8; Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1994), and G. Michael O'Neal, *Interpreting Habakkuk as Scripture* (SiBL 9; New York: Peter Lang, 2007). See also Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998) and John H. Sailhamer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995).

³ Childs most prominent critic is James Barr, who attacked Childs's approach at length in *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983).

ducted in the context of concrete . . . exegetical work.”⁴ This dissertation will contribute to the ongoing efforts to construct a workable canon-exegetical approach by presenting a canonical exegesis of Psalm 8. The aim will be two-fold: 1) to demonstrate that a canonical exegesis is tenable if one can approach the task with clarity regarding the theological foundation of the approach, and 2) to utilize the approach in order to address the often difficult questions related to the interpretation of Psalm 8 as Scripture.

Psalm 8 is well suited to serve as a test case for a canonical exegesis, and the canonical approach is well suited to address some of the issues involved in the theological interpretation of Psalm 8. Childs’s early article on Psalm 8 represents his first attempt to demonstrate a canonical approach to exegesis.⁵ Thus, Psalm 8 provides a basis for assessing his early thought and demonstrating how more recent advances in scholarship enable an expansion and clarification of the canonical approach. Furthermore, Psalm 8, in light of its many intertextual connections with the rest of the Bible and debates concerning its pre-canonical form, offers a helpful vantage point for considering some of the thornier issues involved in the practice of canonical exegesis. Conversely, a thoroughgoing canonical approach can help to clarify many open questions concerning Psalm 8, including questions about Psalm 8’s structure and meaning and its use by New Testament authors.

Chapter one will address the literature on canonical exegesis in order to clarify some outstanding questions facing attempts to employ the canonical approach. After briefly surveying Childs’s work, this chapter will consider other literature addressing the canonical approach that Childs set forth; I will argue that the canonical approach is the

⁴ Noble, *The Canonical Approach*, 370.

⁵ Brevard S. Childs, “Psalm 8,” 20-31.

best candidate available for theological ecclesiastical exegesis, but that much work remains to refine the approach, particularly in terms of clarifying its theoretical assumptions. Next, I will attempt to clarify the theological underpinnings of the approach through an engagement with Augustine's hermeneutic, as articulated in *De doctrina Christiana*.⁶ Finally, this chapter will survey the scholarly literature on Psalm 8 to show 1) how the current state of scholarship makes Psalm 8 especially well suited to serve as a test case for canonical exegesis and 2) how the canonical approach is well suited for addressing questions germane to the interpretation of Psalm 8. The chapter will then conclude by outlining the rest of the dissertation.

Current Literature on Canonical Exegesis

Brevard Childs

Childs is the first, most prolific and, arguably, the most influential writer to articulate a canonical approach to the Christian Bible. Childs began to formulate his canonical approach in the late 1960's in journal articles, including "Psalm 8 in the Context of the Christian Canon."⁷ Expressing discontent with the contemporary approach to biblical commentary, Childs suggests a new approach to exegesis.⁸ His article on Psalm 8 hints at three seminal emphases that have come to characterize the program of canonical exegesis: 1) Childs wants to move beyond "the descriptive task and speak of theological

⁶ Saint Augustine, *Teaching Christianity: De Doctrina Christiana. The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, part I, vol. 11* (Edmund Hill, O. P., trans.; Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1996).

⁷ In addition to "Psalm 8," Childs's articles "Interpretation in Faith" and "Karl Barth as Interpreter of Scripture" both hinted at some seminal concerns that would drive Childs throughout his career.

⁸ While Childs hinted at the need to replace current approaches to the Bible with a canonical model in these articles, his first full argument for a new canonical approach was in *Biblical Theology in Crisis*.

reflection.”⁹ 2) Childs attempts to relate “the way in which a text may once have functioned historically and its later distinctive role in the Christian faith.”¹⁰ In his view, scholarly approaches to the text through the middle of the Twentieth Century had struggled to produce results theologically relevant to the twentieth-century Church because they have focused their attention solely upon reconstructing hypothetical historical origins for the text. 3) Perhaps most importantly, Childs seeks to develop “a concept of interpretation which attempts to deal seriously with the whole Christian canon.”¹¹ By treating the canon as the context for conducting the exegesis of Christian Scripture, Childs believes that interpreters can rectify the shortcomings of contemporary biblical scholarship without lapsing into pre-critical *naïveté*.

This third emphasis has special significance for Childs, who has built his hermeneutical approach on the acceptance of the final form of the text as canonical and exegetically determinative for the Church.¹² In subsequent works, Childs makes the case for his “fresh approach.”¹³ In these later works, he continues to maintain that, by attending to the final form of the text rather than limiting one’s focus to “the history of the develop-

⁹ Childs, “Psalm 8,” 20.

¹⁰ Childs, “Psalm 8,” 20.

¹¹ Childs, “Psalm 8,” 21.

¹² See, for example, Childs’s introduction to *Exodus*, especially xiv-xvi.

¹³ In 1970 he gave a full statement of his concerns with the current state of scholarship and his proposal for a new approach in the book *Biblical Theology in Crisis*. There, he made a compelling case that the exegetical approach of the “Biblical Theology Movement,” which had been the reigning model among American Protestant academics, was failing as a theological enterprise, and that his own canon-exegetical approach was a theologically productive way forward.

ment of the Hebrew literature,”¹⁴ one can better understand the literature itself in its shape and scope and can also better relate the text to the community of faith which had for centuries understood it as “an authoritative body of Scripture.”¹⁵

The “canon-critical” approach employed by James Sanders bears strong similarities with Childs’s approach.¹⁶ Yet, whereas Childs’s approach aims at producing an exegesis for the Church of today, Sanders’s aim seems to be “to reconstruct the prehistory of the canon with historical-critical interests and tools.”¹⁷ As a result, the following will focus upon works carrying forward the emphases put forth in Childs’s program (hereafter “canonical exegesis” or “the canonical approach [to exegesis]”), recognizing that the aims of Sanders (hereafter the “canon-critical approach”) constitute a distinct, although similar, enterprise. Other literature responding to the canonical approach proceeds along one of three lines: 1) James Barr and some others argue that the canon exegetical program is dangerous and that biblical scholars ought rather to carry forward a program of

¹⁴ In 1979, Childs would maintain that approaches to the text prevalent at that time had attempted to limit themselves to addressing the history of the development of the text, and had thus failed to fully “understand the peculiar dynamics of Israel’s religious literature” and “to relate the nature of the literature correctly to the community which treasured it as Scripture” (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, 39-41).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 51. Childs would spend the rest of his career carrying forward this canonical approach in works of biblical theology (*Old Testament Theology* and *Biblical Theology*), Old Testament and New Testament introductions (*Introduction to the Old Testament* and *The New Testament as Canon*), Old Testament commentaries (*Exodus* and *Isaiah*), and one volume, published posthumously, on the Pauline corpus (*The Pauline Corpus*).

¹⁶ James A. Sanders, *Canon and Community: A Guide to Canonical Criticism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), *idem.*, *From Sacred Story to Sacred Text: Canon as Paradigm* (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1987).

¹⁷ Brett, *Biblical Criticism in Crisis?* 121. Childs rightly distinguished Sanders’s approach from his own (“Canonical Shape of the Prophetic Literature,” *Interpretation* 32 (1978): 54).

“modern biblical research” or “biblical criticism.”¹⁸ 2) Several scholars, including Mark Brett, are amenable to the canon exegetical approach, yet seek to bolster its theoretical basis by coupling it with post-modern literary theory.¹⁹ 3) Other scholars, such as Paul Noble, carry forward the canonical approach as Childs articulates it, without linking it to external epistemic assumptions.²⁰ In addition, scholars from all three groups raise questions concerning the proper implementation of the canonical approach arising from inconsistencies and ambiguities in the exegetical practice of Childs. I shall consider each of these lines of response before proposing a way forward.

Barr and the Defense of “Biblical Criticism”

James Barr sees the canonical approach to exegesis as fundamentally flawed.²¹

Barr’s critique employs three main lines of attack: 1) The citation of inconsistencies in

¹⁸ Barr, *Holy Scripture*; *idem.*, *The Concept of Biblical Theology: an Old Testament Perspective* (London, UK: SCM Press, 1999). See also Samuel Cheon, “B. S. Childs Debate with Scholars about His Canonical Approach,” *AJT* 11(1997): 343-357; John C. Poirier, “The Canonical Approach and the Idea of ‘Scripture,’” 11 (2005): 366-370.

¹⁹ Brett, *Biblical Criticism in Crisis*; Georg Steins, *Die Bindung Isaaks im Kanon, Gen 22: Grundlagen und Programm einer Kanonisch-Intertextuellen Lektüre: Mit einer Spezialbibliographie zu Gen 22* (Freiburg: Herder, 1999); George Lindbeck, “Postcritical Canonical Interpretation: Three Modes of Retrieval,” in *Theological Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Brevard S. Childs* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 26-50.

²⁰ Noble, *The Canonical Approach*; Scalise, *Hermeneutics as Theological Prolegomena*; and O’Neal, *Interpreting Habakkuk as Scripture*.

²¹ Barr, *Holy Scripture*; *idem.*, *The Concept of Biblical Theology: an Old Testament Perspective* (London, UK: SCM Press, 1999). Unlike *Holy Scripture*, *The Concept of Biblical Theology* does not focus exclusively upon the canonical approach. Moreover, Barr’s critique of Childs (and others) in the latter is essentially a re-articulation and entrenchment of the views already articulated in *Holy Scripture*. Among the various works that already defend the canonical approach against Barr’s critique, see Childs, review of James Barr, *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism*, 66-70; *idem.*, “Response to Reviewers of the Introduction to the OT as Scripture,” *JSOT* 16 (1980): 52-60; Iain Provan, “Canons to the Left of Him: Brevard Childs, His Critics, and the Future of Old Testament Theology,” *SJT* 50 (1997): 1-38; Brett, *Biblical Criticism in Crisis?* 118-148; Richard Topping, “The Canon and the Truth: Brevard Childs and James Barr on the Canon and the Historical-Critical Method,” *TJT* 8(1992): 239-260.

Childs's approach.²² 2) The theological/philosophical attack, which alleges that the canonical approach is theoretically unsound.²³ 3) The allegation of historical anachronism, claiming that the concept of canon is foreign to the Bible itself.²⁴ We will address each, in turn. 1) Barr argues that Childs fails to distinguish between canon as a list of received books, canon as an emphasis upon the final form of the text, and canon as an impulse towards holistic readings of the text.²⁵ At this point, Barr puts his finger on a real problem that hinders Childs's ability to employ the canonical approach clearly and consistently.²⁶

Yet, as Childs says in responding to Barr, the focus upon the canon as the context for exegesis proceeds from the recognition that "the process of religious interpretation by a historical faith community left its mark on a literary text which did not continue to evolve and which became the normative interpretation of those events to which it bore witness."²⁷ For a canonical approach, the authoritative status of the final form of the text, not the canonical process or the art of holistic reading, is authoritative for the faith com-

²² This line of assault is especially prominent in the chapter of *Holy Scripture* entitled "Further Adventures of the Canon," 75-104.

²³ Barr develops this critique in his concluding chapter of *Holy Scripture*, "The spiritual and intellectual basis of modern biblical research," 105-129. See also *idem.*, *Biblical Theology*, 401-438.

²⁴ See especially Barr, *Holy Scripture.*, 50-66.

²⁵ Barr, *Holy Scripture*, 75-82, c.f. *The Concept of Biblical Theology*, 602. Barr would eventually despair of any meaningful use for the term or concept of canon, alleging that "[t]here is no such thing as 'the' Christian canon, except in so far as we take 'canon' in a rather vague and imprecise sense," *The Concept of Biblical Theology*, 579.

²⁶ While Childs begins his program by emphasizing the final form of the text as determinative for the canonical context, and this emphasis continues throughout his work, rather than either consistently applying this description of "canon," he introduces confusion when he later decides to broaden "the term canon to encompass the complex process involved in religious usage of tradition which extended far back in Israel's history and exerted an increasing force in the post-exilic period," Childs, "Response to Reviewers," 53. While such a broadened definition would seem to imply an abandonment of his earlier declaration that "the study of the prehistory [of the text] has its proper function within exegesis only in illuminating the final text" (Childs, *Exodus*, xiv), Childs continues to use language emphasizing the determinative status of the "final form" (see "Response to Reviewers," 54), even late into his career (see, e.g., *Isaiah*, 4).

²⁷ Childs, review of James Barr, *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism*, 68.

munity. Of course, the canonical process and holistic readings both become of interest to a canon exegetical approach, but the assertion that the final form is authoritative constitutes the driving principle behind the approach. The key question at this point is not whether Childs himself was consistently committed to this driving principle. Rather, the question is whether or not this driving principle is untenable, as Barr alleges.

2) Is Barr correct, then, when he argues that the canonical approach is theological-ly and philosophically problematic, despite having a “sense of religious satisfaction?”²⁸ Barr defines “modern biblical research” or “biblical criticism” as “a literary mode of operation, which carries with it historical consequences,” within which “the standard and criterion for judging the validity of exegesis lies no longer in church doctrine, but in research;”²⁹ it “requires freedom of thought,” entailing a “creative prejudice” resulting in “a considerable degree of scientific objectivity” that produces “more ‘scientific’” results than theology is able to provide.³⁰ Barr argues that the canonical approach (which he labels “canon criticism”) entails a “conception of exegesis as a *purely* theological undertaking,” and thus violates Barr’s canons of modern biblical research.³¹

At first glance, this seems a curious line of attack; Barr criticizes the canonical approach for not doing modern biblical research (as Barr defines it), when the canonical approach does not claim to undertake “modern biblical research.” To the contrary, the canonical approach allows, engages with, encourages, and utilizes “biblical criticism” as a means to the end of answering historical questions; in this regard, canon critical ap-

²⁸ Barr, *Holy Scripture*, 104.

²⁹ Barr, *Holy Scripture*, 105, 108.

³⁰ Barr, *Holy Scripture*, 109.

³¹ Barr, *Holy Scripture*, 118.

approaches (as per Sanders) may be utilized as part of the process of canon exegetical approaches. Yet, when a canonical approach engages in its own exegesis the explicit goal is the appropriation of the text by the Church of today, not the reconstruction of historical events. Thus, it does something decidedly different from Barr's "biblical criticism." It would be more accurate, therefore, if Barr characterized the canonical approach as entailing a "conception of exegesis" *for the Church* that is a "theological undertaking;" a canonical approach allows for other modes of exegesis with other ends, but, for its own part, focuses upon bringing the Church into a fresh encounter with God through the text.

Barr's argument is convincing, however, if one shares Barr's *a priori* epistemic presuppositions. Throughout, Barr's critique consistently relies upon a positive evaluation of the Enlightenment resulting in a self-conscious commitment to an epistemic framework wherein humans, as free rational agents, are able to ascertain truth independent of any faith commitments or of any *a priori* theological presuppositions. Barr describes how, through the rigorous intellectual pursuit of truth, rational humans are able to ascertain the various facts necessary for the construction of theology. For Barr, theology does not come through revelation from above, but, rather, it moves inductively,³² and comes through discovery from below, in the assembly of data derived via "sub-theological disciplines."³³ Given such a view of knowledge, Barr concludes that the ca-

³² *Holy Scripture*, 22. See also *Biblical Theology*, 205-208.

³³ "Theology may be pictured as the apex of a pyramid, the lower levels of which consist of non-theological, or semi-theological, bodies of fact, and are controlled by non-theological, or semi-theological, disciplines; and what is decided at the ultimate theological level is in many respects dependent upon what is judged to be possible at these lower, not fully theological levels" (*Holy Scripture*, 117).

nonical approach is simultaneously unnecessary theologically and dangerous epistemically, as it militates, says Barr, against “freedom.”³⁴

Yet, as Provan asks of Barr:

Is the Enlightenment’s polarization of authoritative tradition and the freedom of reason at all adequate? With Gadamer and others, I should have thought the answer is clearly “no.” . . . [D]escription of a given object always presupposes a prior construction of that object in terms of a given interpretative paradigm.³⁵

In short, Barr’s view of knowledge is epistemologically and theologically problematic in that it: a) ignores the situatedness of finite human interpreters, and b) presumes that such a finite interpreter, via the collation and organization of finite facts and empirical data, can attain knowledge of a God who is infinite, transcendent, and non-empirical.³⁶

Childs’s approach moves along quite different lines. In one of his several responses to Barr, Childs gives a summation of his method that is worth quoting at length:

[T]he acceptance of the canon as normative does not function initially as a derivative of reasoned argument. The canon is the deposit of the religious community's sacred tradition which one receives as a member of that body . . . Does this mean that the relation to the canon is irrational and beyond the scope of all reasoned argument? Certainly not . . . The testimony of faith and not reason establishes the canon. Yet there is an internal logic of

³⁴ *Holy Scripture*, 123-125.

³⁵ Provan’s next words are even more scathing, when he concludes that “[t]o assert that this ‘freedom to follow critical methods wherever they lead’ actually exists in any absolute sense, then, is either to display signs of self-delusion or to suggest a conscious ideological move” (“Canons to the Left of Him,” 23-24; see also Topping, “The Canon and the Truth,” 248-251).

³⁶ Furthermore, Barr’s own use and description of “freedom” is inconsistent and problematic. In one paragraph, Barr states that “biblical research” encompasses “the entire universe of discourse in which scholarly knowledge of the Bible is advanced and maintained,” and thus entails “much scholarship which feels itself bound to reach the results required by this or that religious tradition and which in this sense is not critical” (*Holy Scripture*, 107-108). On the next page, however, Barr says that “research requires freedom of thought” (109-110). Then, a few pages later, Barr attempts to preempt potential criticism of biblical research on the ground that all research entails presuppositions (presuppositions which, presumably, are binding and somehow limit “freedom”); “critical scholars,” he says, “were if anything too much guided by” theological forces, yet still produced salutary work (113). Then, Barr concludes his book with an appeal for the preservation of enlightenment rational freedom through a brief reflection upon the Edict of Religious Toleration and the Declaration of Independence (123-125).

faith within the framework of the confession. The exact nature of the canon's authority must be an object of constant critical reflection within the community.³⁷

Therefore, unlike Barr's approach, the theological method of the canonical approach 1) acknowledges the limits of human reason and the situatedness of the individual and 2) does not presume that knowledge of the infinite and transcendent divine may be ascertained inductively through the careful examination of the finite cosmos; it leaves room for faith. And yet, it seeks to avoid fideism by engaging in the classic Anselmian method of "*fides quaerens intellectum*."³⁸ If, however, Barr's allegation that the canonical approach runs against the historical data is correct, then the canonical approach is mere fideism in that it proceeds from a faith claim that is historically erroneous. We turn, then, to consider Barr's historical objection to the canonical approach.

3) Barr avers that the Old Testament does not exhibit self awareness as scripture, i.e. authoritative religious literature, until very late, and that the concept of canon, i.e., a limited collection of authoritative books, is nowhere to be found in the Bible.³⁹ If, for the sake of the argument, one accepts Barr's definition of "canon" as a closed list of books, then it is mere tautology to aver that the canon did not exist until it was closed; a canonical hermeneutic that presupposes a closed canon of books that are authoritative for the believer today is in no way threatened by the acknowledgement that, at one time, these

³⁷ Childs "Response to Reviewers," 56.

³⁸ See St. Anselm, *Proslogion: With the Replies of Gaunilo and Anselm* (Thomas Williams, trans.; Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2001); Karl Barth, *Fides Quaerens Intellectum: Anselm's Proof of the Existence of God in the Context of his Theological Scheme* (Ian W. Robertson, trans.; Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1960).

³⁹ "There is thus a great difference between the religion of the Old Testament as it was for those who lived by it, and a religion controlled by Scripture" (*Holy Scripture*, 6. See also *The Concept of Biblical Theology* 563-580).

books did not yet constitute a completed and closed canon.⁴⁰ It is questionable, then, whether distinguishing between Scripture and canon in this way is helpful at all.⁴¹ If Barr means to say that the biblical books themselves exhibit absolutely no awareness of a movement towards inclusion in an authoritative collection at any stage, then this claim could be somewhat more problematic (though not decisive) for the canonical approach. Yet, it increasingly appears that such is not the case, with a growing group of scholars arguing for what Zipporah Talshir calls “closing phenomena” in Old Testament texts revealing a self-awareness of the final stages of the canonical process.⁴²

What, then, of Barr’s allegation that the earlier biblical texts do not even exhibit *scriptural* self awareness until late, and that, even then, the extent of the authority ascribed to scripture is limited?⁴³ To quote Provan,

[i]t is not at all clear . . . where the hard evidence lies that necessitates the view that texts later regarded as having special status as scripture were once not so regarded . . . It seems intrinsic in the careful preservation

⁴⁰ See Brett, *Biblical Criticism in Crisis?* 118-122. See also Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 62-67.

⁴¹ Barr does not contest the claim that, after the closure of the canon, the Church accepted the closed canon as the source of orthodox doctrine, Barr, *Holy Scripture*, 2-3.

⁴² Zipporah Talshir, “Several Canon-Related Concepts Originating in Chronicles,” *ZAW* 113 (2001): 386-403. As Talshir points out, “[a]ctual examples for such >closing phenomena< include the final editing of Psalms, which regarded the book as authoritative, and appended it to the Torah and the Prophets . . . the conclusion of Ecclesiastes . . . and, finally, Chr itself” (402). See Talshir’s article for other recent scholarship that views I and II Chronicles as containing strong signs of “closing phenomena” and canon consciousness. In a similar vein, several scholars have argued that there are intertextual links at the seams of the Tanakh indicating canon-consciousness at the macro level (so Stephen G. Dempster, “An ‘Extraordinary Fact:’ *Torah and Temple* and the Contours of the Hebrew Canon,” *TB* 48 [1997]: 23-53, 191-218, *idem*. “Canons on the Right and Canons on the Left: Finding a Resolution in the Canon Debate,” *JETS* 52 [2009]: 69-71, Joseph Belenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon: A Contribution to the Study of Jewish Origins* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1977), 85-88, 120-123, and Sailhamer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology*).

⁴³ Barr, *Holy Scriptures*, 3-23. Barr writes: “The idea of the near-absolute scriptural *control* of faith is a quite foreign conception, based on a quite different construct of problems, and read into the New Testament statements about Old Testament scripture by a later generation” (*ibid.*, 14).

and passing on of prophetic traditions, for example, that these traditions were already regarded at the point of origin as specially important.⁴⁴

Provan notes that, in order to support his claim, Barr must dismiss the “multitude of cross-references” between Old Testament texts as merely reflecting “a loose relation between books and traditions,” not any acknowledgement of scriptural authority.⁴⁵ Yet, when the vast range of inner-biblical allusions are read more carefully than Barr allows, a very different picture emerges, wherein such intertextual references imply a self-portrayal of the Scriptures as authoritative texts throughout the Old Testament.⁴⁶

Moreover, the canonical approach is concerned with the faith claim that the text of Scripture is authoritative for the Church today, and the question of whether or not it was considered authoritative by all members of its original audience is only of secondary concern. An “original” audience may have failed to feel the full authoritative force of a text, oracle, or tradition that the later faith community came to rightly recognize as authoritative for the faith community. As Brett points out, “some Israelite communities would have known, say, prophetic oracles, before they had actually acquired an authoritative status . . . [I]s this really a controversial point? The biblical texts concerned with true and false prophecy provide evidence enough for this kind of situation.”⁴⁷ In fact,

⁴⁴ Provan, “Canons to the Left of Him,” 8.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁶ Quoting Provan again, “the level of intertextuality among [OT texts] is extraordinarily high. It is not a trivial or marginal matter, this reality of cross-referencing. It is, rather, a central matter. It is, for example, an intrinsic feature of the nature of our OT narrative texts that they have come into their present form in relationship with each other and with torah and prophetic texts, the very form in which they are written inviting reference time and time again to these other scriptural texts” (“Canons to the Left of Him,” 8). OT texts at various stages reference other OT texts in a way that betrays an awareness of the authoritative status of the texts referenced (e.g., Psalm 8’s presupposition of a creation account very much like the account of Genesis 1), even if the purpose of the reference seems to be to reevaluate or call into question that authoritative status (e.g., Job’s allusion to Psalm 8 in Job 7:17-18).

⁴⁷ Brett, *Biblical Criticism in Crisis*, 120.

Isaiah is told to preach in such a way that the original audience will not acknowledge his message, though it is a divine message (Isa 6:9-10). Thus, the canonical approach may rest on a faith claim, but it is a faith claim that is consonant with the claims made by the biblical text itself. Moreover, such a faith claim poses no problem if the purpose of interpretation is to address an ecclesial body that already accepts the text as authoritative.

Therefore, there is much to commend a canonical approach as uniquely well suited for doing exegesis within the context of the Church. The claim for the authoritative status of Scripture presupposed by the canonical approach is consonant with the hermeneutical claims of many Christian interpreters from diverse traditions and times, as Childs is at pains to show and as Barr never contests,⁴⁸ and it is also consonant with the Scriptures' own self-presentation.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the faith claims that a canonical exegesis presupposes are arguably at least no less compelling than the Enlightenment claims presupposed by Barr. The canonical approach recognizes the situatedness of the interpreter, acknowledges the epistemic limits of the individual, and seeks to speak to the community of faith from within the community of faith. I do not argue here that the canonical approach is the only legitimate mode of interpretation, or that other interpretive approaches taken up by Barr or any other interpreter are illegitimate. Rather, the point being argued here is that canonical exegesis is a legitimate approach which is especially well suited to yield great insight for the Church of today, despite Barr's claims to the contrary.

⁴⁸ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 30-69.

⁴⁹ I agree with Provan's conclusion: "Childs is right when he claims that canon does not represent an arbitrary and late imposition on the OT texts, but is rather intrinsically bound up with the OT texts as we have them" ("Canons to the Left of Him," 11).

This dissertation, then, seeks to articulate a hermeneutic that embraces the faith commitment that underlies the canonical approach, but it does not seek to argue rationally for such a faith claim. One might object to this approach, claiming that it will only be of parochial interest. Yet, the presupposition that it is possible to forge objectively a single, totalizing hermeneutic that is not somehow parochial in scope betrays just the sort of epistemic naïveté that is untenable in our post-modern context. Furthermore, as I shall argue below, a canonical approach need not silence all other voices. Rather, on the one hand, a canonical approach seeks to glean insight from other approaches to the text, even if such approaches do not share the same aims and presuppositions as the canonical approach; on the other hand, a canonical approach will, in turn, yield insights that are of interest to practitioners of other approaches, as Barr himself acknowledges.⁵⁰ Additionally, the canonical approach is of special interest to one specific group—namely, those believers who share a faith commitment to the authoritative status of the canonical literature. Thus, the canonical approach is able to address a pressing need faced by the constituents of this group in a way that other approaches cannot; it addresses the need to understand and interpret Scripture as the authoritative measure of faith for the believing community in a way that is intellectually rigorous and conversant with the broad scope of scholarly biblical literature. We turn now, therefore, to consider some works of others who, unlike Barr, see the canon-exegetical approach as a worthwhile undertaking.

⁵⁰ In this regard, the canonical approach that I propose does not consider the current multiphonic state of Old Testament studies that Leo G. Perdue outlines (*The Collapse of History: Reconstructing Old Testament Theology* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994]; *Reconstructing Old Testament Theology: After the Collapse of History* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005]) to be an unmitigated ill plaguing the academic community. To the contrary, the frank admission of the situatedness of the interpreter by many current approaches to biblical studies enables a diverse field of scholars to pursue their work in a way that is honest about their presuppositions and faith commitments, creating a vibrant and vigorous environment for dialogue.

Mark Brett and the Insights of Post-Modern Literary Approaches

While many theological approaches to the text have gained traction in various circles in recent decades with none gaining ascendancy,⁵¹ a substantial body of literature has carried forward the canonical approach to exegesis. Much of this literature has acknowledged that, while Childs has produced exegetical insights, his work has left many questions unanswered regarding both the precise nature of the philosophical or theological basis for the approach and the implementation of the canonical approach in practice.⁵² As a result, some scholars attempt to “provid[e] the theoretical underpinning which Childs’ work needs”⁵³ by coupling the canon-exegetical approach with postmodern literary theory and related epistemic systems. For example, Brett, who sees Childs as inconsistent, argues that Childs is at his best when he exhibits post-modern, pluralistic tendencies.⁵⁴ “Childs,” he writes, “wants to put all our theological eggs in one basket—the canonical approach. It would be more responsible, on the pluralist argument, to distribute them widely.”⁵⁵ In Brett’s view, canonical exegesis is best understood in light of its

⁵¹ See, for example, Perdue, *Collapse of History* and *idem.*, *Reconstructing*.

⁵² “One important theme that keeps recurring . . . is that Childs’ own methodological foundations are insufficient for the superstructure he wishes to build upon them; and this has naturally led to various thinkers and schools of thought being suggested as providing the theoretical underpinning which Childs’ work needs” (Noble, *The Canonical Approach*, 6).

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Brett says that Childs is confused as to whether he wants to endorse his approach in a totalitarian manner, or whether he is willing to allow his approach to stand as one among many. So, for example, Brett says of Childs’s *Exodus* commentary that “[t]here seem to be two competing attitudes . . . The coherent attitude I shall characterize as hermeneutical ‘pluralism,’ and the incoherent one, hermeneutical ‘monism.’” Brett laments that “[u]nfortunately, Childs is more often a hermeneutical monist,” and then goes on to examine some “less happy examples” of Childs’s monistic tendencies, concluding that Childs’s approach fails when he adopts the monistic attitude (*Biblical Criticism in Crisis*, 41-47).

⁵⁵ Brett, *Biblical Criticism in Crisis*, 167.

affinities with post-modern literary theory.⁵⁶ Brett is not alone in attempting to construct a canonical approach upon a theoretical basis that derives from post-modern literary theory.⁵⁷

While Childs expresses appreciation for the insights of contemporary literary theory, he rejects attempts to utilize post-modern literary theory as a theoretical basis for a canonical approach.⁵⁸ Childs insists that his canonical approach has a fundamentally different “theological understanding of the nature and function of scripture,”⁵⁹ and that “a canonical approach” ought not “simply be relegated to one option within a pluralistic menu.”⁶⁰ The question at this point, then, is whether Brett is correct to insist that a canonical approach adopt a “pluralist” model, or whether Childs is correct that such a model is fundamentally incompatible with the canonical approach.

In the first place, it is worth noting that Brett’s work has made substantial contributions to the canonical approach in at least two regards. His appropriation of Gadamer’s idea of a “classic” to the canonical approach has provided a helpful framework within which to understand how and why a community of faith can justifiably focus its attention on the final form of the canonical text. Furthermore, Brett has reminded practitioners of

⁵⁶ It is worth pointing out, however, that some of the thinkers that Brett draws upon to construct a theoretical basis for Childs’s approach—such as Gadamer (135-148) and Childs’s colleagues Frei and Lindbeck (156-164)—are not necessarily relativistic or thoroughgoing pluralists in their approach.

⁵⁷ Georg Steins, for example, articulates a “kanonisch-intertextuelle Lektüre” on the basis of the textual theories of Kristeva and Bakhtin (*Die Bindung Isaaks im Kanon*). Similarly, George Lindbeck argues that Childs’s approach would work best within the context of Lindbeck’s own cultural linguistic model (“Postcritical Canonical Interpretation”).

⁵⁸ See especially Brevard S. Childs, “Critique of Recent Intertextual Canonical Interpretation,” *ZAW*, 115 (2003), 173-184.

⁵⁹ “For this reason,” Childs continues, “I remain highly critical of many modern literary proposals, which are theologically inert at best, and avowedly agnostic at worst” (*Isaiah*, 4).

⁶⁰ Childs goes on to say that the canon’s “function as scripture is to point to the substance (*res*) of its witness, to the content of its message, namely to the ways of God in the world (“Critique,” 176).”

the canonical approach that they need not dismiss out of hand all other approaches to the text as irrelevant and unable to produce theological insight. If, when speaking of the canonical text as “normative,”⁶¹ Childs means to marginalize all other approaches to the text as irrelevant or incapable of yielding theological insight, then Brett’s work offers a poignant corrective that practitioners of the canonical approach ought to take seriously.

Yet, Brett’s corrective goes too far if it intends to eliminate the normative status that the canonical text plays *within the canonical approach itself*. When it does so, Brett’s approach fails to do full justice to the canonical approach epistemologically and theologically. For all of their differences, Barr and Brett are agreed in presupposing the existence of only two diametrically opposed epistemic approaches, which Barr describes as “modern biblical criticism” on the one hand and “relativism” on the other, and Brett describes as “totalitarianism” on the one hand and “pluralism” on the other.⁶² The difference, of course, is that Barr sides with modern biblical criticism/totalitarianism, while Brett sides with relativism/pluralism; presupposing such a dichotomy forces Brett to imply that a canonical approach cannot co-exist alongside of other approaches and to engage in fruitful dialogue with other approaches without abandoning its core claim that the canon has an authoritative status for the faith community.

The canonical approach affirms the belief that there is a meaning in the text and that the text is authoritative for faith within the community of believers, while at the same time acknowledging that these claims are faith claims, and not claims made on the basis

⁶¹ Childs, review of James Barr, *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism*, 68.

⁶² Barr argues that, in introducing a distinction between the meaning of the text for the people of the biblical era and the meaning of the text for the Church of today, a canonical approach is “in tune with the rather radical thinking associated with ‘cultural relativism.’” Such a view, Barr says, brings about “a much more serious breach with traditional Christianity than anything that biblical criticism brought about” (*Holy Scripture* 64-65).

of rationalistic argumentation.⁶³ In so doing, a canonical approach differs from both the modern/totalitarian view and from the relativist/pluralist view. On the one hand, it acknowledges the interpreter's situatedness. Yet, on the other hand, it avoids asserting that ontic truth is not noetically attainable and lapsing into epistemic nihilism. Furthermore, while canonical exegesis finds the idea "that there is only one fixed, 'objective' meaning to a given text which only needs to be critically excavated" to be problematic, this does not mean that it completely relativizes the text's meaning.⁶⁴ Thus, while Brett's insights may help to clarify the canonical approach, if Brett's "pluralism" is applied in a sweeping fashion, so that the interpreter may not acknowledge the authoritative status of the canonical text, then Brett's proposed modifications run against the claims of the canonical approach. For those who share the faith commitment that the canonical text plays an authoritative role for faith and practice and embrace the canonical approach, Brett has offered valuable insights, but they must be applied with caution.

Paul Noble and the Continuation of the Canonical Approach

Other scholars agree that the canonical approach to exegesis need not be coupled with a pluralist epistemic framework and attempt to carry forward the enterprise in a way that is more in keeping with Childs's emphases.⁶⁵ While some simply move forward in

⁶³ See, for example, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning in This Text?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), especially pages 455-457.

⁶⁴ "The entire OT," he says, "is consistent in confessing that there is a divine address in Scripture," and "both synagogue and Church assigned a unique value to the text's plain sense," implicitly maintaining "some form of authorial intent." Thus, Childs concludes, "When Steins' theory of intertextuality eliminates the privileged status of the canonical context and removes all hermeneutical value from any form of authorial intent, an interpretive style emerges that runs directly contrary to the function of an authoritative canon which continues to serve a confessing community of faith and practice" ("Critique," 176-177).

⁶⁵ Noble, *The Canonical Approach*, Scalise, *Hermeneutics as Theological Prolegomena*, and O'Neal, *Interpreting Habakkuk as Scripture*.

applying Childs's approach either to exegesis or to constructive theology, others recognize that work remains to be done on the theoretical level to strengthen and clarify the approach. For example, Paul Noble notes Childs's failure to address directly the theoretical underpinnings of the canonical approach;⁶⁶ he attempts to address this shortcoming while at the same time seeking to understand Childs on his own terms without superimposing an alien epistemic view upon the canonical approach.⁶⁷ Noble proposes eight helpful methodological alterations to the approach of Childs, resulting in a balanced and insightful assessment.⁶⁸ Noble's changes are helpful in that they highlight two methodological convictions which are necessary for a canon-exegetical approach yet stand in tension with one-another: the recognition of intentionality as an exegetical criterion and the allowance for textual multivalence.⁶⁹ He provides a way to keep these two convictions in fruitful tension by suggesting the adoption of a formal, but not material, model of inspiration.⁷⁰ Yet Noble leaves many theoretical questions about the approach unresolved.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Noble astutely observes that, "[a]lthough, officially, 'canonical context' is the fundamental principle of [Childs's] approach, what often seems to be doing the real work (although from just below the surface) is a belief in the 'inspiration' . . . of the canonical text In other words, granted a suitable doctrine of inspiration, the rest of Childs' programme flows naturally from it" (*The Canonical Approach*, 30-31). Whether or not one agrees with Noble's choice of the phrase "doctrine of inspiration" here, Noble is correct that Childs's theological presuppositions are "just below the surface," and in need of a full articulation if a canonical exegesis is to succeed.

⁶⁷ Noble, *The Canonical Approach*.

⁶⁸ Noble, *The Canonical Approach*, 368-370. Noble's response contrasts with Brett's post-modern response, yet does not represent a complete return to a modernistic epistemology.

⁶⁹ Noble, *The Canonical Approach*, 368-370.

⁷⁰ Noble, *The Canonical Approach*, 340-350.

⁷¹ While Noble himself has acknowledged that "Childs' own methodological foundations are insufficient" (*The Canonical Approach*, 6), Noble refuses to look outside of Childs's own work to solve these deficiencies. Thus, his insistence that the model of inspiration should be formal, but not material enables him to avoid imposing a foreign doctrine upon Childs, but keeps him from clearly articulating what the theological basis or nature of this model of inspiration ought to be.

One could multiply this survey to consider other scholars sympathetic to Childs's approach, such as O'Neal, Scalise, and Provan. These scholars have responded positively to Childs's approach, agreeing with Childs's vision and main emphases. Noble and Brett, however, represent the secondary literature accurately in that, while progress has been made, work remains to be done in clarifying the theoretical underpinnings of the canonical approach. Some attempt to locate Childs within a pluralist epistemic framework, producing some insight into the approach and elucidating its affinities with contemporary literary approaches; Yet Brett and others fail to allow canonical exegesis to have a truly normative role in Christian theology, producing an approach that is decidedly at odds with the faith claims that underlie the canonical approach. Others accept Childs on his own terms, and works such as Noble's have clarified the approach. Thus, the canonical approach, in the spirit of Brevard Childs, is alive and well, and a growing body of literature testifies to its continuing viability. Nevertheless, work remains to be done, particularly to bring further theological clarity to the approach.

Questions Concerning the Implementation of the Canonical Approach

The need for further study is evident when one considers the questions that scholars have raised concerning the implementation of the canon exegetical approach. A brief survey of some of the places where Childs has been criticized for the manner in which he carries out his approach reveals some of the difficult questions that a canonical approach must address if it is to be implemented successfully. First of all, Childs's literature has not been able to demonstrate consistently how one ought to relate diachronic and synchronic interpretations of a canonical text or to articulate clearly the interpretive relation-

ship between the pre-canonical forms of the text and the final form.⁷² Some of the inconsistencies result from his failure to stay committed to his own principle that the text's final form is the proper focus of canonical exegesis; a firm commitment to this foundational principle would eliminate many of Childs's inconsistencies.⁷³ Nevertheless, the question of the role of pre-canonical forms of a text is a difficult one, and attempts to carry forward the canon-exegetical approach must attend to the matter with care.

Similarly, scholars express concern and confusion about the relationship between the Old and New Testaments in Childs's program.⁷⁴ A related question pertains to the role of the authority of the Church. The canon (not the Church) sets the normative context for exegesis, yet the canon is the collection of texts that the Church has received.

⁷² Addressing "the relation between diachronic and synchronic interpretation in [Childs's] *Exodus* commentary," Brett concludes that "Childs's actual exegetical practice is at times marred by conceptual confusion" (*Biblical Criticism in Crisis?* 52). This confusion continues in his more recent *Isaiah* commentary, where he states that "in the end, it is the canonical text that is authoritative, not the process" (Childs, *Isaiah*, 4), but spends much of his commentary discussing redactional layers underlying the Book of Isaiah. Thus, one reviewer laments, "My only wish is that Childs would have further developed this concept [of the priority of the canonical text over the process] throughout his commentary" (Paul D. Wegner, review of Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary*, *JETS* 45 [2002], 692-694), while another says that, for all of the avowed emphasis on unity, Childs allows sub-sections of Isaiah "to interact only rarely and superficially" (Reed Lessing, review of Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary*, *CJ* 28 [2002], 470).

⁷³ For example, in a review responding to Barr's criticisms, Childs admits that "certainly, some of [Childs's] own formulations need improvement and more precision." Yet, in that same review, Childs adds to the confusion, saying at one point that the final form of the text "became the normative interpretation," and then saying elsewhere that his "intention was to suggest that the final form would function [merely] as the starting point for exegesis," and that the interpreter must look beneath the final form for earlier stages of shaping (review of Barr *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism*, 67-69).

⁷⁴ Noble singles out Childs's inability to articulate clearly the relationship between the testaments as especially problematic. Noble argues that, despite Childs's claim to read both testaments as bearing witness to Christ, Childs's *Old Testament Theology* is almost devoid of references to Christ, and his *Biblical Theology* is unconvincing in its Christological reading of the Old Testament, (*The Canonical Approach* 65-76). In contrast to Noble's assessment, Walter Brueggemann says that "the Old Testament is enveloped in New Testament claims and nearly disappears" in the second part of Childs's *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments (Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997], 731). The conflicting assessments of Noble and Brueggemann highlight the confusion that scholars express in understanding how, exactly, Childs expects to hear the distinctive voice of each testament and at the same time understand both testaments as speaking of Christ.

Where does this put the authority of Church teaching and tradition,⁷⁵ and what role ought the history of exegesis ought to play in a canonical approach?⁷⁶

While acknowledging the need to address such questions with greater clarity, scholars such as Brett, Noble, Lindbeck, Scalise, Provan, and O’Neal continue to embrace the canonical approach. Furthermore, while much work remains to be done, others carrying forward the canon-exegetical approach have been able to preserve the main emphases articulated by Childs while addressing some of the shortcomings and inconsistencies in the approach.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, much work remains to be done, especially in refining and strengthening the theological underpinnings of the approach to provide more clarity and consistency in the implementation of canonical exegesis.⁷⁸ The present dissertation will contribute to ongoing attempts to carry forward the canonical approach to ex-

⁷⁵ For example, Barr alleges (erroneously) that the canonical approach to exegesis entails “in effect a sharing of authority between scripture and the patristic period” (*Holy Scripture*, 66). Ongoing work on the canon-exegetical approach must both address this claim at the theoretical level and, in so doing, work out the proper role for Church teaching and tradition in exegetical practice.

⁷⁶ Brett, *Biblical Criticism in Crisis?* 57. The omission in his *Isaiah* commentary of a section on the history of exegesis (which he included in his *Exodus* commentary) may reflect a shift in Childs’ thinking. Nevertheless, Childs has not explicitly stated why he omitted the history of exegesis section in *Isaiah*, leaving readers to guess as to how, if at all, the history of interpretation is to function in a canonical exegesis. The fact that Childs published *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), which selectively treats the history of interpretation of Isaiah, a few years after the publication of his *Isaiah* commentary should guard anyone against assuming that Childs’s later works abandon any interest in the history of interpretation.

⁷⁷ In addition to the works of Brett, Noble, Scalise, Provan, and O’Neal, mentioned above, works utilizing a canonical approach in tune with the one described here include: Jochen Teuffel, “Fate and Word: The Book of Esther as Guidance to the Canonical Reading of Scripture,” *CTM* 36 (2009): 26-31; Jon M. Isaak, “Hearing God’s Word in the Silence: A Canonical Approach to 1 Corinthians 14.34-35,” *Direction* 24 (1995): 55-64; Rolf Rendtorff, *The Canonical Hebrew Bible: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Deo, 2005); and Robert W. Moberly, *From Eden to Golgotha: Essays in Biblical Theology* (SFSiHJ 52; Atlanta: Scholars, 1992).

⁷⁸ While the literature carrying forward the canonical approach has provided great insight, works have tended either to focus exclusively upon the theoretical questions or to move quickly forward to exegesis. While Brett (*Biblical Criticism in Crisis*) and Noble (*The Canonical Approach*) focus on the methodological issues, O’Neal (*Interpreting Habakkuk*) and Isaak (“Hearing God’s Word”) focus on putting the canonical approach into practice. Yet, as Noble notes at the end of his expansive theoretical assessment of Childs, “the methodological arguments are unlikely to develop fruitfully unless they are conducted in the context of concrete . . . exegetical work.” (Noble, *The Canonical Approach*, 370).

egesis, first by briefly clarifying some of the questions that remain concerning the theological underpinnings of the approach, and then by extensively applying the approach to Psalm 8 in a way that is consistently attentive to the theoretical issues at hand. I will seek to shine fresh light upon the canonical approach by bringing the approach into dialogue with a theological treatise that attends directly to the question of the theological basis for Christian exegesis: Saint Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana*.

*Towards Greater Theological Clarity:
The Canonical Approach in Dialogue with De Doctrina Christiana*

One reasonable way to advance the canon exegetical program is to look for someone who has clearly articulated a theological foundation for exegesis and, through careful interaction with their work, strengthen the theological foundation of the approach. Many theological works, including some recent literature, address the theological basis for exegesis in a way that resonates with the canonical approach.⁷⁹ Therefore, practitioners of the canonical approach would be wise to interact with a broad array of works dealing with theological hermeneutics. Nevertheless, in order to achieve lucid brevity, I will select two primary interlocutors—one representing a thoroughgoing theology of exegesis (Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana*) and another representing the canonical approach (Childs)—with which to dialogue.

The concise treatise *De doctrina Christiana* is especially well suited to aid in clarifying the canonical approach for several reasons. First of all, Augustine has been influential throughout Western Christendom, and his hermeneutical thought is no excep-

⁷⁹ In addition to Scalise (*From Scripture to Theology*), who applies the canonical approach to constructive theology, Kevin Vanhoozer also approaches theology in a canonical fashion that resonates with the canon-exegetical approach outlined in this chapter *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* [Louisville: WJK, 2005].

tion. Thus, choosing Augustine as an interlocutor has the benefit of 1) broadening the discussion beyond the parochial limitations of Reformed Protestant thought to include other Christians in the discussion while 2) honestly highlighting the Protestant distinctives that underlie the canonical approach. Among Augustine's variegated works,⁸⁰ *De doctrina Christiana* commends itself as the source for Augustinian hermeneutical theory and method best suited for the present purposes in that it concisely articulates a Scriptural hermeneutic⁸¹ that reflects both the early stages and the mature development of Augustine's exegetical theory,⁸² and it has had "an extraordinarily fruitful history of influence, which has continued for many centuries."⁸³

Furthermore, *De doctrina Christiana* addresses questions especially germane to a canon-exegetical approach to Scripture, and it does so from an epistemic stance that is compatible with that of the canonical approach. Augustine addresses both the hermeneutical role that the tradents who pass on the Scriptures play, and the hermeneutical role

⁸⁰ As Van Fleteren puts it, "Augustine's hermeneutic is difficult to study," and "while most of [his] scriptural themes are constant, they evolve over the years;" the difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that "Augustine's axioms of biblical interpretation are scattered throughout his works." ("Principles of Augustine's Hermeneutic: An Overview," in *Augustine: Biblical Exegete* [New York: Augustinian Historical Institute at Villanova University, 2001], 2).

⁸¹ See James J. O'Donnel, "Doctrina Christiana, De," in *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 278.

⁸² While Augustine began *De doctrina Christiana* early in his bishopric, he completed it later in his ministry, endorsing the earlier sections without altering them. "The circumstances of composition are imperfectly known, but are clearly tied up with Augustine's understanding of his own position as a bishop at the outset of his Episcopal career (roughly 395/6). What we know comes from the note in the *Retractiones* (2.4) which places the work at the outset of his bishopric but tells us that he left it incomplete and finished it at about the time he wrote the *Retractiones*" (O'Donnel, "Doctrina Christiana, De," 278).

⁸³ Christof Schäublin, "De doctrina christiana: A Classic of Western Culture?" in *De doctrina Christiana: A Classic of Western Culture* (ed. Duane W. H. Arnold and Pamela Bright; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 48. For a collection of essays on the influence of *De doctrina* in the middle ages, see *Reading and Wisdom: The De doctrina Christiana of Augustine in the Middle Ages* (ed. Edward D. English; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995). See also Duane W. H. Arnold, "To Adjust Rather than to Reconcile: *De doctrina Christiana* and the Oxford Movement," in *De doctrina Christiana: A Classic of Western Culture*, 207-216.

that the Scriptures themselves play, and he addresses these roles within the context of a theological framework. Also, as I have shown above, canonical exegesis does not fit easily into either a modern/totalizing or a pluralist/relativist epistemic framework; similarly, *De doctrina Christiana* articulates a hermeneutic of *fides quaerens intellectum* which, on the one hand, recognizes the situatedness of the reader while, on the other hand, is not epistemically nihilistic. This is of special interest in light of the appropriation of Augustine by current literary theorists;⁸⁴ *De doctrina Christiana* may provide a means of incorporating some insights of postmodern literary theory into canonical exegesis, without adopting a relativist epistemic framework.⁸⁵

In light of these considerations, the following section will survey Augustine's hermeneutic, giving special attention to the theological framework, the role of the rule of faith, and the role of the self-interpretation of Scripture (the "analogy of Scripture").⁸⁶ Next, I will clarify some of the theological questions lying at the foundation of the canonical approach by bringing Augustine's hermeneutic into conversation with the canonical approach. The reader must bear in mind, however, that what follows does not purport to be a wholesale acceptance of either Childs or Augustine. Rather, I will argue for a canon-exegetical approach which builds extensively upon these two thinkers, but is completely my own, and I will part company with Childs and Augustine at points.

⁸⁴ Cyril O'Regan, "De doctrina Christiana and Modern Hermeneutics" in *De doctrina Christiana: A Classic of Western Culture*, 217-243; Phillip J. Donnelly, *Rhetorical Faith: The Literary Hermeneutics of Stanley Fish* (ELMS 84; Victoria: English Literary Studies, 2000).

⁸⁵ See Frances M. Young, "Augustine's Hermeneutic and Postmodern Criticism," in *Interpretation* 58 (2004) 42-55.

⁸⁶ I am well aware that this term "analogy of scripture" is an anachronistic way to describe Augustine's thought. Following Prosper Grech, who uses the phrase to put Augustine's thought "into modern terms," I will use the phrase "analogy of scripture" as short hand for the instrumental use of scripture in the process of the interpretation of scripture ("Hermeneutical Principles of Saint Augustine in *Teaching Christianity*," in *Teaching Christianity: De Doctrina Christiana. The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21'st Century, Part I, vol. 11*. [Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1996], 86).

The Hermeneutic of De doctrina Christiana

In Book I of *De doctrina*, Augustine establishes the goal of interpretation as the identification of the things to which signs, such as words, refer. Augustine then undertakes a discussion of the “things” to which the signs of Scripture point, wherein he summarizes “the content of Christian doctrine,”⁸⁷ which includes the believer’s participation in the truths of that doctrine.⁸⁸ Augustine goes on to assert that the apprehension of the “thing” (reality) that lies behind the signs of Scripture produces “love.”⁸⁹ Thus, a proper understanding of the Scriptures will bring about love—love of God and of neighbor—as a result.⁹⁰ This is not to say that every passage simply means “love God and love your neighbor.” “Love” for Augustine is “the motion of the soul toward the enjoyment of God for his own sake, and the enjoyment of one’s self and one’s neighbor for the sake of God.”⁹¹ Thus, the reader’s ultimate goal is not a mere cognitive apprehension of data, but a transformation by and participation in faith, resulting in a life of self giving love.⁹²

⁸⁷ O’Donnell, “*Doctrina Christiana, De*,” 279.

⁸⁸ Lewis Ayres points out that Book I is not simply a static description of abstract doctrine, but also a statement of the Christian’s participation in the Truth of that doctrine. “If Book I of *De doctrina* sets out the rule of faith,” he writes, “then the journey of the affections that constitutes Christian life in Christ is itself at the heart of the rule (“Augustine on the Rule of Faith,” 38).

⁸⁹ “So what all that has been said amount to, while we have been dealing with things, is that ‘the fulfillment and the end of the law’ and all the divine scriptures ‘is love’ (Rom 13:8; I Tm 1:5); love of the thing which is to be enjoyed, and the thing which is able to enjoy that thing together with us” (*Doc Chris.*, Book I).

⁹⁰ According to Augustine, the end “of all the divine scriptures ‘is love’ (Rom 13:8; I Tim 1:5); love of the thing which is to be enjoyed, and of the thing which is able to enjoy that thing together with us” (*Doc Chris.*, Book I: 35).

⁹¹ Donnelly, *Rhetorical Faith*.

⁹² See, for example, Tarmo Toom, who argues that Augustine’s hermeneutic is Christological (*Thought Clothed With Sound: Augustine’s Christological Hermeneutics in De Doctrina Christiana* [New York: Peter Lang, 2002]).

Augustine later describes how, when the tools available through common human knowledge are insufficient for the interpretation of Scripture, the interpreter of Scripture is to proceed.⁹³ When a passage's interpretation is uncertain, Augustine says, the reader "should refer it to the rule of faith, which you have received from the plainer passages of scripture and from the authority of the Church."⁹⁴ Thus, the relationship between the rule of faith, Scripture, and the teaching of the Church is mutually reciprocal, and Augustine's hermeneutic is a mutually interpretive circle. The goal of scriptural exegesis is to move from the sign to the "thing," or reality, which is the faith in which the believer participates for the sake of love. When, due to difficulties in the exegetical task, the believer is unsure what, exactly, is the "thing" to which a given "sign" refers, she is to consult the rule of faith, which is itself a summation of the Scriptures' *res*.

Thus, some have seen Augustine's hermeneutic as "une interprétation finaliste"⁹⁵ that exhibits a circularity such that "Augustine knows what scripture will say before he begins to read it."⁹⁶ Yet, in the first place, God, not Augustine, is the author of the hermeneutical process at every point, and the interpreter seeks out and anticipates the trans-

⁹³ *Doc Chris.*, Book III.

⁹⁴ *Doc Chris.*, Book III: 2. Book I addresses the "things" to which Scripture bears witness. Special care is necessary at this point to understand what Augustine means by "the rule of faith." The reader might be tempted to assume that the early church shared one uniform conception of the definition of the term "rule of faith," and fail to understand Augustine on his own terms. As Lewis Ayres demonstrates, however, it would be a mistake to identify Augustine's use of the phrase "the rule of faith" with earlier writers such as Origen, or even contemporaries such as Ambrose. We must look to Augustine himself to understand what Augustine means by "the rule of faith."

⁹⁵ Tzvetan Todorov, *Symbolisme et Interprétation* (Paris: Seuil, 1978), 91-124. According to Todorov, patristic exegesis, exemplified in *De doctrina Christiana*, was merely a means of artificially manipulating the text so that the sense of the text could be forced into an identification with the teaching of the Church. For a brief survey of Todorov's approach that insightfully highlights the problems inherent in Todorov's view, see Isabelle Bochet, "Le cercle herméneutique dans le *De doctrina christiana* d'Augustin," *Studia Patristica* 33 (1997), 16-18.

⁹⁶ O'Donnell, 281.

formation of the self.⁹⁷ One might respond that Augustine has, in fact constructed the divine author within his own hermeneutical thought in a way that ultimately results in self fulfilling circularity. Such an account of Augustine is problematic on two levels: 1) It rejects any hermeneutic wherein God is involved in the process, taking a stance that eliminates the possibility of any approach to the text that seeks to encounter the divine. 2) It misconstrues the aim of Augustine's hermeneutic. As Donnelly notes, one must be careful to avoid "imposing upon [Augustine's] terms the rationalist categories of a mastering subject and a sub-personal object."⁹⁸ The goal of Augustine's hermeneutic is an encounter with the divine resulting in a life of love, not the mere apprehension of data.

To summarize, then, while God stands outside of the hermeneutical circle, the human interpreter stands within the circle, and the process of interpretation is not a mere cognitive act, but a participation in the ascent of the soul to God.⁹⁹ The "rule of faith," then, is not merely a static set of data. It is the believer's participation in redemption through Christ, an ascent of the soul wherein she moves towards the enjoyment of "The Thing" which alone is to be enjoyed above all else: the triune God. This distinctive aim of interpretation results in a hermeneutical circle that is neither vicious nor solipsistic.

⁹⁷ Augustine is clear that God alone stands outside the circle as the author of the hermeneutical circle, of the interpretive process, and of the text itself (*De doctrina Christiana*, Book II: 6, Book III: 27). God alone is the author of the task, the "thing" (*res*) which alone is to be enjoyed, the content of the Christian faith, and the "thing" to which the "signs" in Scripture refer (Book I: 22).

⁹⁸ Donnelly, *Rhetorical Faith*, 96.

⁹⁹ Lewis Ayres's treatment of Augustine's use of the rule of faith in light of his structure of Book I is instructive at this point: Book I contains two sections: pars. 5-19, and pars. 22-40. The first section, which addresses the "thing," has a creedal structure, and addresses specifically "the journey that must be made to see that which is to be enjoyed." That journey is made possible through Christ's descent in the incarnation and his ascent which "forms hope: the Church his body is trained for life with Him." The second section, which addresses the "use" of things (and of "The Thing," the triune God) culminates by returning to Christ as "both way and goal through the divine condescension." From this, Ayres concludes that "if Book I of *De doctrina* sets out the rule of faith, then the journey of the affections that constitutes Christian life in Christ is itself at the heart of the rule." Ayres, 37-38. See also, *doc Chr.* Book I: 8, and 34.

Having thus adumbrated the hermeneutic of *De doctrina Christiana*, we may now attend to bringing Augustine's hermeneutic to bear upon a canon-exegetical approach.

De Doctrina Christiana and Canonical-Exegesis

How, then, is *De doctrina Christiana* relevant for ongoing attempts to forge a successful canon-exegetical program? In the first place, the focus of the first three books is the articulation of a theoretical and theological basis for exegesis.¹⁰⁰ Thus, whereas Childs and others have passed over theological questions, Augustine has tackled the theological questions head on. As a result, *De doctrina Christiana* provides a starting point for addressing the allegation of critics such as Barr that, despite a superficial "sense of religious satisfaction," the canonical approach is methodologically and theologically flimsy.¹⁰¹ Significantly, *De doctrina Christiana* provides a valuable starting point for articulating how one might evade attempts to force the canonical approach into one side or the other of the totalizing/relativizing binary. *De doctrina Christiana* does so by 1) acknowledging the situatedness of the interpreter without relativizing all knowledge, 2) conceiving of the ultimate goal of exegesis as an encounter with the divine, not the cognitive apprehension of data or mastery of the world, while 3) seeing the acquisition of knowledge from the text as an important part of the exegetical process.

¹⁰⁰ As Christoph Schäublin points out, *De doctrina Christiana* is neither an exegetical handbook nor a treatise on the Christian usage of the liberal arts; too many questions of exegetical practice are left unanswered and the liberal arts are not in the foreground. Schäublin, Rather, Books I-III of *De doctrina Christiana* are concerned with articulating a theological framework for scriptural hermeneutics. "[W]e might say," writes Schäublin, "that Augustine . . . on a theoretical level, embraces in *De doctrina christiana* the question of how such a science [of *praecepta* of biblical interpretation] should ideally be presented and carried out" ("*De doctrina christiana*" 53-55).

¹⁰¹ Barr, *Holy Scripture*, 104.

Barr might respond that, like the canonical approach, *De doctrina*'s hermeneutic is actually "in tune with . . . 'cultural relativism,'"¹⁰² since the interpreter knows "what scripture will say before he begins to read it."¹⁰³ Yet, it bears repeating that one must be careful to avoid "imposing upon [Augustine's] terms the rationalist categories of a mastering subject and a sub-personal object."¹⁰⁴ For Augustine, the interpreter is not merely looking for knowledge, but is looking for a transformative encounter with the divine.¹⁰⁵ Thus, the interpreter does not know in advance what that encounter will entail. Furthermore, Augustine's interpreter is not free to find any meaning she wishes; rather, she is constrained both by the mutually interpretive elements of Augustine's hermeneutical circle and by the divine author. Finally, Augustine's hermeneutic differs significantly from much of post-modern literary theory which "never admits even the consideration of mind-independent reality,"¹⁰⁶ while Augustine's hermeneutic is predicated upon the belief in a divine author who is the ground of all mind-independent reality.¹⁰⁷

Escaping the totalizing/relativizing binary in this way provides a framework which can deal with some of the tensions inherent in the implementation of the canonical

¹⁰² Barr, *Holy Scripture*, 65.

¹⁰³ O'Donnel, "Doctrina Christiana, De," 281.

¹⁰⁴ Donnelly, *Rhetorical Faith*, 96.

¹⁰⁵ Augustine's view, then, is markedly different from that of Barr. Barr claims that "theology begins when we pass by the sense of religious satisfaction and begin to pose the question of truth" (*Holy Scripture*, 104), implying that "truth" is reducible to abstract propositional facts. For Augustine, by contrast, the *res* which is the object of exegesis (and theology) is the personal, trinitarian God (c.f. Donnelly, *Rhetorical Faith*, 73).

¹⁰⁶ Donnelly, *Rhetorical Faith*, 73. Here, Donnelly is describing Stanley Fish's attempt to embrace anti-formalism over and against formalism. Fish, no doubt, would see Barr as a "proud formalist."

¹⁰⁷ As Kevin Vanhoozer points out, while the belief in reality beyond the text (or even beyond the interpreter) is an act of faith, so, also, is the belief that there is no such reality (*Is There Meaning in This Text*, 455-457).

approach. The theology of *De doctrina Christiana* enables Augustine to hold in balance, on the one hand, understanding the text to have an intentionality that supplies the normative context within which legitimate interpretation must operate and, on the other hand, understanding the text to have a multivalence independent of the human author's original intention. According to Augustine,

When from the same words of scripture not just one, but two or more meanings may be extracted, even if you cannot tell which of them the writer intended, there is no risk if they can all be shown from other places of the holy scriptures to correspond with the truth . . . [C]ertainly the Spirit of God who produced these texts through him foresaw without a shadow of doubt that [a meaning not intended by the human author] would occur to some reader or listener; or rather he actually provided that it should occur to them, because it is upheld by the truth [i.e., it does not violate the rest of Scripture or Church teaching].¹⁰⁸

Thus, by identifying God as both the author and the object of the hermeneutical task, Augustine is able to maintain a fruitful tension between intentionality and multivalence. Maintaining this tension is especially important for a canon-exegetical approach which seeks to relate a text's historical function with its canonical function and to relate both to the life of the contemporary believer.

Furthermore, bringing Augustine's hermeneutic into dialogue with the canonical approach provides a context for addressing adequately some of the more difficult issues involved in the implementation of canonical exegesis. Three such issues demand special attention: 1) The question of the interpretive relationship between the final form of the text and the shape of the broader canon within which the final form of the text appears, 2) The question of the interpretive relationship between the final form of the text and hypothetical pre-canonical forms of the text, and 3) the question of determining appropriate boundaries for legitimate interpretation.

¹⁰⁸ *Doc Chr.*, Book III: 27.

1) Augustine's hermeneutic provides a starting point for understanding the relationship between the hermeneutical roles of the final canonical form of the text and the location of a given text within the broader canonical context by maintaining the tension between the intention of the divine author and the multivalence of the text. The Scriptures and the traditions of the Scriptures, for Augustine, both have an interpretive function. Thus, if it can be shown that the ordering of various books within the canon reflects the way in which the later collectors of those books have understood them to relate to one another, the situation of a text within the ordering of the broader canon is hermeneutically informative.¹⁰⁹ So, in the case of Psalm 8, a canonical exegesis ought to attend to signs of intentional placement in connection with the location of the psalm in the Psalter, and the location of the Psalter within the Ketuvim, Tanakh, and Christian Bible.

The question remains, however, as to how the interpreter ought to negotiate the interplay between Scripture and tradition. Bringing *De doctrina* into dialogue with Childs provides an opportunity to delineate more precisely the mutually interpretive relationship between the two. On the one hand, Childs's canonical approach acknowledges a canonical authoritative status only for the final form of the Christian Scriptures. On the other hand, Augustine's hermeneutic places church teaching, the rule (*kanon*) of faith, and the canon of Scripture all within the interpretive circle; one might therefore conclude that all of the elements of Augustine's hermeneutical circle are equally authoritative.¹¹⁰

To proceed clearly and consistently, a canonical approach must begin by affirming that,

¹⁰⁹ I do not here mean to imply that this mutually interpretive relationship lead Augustine to draw any conclusions concerning the ordering of canonical texts.

¹¹⁰ So, for example, concerning the question of what constitutes "the canon of the scriptures," Augustine says that "for the canonical scriptures, they should follow the authority of the majority of the Catholic Churches, among which, of course, are those that have the privilege of being apostolic sees and having received letters from the apostles," *Doc Chr.*, Book II, 12.

while a canonical exegesis gives a significant interpretive role to church teaching and the tradition (especially in the case of the reception and shaping of the canon), it gives pride of place to the role of the Scriptures themselves. Richard Hays' description of the relationship between the Scriptures and tradition aptly summarizes the view presupposed by the canon-exegetical approach of this dissertation:

The classic formula remains serviceable: Scripture is *norma normans* ("the norming norm"), while tradition is *norma normata* ("the normed norm"). Still, tradition gives us a place to start in our interpretation . . . Only where there is an appropriate concern for the witness of tradition in the church will we find it possible to sustain what Hauerwas calls a "conversation with one another and God . . . across generations."¹¹¹

Canonical exegesis, then, takes seriously the hermeneutical tradition's role, but distinguishes that role from the authority of the Scriptures themselves. In this way, it is possible to use the hermeneutical circle derived from *De doctrina Christiana* as a heuristic summary of the theological hermeneutic underlying the canonical approach, with the qualification that the other elements of the circle are derivative, and that the canonical form of the text is the basis for exegesis.

Naturally, difficult questions will arise as one addresses material that lies on the border, as it were, between tradition and Scripture, where it is unclear whether something belongs to the *norma normans* of Scripture or the *norma normata* of tradition. For example, one might ask of Psalm 8 whether the superscript is part of Scripture or tradition, whether the location of Psalm 8 in the Psalter is part of Scripture or tradition, whether the Psalter's location within the Ketuvim is part of Scripture or tradition, etc. This disserta-

¹¹¹ Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (San Francisco: Harper, 1996) 210. Hays quotes the words "conversation with one another and God . . . across generations" from Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 64.

tion will give a full treatment of such situations throughout the course of the study, recognizing that a canon-exegetical approach can adequately deal with these “border-line” scenarios only if one is clear about the normative hermeneutical role that the canonical Scriptures play as the *norma normans*.

2) What, then, of the relationship between the canonical form of the text and hypothetical pre-canonical forms of the text? What ought a canon-exegetical approach to do with pre-canonical forms of a text, such as M. Smith’s proposed textual emendation of Psalm 8 that results in a poem that speaks of violent children of the deity El devouring and threatening creation?¹¹² The canonical form of Psalm 8 speaks instead of pacific babies and sucklings that stand against the foes of YHWH; should Smith’s reading establish the parameters for legitimate interpretation of a text within a canonical approach? Given a theology of exegesis articulated thus far, neither the pre-canonical form nor a hypothetical process transforming the pre-canonical form into the final form ought to have the same interpretive importance as either the canonical final form or later Church tradition.¹¹³ Thus, as Childs says in his *Exodus* commentary, “the study of the prehistory [of the text] has its proper function within exegesis only in illuminating the final text.”¹¹⁴ This study will attend to hypotheses such as Smith’s attempt to reconstruct an earlier form of Psalm 8 as important only insofar as they clarify the meaning of the final text.

¹¹² Mark S. Smith, “Psalm 8 2b-3: New Proposals for an Old Problem” *CBQ* 59 (1997): 637-641.

¹¹³ Childs, I would argue, does not clarify his views on this point and, as a result, conflates those who preserve, pass on, and interpret the final form of the text with the final form of the text itself. This confusion leads Childs to conflate Scripture with tradition in a confusing and ambiguous way, saying that “the text is the tradent of authority” (Brevard S. Childs, “Retrospective Reading of the Old Testament Prophets,” *ZAW* 108 [1996], 375).

¹¹⁴ Childs, *Exodus*, xiv. Again, when Childs deviated from this commitment to the final form of the text, he undermined his own attempts to forge a set of working canon-exegetical principles.

3) Turning to the final question of establishing reasonable parameters for legitimate exegesis, one might object that the hermeneutic briefly adumbrated here is problematic in that, while it insists that there are parameters within which normative interpretation must take place, it does not articulate with sufficient clarity what the parameters should be. If a text can have multiple meanings, as long as “they can all be shown from other places of the holy scriptures to correspond with the truth,”¹¹⁵ it follows logically that “other places of the holy scriptures” can also have multiple meanings. How, then, is one to judge the legitimacy of an interpretation of a passage? In addressing this question, one must bear in mind that Augustine first instructs his reader to “make every effort to arrive at the intention of the author through whom the Holy Spirit produced that portion of scripture.”¹¹⁶ Only after attempting to discover the inspired author’s intention does Augustine give his reader interpretive freedom.¹¹⁷ As Mazzeo notes, “[t]he first and most important thing to say about St. Augustine’s conception of allegory and his techniques of biblical exegesis is that he considered them, in the last analysis, relatively unimportant. All of the teaching on faith and morals necessary to salvation is quite plain in Scripture.”¹¹⁸ Childs argues that, in setting “apart apostolic witness (text) from later church tradition,” the Church “assigned a unique role to the text’s plain or literal sense. Implicit thereby was the concern to maintain some form of authorial intent.”¹¹⁹ So Childs and

¹¹⁵ *Doc Chr.*, Book III: 27.

¹¹⁶ *Doc Chr.*, Book III: 27

¹¹⁷ Augustine, *Doc Chris.*, Book III: 27.

¹¹⁸ Cited in Donnelly, *Rhetorical Faith*.

¹¹⁹ Childs, “Critique of Recent Intertextual Canonical Interpretation,” 177.

Augustine are unanimous: the first interpretive task for exegesis is to determine the plain sense of the passage, and then from there to determine the legitimacy of any other sense.

Yet, talk of the intention of the human author and the “plain” or “literal” sense of the text introduces a whole host of questions. In the first place, a canonical exegesis presupposes a multivalence of meaning that transcends any single human author. Furthermore, the question of defining and discovering the text’s “plain” or “literal” sense is contentious. Moreover, an understanding of “the plain sense” that gives pride of place to the intention of a human author as understood by Barr’s “modern biblical research,” which seeks to reconstruct a putative historical reality behind the text, is inconsistent with the claim that the normative interpretation lies in the final form of the text.

Childs, building upon Hans Frei’s *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*,¹²⁰ has addressed the question of the “literal sense” of the text” in a way that points forward.¹²¹

According to Childs, post-reformation critical approaches to the text resulted in an altered understanding of the meaning of the phrase “*sensus literalis*,” as follows:

The historical sense of the text was construed as being the *original* meaning of the text as it emerged in its pristine situation. Therefore, the aim of the interpreter was to reconstruct the original occasion of the historical reference on the basis of which the truth of the biblical text could be determined.¹²²

This marked a shift from Calvin, who defined the literal sense against the allegorical sense, but did not see any need to get behind the text to find a historically pristine original

¹²⁰ Hans W. Frei. *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

¹²¹ Brevard S. Childs, “The *Sensus Literalis* of Scripture: An Ancient and Modern Problem,” in *Beiträge zur Alttestamentlichen Theologie: Festschrift für W. Zimmerli*. (Ed. Herbert Donner; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1977): 80-93.

¹²² Childs, “*Sensus Literalis*” 89.

sense.¹²³ Childs does not endorse a complete return to Calvin's conception, but argues that interpretation within a canonical context is the way to recover the reformers' emphasis upon the text itself, over and against an emphasis upon something behind the text.¹²⁴ Interpretation within a canonical context leaves the door open to figural interpretation in the spirit of the reformers.¹²⁵ According to Childs, "[t]he role of canon as scripture of the church . . . is to provide an opening and a check to continually new figurative applications of its apostolic content as it extends the original meaning to the changing circumstances of the community of faith."¹²⁶ For example, the canonical context of Gen 1-3 provides a literary context that extends beyond its original *Sitz im Leben*, so that it becomes part of the Bible's story of redemption. Thus, in the canonical context, it is legitimate to speak of Adam as a figure of Christ (Romans 5). The canon opens the possibility of such interpretation, but also provides the context and the limits for such interpretation. In short, the canon itself establishes the boundaries for legitimate interpretation.

Yet, Childs's work on the *sensus literalis* leaves some difficulties unresolved,¹²⁷ so I will attempt to clarify the interpretive parameters of canonical exegesis throughout this dissertation in two ways. First, I will apply Augustine's hermeneutical circle, asking how an understanding of my own situation within the circle clarifies my interpretation. Secondly, I will distinguish between various levels of meanings, as follows: 1) The first level of meanings occurs at the level of the final form of the text as a unit, where the final

¹²³ Childs, "Sensus Literalis" 84. Also see Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*, 724, and Noble, *The Canonical Approach*, 307-312.

¹²⁴ Childs, "Sensus Literalis," 92-93.

¹²⁵ See Frei, *Eclipse*, 2, and Noble, *The Canonical Approach*, 309.

¹²⁶ Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*, 724.

¹²⁷ Noble, *The Canonical Approach*, 312.

form itself clearly demarcates a beginning and an end of that unit—*not* where form or source criticism postulates a pre-canonical beginning or end of the unit.¹²⁸ Polyvalence is possible within this level (indeed, within all levels), especially in the case of poetry, which lends itself to ambiguity and adaptability. 2) The second level of meanings extends beyond the boundary of the text itself, to consider the meaning of the text within the canonical context. At this level a reader may find figural meanings. Thus, figural level two meanings emerge when the human in Psalm 8 is read in light of Adam of Genesis 2 or in light of the Second Adam of 1 Corinthians 15. 3) The third level goes beyond the plain sense of the passage on any level, and includes allegorical meanings which do not violate the teachings of Scripture. Since the first two levels are determinative, a canonical exegesis must pay most attention to the meanings found at levels one and two.

This brief treatment of the difficulties facing the canon exegetical approach is not intended to address every question exhaustively. The thornier issues can only be adequately addressed in the context of the practical implementation of the approach, not in extended discussions of prolegomena. Therefore, this dissertation is not primarily a work of theory but of exegetical practice, and the foregoing discussion is meant merely to set some general guidelines within which the rest of the study will proceed, emphasizing that the foundational convictions necessary for establishing methodological controls are: 1) that the canon itself sets the parameters for understanding the plain meaning of the text; and 2) that the interpreter stands within and is constrained by the hermeneutical circle.

Thus, this dissertation deploys the canonical approach to the Bible to accomplish three interrelated goals: 1) To put into practice an exegesis that preserves Childs's em-

¹²⁸ While many biblical books lack clearly demarcated internal breaks (e.g., Genesis, Job, Matthew) the Psalter introduces several possible levels of "level one" meanings by integrating each psalm into the rest of the Psalter, while maintaining a level of independence for each individual psalm.

phases while at the same time addressing some of the more problematic questions concerning both the theoretical basis and the implementation of the approach. To this end, the preceding dialogue with *De doctrina Christiana* has yielded at least three major theological affirmations undergirding the present study: a) that the ultimate goal of exegesis is an encounter with the divine, b) that the interpreter engages in exegesis in the context of the hermeneutical circle that includes Church teaching and the Scriptures, and c) that the Scriptures themselves are ultimately authoritative and set the parameters for exegesis.

2) To apply the canonical approach to Psalm 8. By so doing, this study will demonstrate the benefits of the approach by presenting a canonical exegesis of a single passage that is especially well suited to serve as a test case for canonical-exegesis. Perhaps more importantly, however, this dissertation will contribute to the attempts by Christian scholars to understand the Eighth Psalm as Christian Scriptures. Psalm 8 intersects with various passages of Scripture in both testaments and touches upon profound theological questions that run across the canon. As a result, a careful and consistent application of the canonical approach that interprets Psalm 8 in light of the broad sweep of the biblical corpus can go a long way towards clarifying the psalm's theological significance. We turn, therefore, to survey the state of scholarship on Psalm 8. The following will highlight both the ways in which Psalm 8 is an appropriate test case for the canonical approach and the ways in which a canonical exegesis is especially well suited for elucidating the theological significance of Psalm 8. The chapter will then conclude by outlining how the rest of the dissertation will apply the canon-exegetical approach to Psalm 8.

Current Scholarship on Psalm 8

In considering Psalm 8 as a discreet unit, scholars have posited divergent views about the original setting of Psalm 8, ranging from the 12th to the 5th Centuries BCE.¹²⁹ Scholars have come to equally varied conclusions about the related question of the proper cultural/ideological context for understanding Psalm 8, ranging from Egypt to Mesopotamia, often emending the text of Psalm 8 based in part on what one might expect to find in that ideological context.¹³⁰ Scholars less concerned with questions of the origins and pre-history of the text have attended to the final canonical form of Psalm 8, arguing that the MT 150 edition of Psalm 8 constitutes a satisfactory syntactical unity without emendation or recourse to a hypothetical pre-canonical form.¹³¹ Thus, diverse interests and

¹²⁹ Dates range from “the early years of the Jewish settlement” (Wenceslaus M. Urassa, *Psalm 8 and its Christological Re-Interpretations in the New Testament Context: An Inter-Contextual Study in Biblical Hermeneutics* [EUS 23:577; New York: Peter Lang, 1998], 241), to the time of David (Felix Asensio, “El Protagonismo del ‘Hombre-Hijo del Hombre’ del Salmo 8,” *Estudios Biblicos* 41 [1983]: 18-19), to the Persian era (Raymond J. Tournay, “Le Psaume VIII et la Doctrine Biblique du nom,” *RB* 78 [1971]: 18-30), with Oswald Loretz positing a detailed account of the development of Psalm 8 over several stages, culminating in the Persian era (“Die Psalmen 8 und 67, Psalmstudien V,” *UF* 8 [1976]: 117-122).

¹³⁰ Scholars have situated Psalm 8 in the context of Egyptian royal ideology (Manfred Görg, “Königliche Eulogie. Erwägungen zur Bildsprache in Ps 8,2,” *BN* 37 [1987]: 38-47), Assyrian astral worship (so, tentatively, Jeffrey H. Tigay, “What is Man that You Have Been Mindful of Him?” in *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in honor of Marvin H. Pope* [ed. John H. Marks and R. M. Good; Guilford, CT: Four Quarters Publishing Co., 1987], 169-171), and Ugaritic mythology (Alberto J. Soggin, “Textkritische Untersuchung von Ps 8:2-3 und 6” *VT* 21 [1971]: 565-571; Mark S. Smith, “Psalm 8 2b-3: New Proposals for an Old Problem” *CBQ* 59 [1997]: 637-641).

¹³¹ Øystein Lund, “From the Mouths of Babes and Infants You have Established Strength,” *SJOT* 11 (1997): 78-99; Pierre Auffret, “Qu’est-ce que l’Homme que tu t’en Souviennes? Étude structurelle du Psaume 8,” *SeE* 54 (2002): 25-35.

methodologies have given rise to contradictory interpretations of the Psalm.¹³² This state of affairs poses some special problems for a canon-exegetical approach, which must convincingly address the relationship between the final canonical form of the text with potential pre-canonical forms. Thus, Psalm 8 serves as a good basis for testing a proposed canon-exegetical method.

Turning to the relationship between Psalm 8 and the rest of the Psalter, scholars have written much in recent years about the canonical shape of the Psalter, often hinting at Psalm 8's special role within that shape, yet, no study that has given exclusive attention to Psalm 8's role within the shape of the Psalter.¹³³ As a result, a canonical exegesis of Psalm 8 will have a three-fold significance. By applying the yields of the burgeoning literature about the editorial shaping of the Psalter to a canon-exegetical approach, the dissertation will contribute 1) to the study of the shaping of the Psalter, 2) to ongoing attempts to develop a viable canon-exegetical program, and 3) to attempts to interpret Psalm 8 as Christian Scripture.

Concerning the relationship between Psalm 8 and the broader Old Testament context, several scholars have seen fit to interpret Psalm 8 in light of the same Old Testament

¹³² Smith, whose concern is interpreting Psalm 8 in light of Ugaritic mythology after correcting the corrupted MT 150 version through emendation, argues that the **ינקים** and **עוללים** of Ps 8:3[2] are chaos monsters militating against YHWH ("Psalm 8 2b-3," 638-639). Auffret and Lund, whose concern is the text as it now stands and interpreting Psalm 8 in light of biblical parallels, see the **ינקים** and **עוללים** as beings that have been granted strength by YHWH to militate against his enemies (Lund "From the Mouths of Babes," 79-83, and Auffret, "Qu'est-ce que l'Homme," 25-26).

¹³³ Gerald H. Wilson sees Psalm 8 as part of "a thematic unity" in Pss 7-10 (*Psalms I* [NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002], 237). Matthias Millard sees Psalm 8 as the central *Orakel* in the *Mittelstück* of the *Kompositionsböge* containing Pss 1-10, (*Die Komposition des Psalters, Ein formgeschichtlicher Ansatz* [FzAT 9; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1994]). Rolf Rendtorff sees Psalm 8 as connecting Ps 9 with Ps 7 in such a way that Psalms 8 and 9 together serve to provide "a strong, thankful conclusion" to the grouping of Pss 3-9, "David in the Psalms," in *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception* (VTSup 49:4; ed. Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint; Boston: Brill, 2005), 56.

passages that Childs referred to in his “Psalm 8” article (Gen 1; Job 7; Ps 144).¹³⁴ While other scholars with diverse interests have seen it worthwhile to discuss the relationship between Psalm 8, Genesis 1, and other creation passages, their works do not attempt a canonical exegesis, and no one has attempted to clarify how or why a canonical exegesis should read Psalm 8 in light of the passages that Childs selected in his seminal article.¹³⁵ On the other hand, these studies have made observations that could contribute much to a canon-exegetical reading of Psalm 8. Thus, the state of scholarship on Ps 8’s relationship with the rest of the Old Testament canon makes Psalm 8 well suited to serve as a test case for a canon-exegetical approach.

Finally, scholars have written much about the use of Psalm 8 by New Testament authors, but this literature has the New Testament text, not Psalm 8, as its primary focus.¹³⁶ Urassa’s monograph stands out as one significant exception.¹³⁷ Urassa traces the tradition history of Psalm 8 from its hypothetical origins to its Christological re-

¹³⁴ Jerome F. D. Creach, *Psalms* (IBS; Louisville: Geneva, 1998), 74-75, James L. Mays, *Psalms* (Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994), 68, Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (WBC 19; Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 106.

¹³⁵ To name a few examples: Thomas F. Dailey, “Creation and Ecology—the ‘Dominion’ of Biblical Anthropology,” *ITQ* 58 (1992), 1-13; James L. Mays, “The Self in the Psalms and the Image of God,” in *God and Human Dignity* (ed. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2006), 27-43; Ute Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung: Ein Beitrag zur Alttestamentlichen Anthropologie am Beispiel von Psalm 8, Genesis 1 und verwandten Texten* (WMANT 101; Göttingen: Universität Göttingen, 2004); and Manfred Görg, “‘Alles hast Du Gelegt under seine Füße,’ Beobachtungen zu Ps 8,7b im Vergleich mit Gen 1,28,” in *Freude an der Weisung ders Herrn: Beiträge zur Theologie der Psalmen* (ed. E. Haag and F. L. Hossfeld; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1986), 125-148.

¹³⁶ To name a few representative examples: Francis J. Moloney, “The Targum on Psalm 8 and the New Testament,” *Salesianum* 37 (1975), 326-336; *idem.*, “The Reinterpretation of Psalm 8 and the Son of Man Debate,” *NTS* 27 (1981), 656-672; Wilhelmus J. C. Weren, “Jesus’ Entry into Jerusalem: Mt 21, 1-17 in Light of the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint,” in *The Scriptures in the Gospels* (ed. C. M. Tuckett; Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1997), 116-141; George H. Guthrie, “A Discourse Analysis of the Use of Psalm 8:4-6 in Hebrews 2:5-9,” *JETS* 49 (2006), 235-246; and Roy A. Harrisville, “Paul and the Psalms,” *Word and World* 5 (1985): 168, 174, 178-179.

¹³⁷ Urassa, *Psalm 8 and its Christological Re-Interpretations*. Another exception is Felix Asensio “El Protagonismo del ‘Hombre-Hijo del Hombre’ del Salmo 8.” *Estudios Biblicos* 41(1983): 17-51.

interpretation in the New Testament. Urassa's work is valuable in demonstrating how an understanding of early Jewish interpretations of Psalm 8 helps to make sense of the New Testament interpretations of Psalm 8 that speak of Jesus as the "new Adam" and the "Son of Man." Yet Urassa admits that his own work is "only a humble beginning," and that much more research must be done on the New Testament authors' re-interpretation of Psalm 8.¹³⁸ Again, this state of affairs poses intriguing questions for a canonical exegesis of Psalm 8, making Psalm 8 well suited as a test case for a canonical exegesis.

In the rest of this dissertation, therefore, I will use Psalm 8 as a concrete test case within which to conduct a canonical exegesis in order to demonstrate the viability of my proposal, to address questions that scholars have about Psalm 8, and to set forth a Christian theological interpretation of Psalm 8. Chapter two will analyze the final canonical edition of Psalm 8 and then address the possibility of earlier versions. In this section I will argue that the canonical edition has theological priority for a canonical exegesis, but the pre-canonical history of the text, to the extent that it can be recovered, can illuminate the significance of the final received form. Chapters three and four will address the relationship between Psalm 8 and the rest of the Old Testament. Chapter three will address the shape of the MT 150 Psalter and the role of Psalm 8 in that shape. Chapter four will consider some other Old Testament passages that resonate strongly with Psalm 8 (Genesis 1-2; Job 7:17-21; Psalm 144). Using Childs's article on Psalm 8 as a starting point, I will argue that these passages are especially well suited as entry points into the rest of the Old Testament canon for the purpose of building a canonical exegesis of Psalm 8. In this

¹³⁸ Urassa, *Psalm 8 and its Christological Re-Interpretations*, 248-249.

chapter I will draw upon Noble's "new typology"¹³⁹ as well as Childs's distinctive intertextual approach developed in his *Isaiah* and *Exodus* commentaries. Chapter five will attend to the New Testament, considering passages that allude to or cite Psalm 8 (Matt 21:16; 1 Cor 15:27; Eph 1:22; Heb 2:6-8). I will argue that, within my proposed canonical-exegetical approach, it will not suffice simply to describe the way in which the New Testament authors use Psalm 8. Rather, a canonical exegesis must read these passages alongside Psalm 8 as constituent parts of the Christian canon, allowing them to inform and to be informed by Psalm 8. The sixth and final chapter will summarize the findings of the preceding chapters and argue for a canonical exegesis of Psalm 8. I will distill, from the foregoing chapters, an exegesis of Psalm 8 that preserves the emphases of Childs in a theologically informed and intellectually rigorous manner.

¹³⁹ Noble, *The Canonical Approach*, 314-322.

CHAPTER TWO

Reading Psalm Eight as a Discreet Unit

Before proceeding to our exegesis of Psalm 8, it is important to consider the role that each of the three elements of the hermeneutical circle described in chapter one will play in the process of interpretation. While this dissertation will start with and focus upon the role of Scripture in the hermeneutical circle, the other two elements—the rule of faith and church teaching—will play an informative role. Just as the rule of faith did not have a static form for Augustine and the Church Fathers,¹ neither will this study present a single concrete articulation of the rule of faith from which to proceed. Rather, the rule of faith will be viewed as the living Church’s articulation of the narrative of Scripture as it is actualized in the ongoing life of the Church.² Thus, the rule of faith will guide interpretive decisions in the study, but it remains a tacit part of the process;³ this dissertation ought not to place the tradition in the foreground in light of both theological and practical

¹ As Paul Blowers writes, the early “Church committed itself not to a universally invariable statement of faith but to variable local tellings of a *particular* story that aspired to universal significance,” “The *Regula Fidei* and the Narrative Character of Early Christian Faith,” *Pro Ecclesia* 6 (1997), 208.

² Blowers, “The *Regula Fidei*,” 215-217.

³ Moreover, since it is derived from the plain teaching of Scripture and is consonant with Church teaching, we must begin with the other elements of the hermeneutical circle before we can be sure that we have a proper conception of the rule of faith.

considerations.⁴ I will, however attend to later tradition as a hermeneutical aid throughout the study, seeking to look beyond the standard critical commentaries to consider the exegesis of various theologians, especially when I turn to assess a passage's theological import.

Turning, then, to the element of the circle that occupies the primary focus here—the Scriptural text itself—this chapter will examine the Eighth Psalm as follows: The bulk of the chapter will contain an extended analysis of Psalm 8 from a canon exegetical perspective, presenting a close reading and interpretation of the psalm. Then, the chapter will conclude by setting the agenda for the rest of the dissertation, first by highlighting key theological motifs and issues arising from those motifs that will inform the way that the rest of the dissertation is to proceed, and then by proposing ways of discerning canonical “points of entry,” or parts of Scripture that can serve as contact points to illuminate and be illuminated by Psalm 8.

Reading the Eighth Psalm

In order to arrive at an adequate understanding of Psalm 8 in its discreet context, following a presentation of a translation of Psalm 8, this section will begin with a brief treatment of some of the more difficult text-critical problems facing the interpreter of Psalm 8. After briefly attending to the date and setting of the psalm, I will survey the

⁴ Theologically, as the *norm normans*, Scripture has hermeneutical priority over tradition. Practically, an adequate study of Church teaching on Psalm Eight would require a detailed survey of the history of interpretation, exceeding the limits of this study; several thorough studies of the tradition history of Psalm Eight have already been written from diverse perspectives (Susan Gillingham, “Through the Looking Glass,” in *Diachronic and Synchronic: Reading the Psalms in Real Time: Proceedings of the Baylor Symposium on the Book of Psalms* [LHB/OTS 488; New York: T & T Clark, 2007] , 167-196; Wenceslaus M. Urassa, *Psalm 8 and its Christological Re-Interpretations in the New Testament Context: An Inter-Contextual Study in Biblical Hermeneutics*. EUS 23:577 [New York: Peter Lang, 1998]; Felix Asensio “El Protagonismo del ‘Hombre-Hijo del Hombre’ del Salmo 8.” *Estudios Biblicos* 41[1983]: 17-51; Margaret Kim Peterson, “Psalm 8: A Theological and Historical Analysis of its Interpretation” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1998).

various themes that scholars have recognized as being central to its message. Next, I will present a close reading of the thematic development of the psalm which will show how Psalm 8's themes are intertwined and work together to drive the internal movement of the psalm through several key reversals. This reading will lead to an interpretation of Psalm 8, highlighting some salient themes that will set the agenda for the rest of the dissertation.

Translation

- 1 (Title) For the leader of music, on the gittith, a song of David.
 2 (1) YHWH, our ruler, how majestic is your name in all the earth!
 You who have set your splendor above the heavens!
 [*alternatively*, Therefore, set your splendor above the heavens!]⁵
 3 (2) From⁶ the mouths of babies and sucklings you have founded strength⁷
 because of your adversaries to silence the enemy and the avenger.
 4 (3) When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
 The moon and the stars which you have established,

⁵ The first reading of this line follows the interpreters, ancient and modern, who interpret the text as reflecting a grammatically acceptable form of the verb **נָתַן**, either by emending the text to yield a perfective form **נָתַתָּה** (John Goldingay, *Psalms Volume 1: Psalms 1-41* BCOT [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006], 153; Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* ECC [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003], 124, 128) or by reading the MT as containing a rare, but not unattested form of the infinitive functioning as a finite verb (Nahum M. Sarna, *Songs of the Heart: An Introduction to the Book of Psalms* [New York: Schocken, 1993], 228 n. 37). The alternative in brackets understands the MT to contain an imperative form of **נָתַן** following **אֲשֶׁר** functioning as a conjunction, “Therefore, oh, set.” Others reposit the text to read “I will worship” (**אֲשַׁרְתָּנָה**, Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I, 1-50* [AB 16; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965], 48-49; Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (WBC, 19; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 104) or “is chanted” (pual **תָּנָה**, Claus Schedl, “Psalm 8 in ugaritischer Sicht,” *FuF* 38 (1964): 183-185). For a full yet brief presentation of these and other proposals, see Alberto J. Soggin, “Textcritische Untersuchung von Ps 8:2-3 und 6” *VT* 21 (1971): 565-571; Mark S. Smith, “Psalm 8 2b-3: New Proposals for an Old Problem.” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 59 (1997): 638-639.

⁶ H. Kruse’s proposal that the **מִן** here is functioning comparatively (“Two Hidden Comparatives,” *JSS* 5(1960): 345) is unlikely. It is more common to take the **מִן** as a preposition meaning “out of/from,” such that the **פִּי** (mouth) is the source either of the acclamation of YHWH’s splendor in verse 2b (Alberto J. Soggin, “Textcritische Untersuchung von Ps. viii vv. 2-3 und 6,” 565-571; Goldingay, *Psalms* vol. 1, 153; NRSV) or the source of the **עֹז** (strength/stronghold) of verse 3 (Øystein Lund, “From the Mouths of Babes and Infants You have Established Strength,” *SJOT* 11 [1997]: 78-99; Samuel Terrien, *Psalms*, 124; NIV).

⁷ Rather than rendering **עֹז** as “a stronghold” (cf., BDB, 739; NRSV; RSV), it is preferable to preserve poetic multivalence by using “the more general” term “strength,” (Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 105).

- 5 (4) What is humankind⁸ that you are mindful of it,
The child of humanity,⁹ that you care for her/him?¹⁰
- 6 (5) Yet you have made him/her only a little less than divine,¹¹
and you have crowned him/her with glory and honor.
- 7 (6) You have made her/him to rule over the works of your hands.
You have put all things under his/her feet.¹²
- 8 (7) All sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,
- 9 (8) The birds of the sky, and the fish of the sea,
whatever swims along¹³ the paths of the seas.
- 10 (9) YHWH, our ruler, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Some Text-Critical and Translational Concerns

While most of the MT version of the text of Psalm 8 is grammatically intelligible as it stands,¹⁴ the opening words of verse 2b in the MT, **אֲשֶׁר תִּנְהַ**, are notoriously diffi-

⁸ While, as Victor P. Hamilton states, “there are probably no major differences in meaning or nuance between” **אֲנוּשׁ** and **אָדָם**, (“אֲנוּשׁ,” *NIDOTTE* 1: 453), I have tried to use “humankind” and “humanity” to differentiate the two. See BDB, 60.

⁹ Though it is legitimate to regard the phrase **בֶּן אָדָם** as “simply a poetic synonym of ‘man’ in v. 5a,” (Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 108), I am rendering this phrase more literally as “child of humanity” to preserve other possibilities of interpretation this phrase may have evoked for both the ancient and modern reader, such as evoking the “sonship” model of the Davidic Kingship (cf. James Luther Mays, *Psalms*, (Interpretation, Louisville: John Knox, 1989), 67), and by extension, evoking messianic associations.

¹⁰ This rendering is gender inclusive (vs. ESV “son of man . . . him”) but does not translate singular pronouns as plurals (vs. NRSV, “humans . . . them . . . mere mortals . . . them”).

¹¹ The rendering of the LXX and NT of **אֱלֹהִים** as ἀγγέλους, the mixed opinion of early translations, and the apparent meaning of the word in context make a literal translation of **אֱלֹהִים** difficult. While I have taken it to carry the literal meaning of “God” rather than that of “heavenly beings” (so ASV), I have gone with a more dynamic rendering as “divine” to indicate its purpose in this verse (cf. NJPS, JPS). The point is not so much the nature of the **אֱלֹהִים**, but that humanity has been exalted to an unfathomably high place in the created order, next to God (see Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 108).

¹² I have translated all of the verbs in vv. 5 and 6 in the past perfect. For difficulties in translating the tenses of these verbs, see Craigie *Psalms 1-50*, 112-113.

¹³ A more literal rendering could read “wanders/passes through” (cf. NASB; NJPS; see BDB, 72). However, “Swims along” certainly fits within the semantic range of the word and is a much more natural (dynamic) English rendering (cf. NIV).

¹⁴ See, however, Claus Schedl, “Psalm 8,” 183-185. Schedl proposes several changes in verses 2, 3, 4, and 9. Many of these changes, such as the deletion of **אֲדוֹנָי** (verse 2), **שְׂמִיךְ** (verse 5), and **יָם** (verse 9) as later additions are unnecessary, and few contemporary commentators follow his suggestions.

cult to translate, leading some to conclude that the phrase “defies translation.”¹⁵ The relative pronoun אשר seems to be grammatically out of place. Furthermore, the verb תנה, as the Masoretes have pointed it, is most likely in the imperative form, and it is difficult to see how an imperative ought to fit in this context, although it is possible to read the MT’s תנה as a rare infinitive form of נתן, which is also somewhat awkward in context.¹⁶

Thus, many emendations have been proposed.¹⁷ Two somewhat similar proposals are compelling in that they do no violence to the consonantal text: 1) combining the consonants of both words, resulting in the single word, אשרתנה, to form a piel imperfect form of “שרת,” meaning “I will adore your majesty;”¹⁸ and 2) repointing the verb to read תנה, the Pual perfect of תנה, meaning “is sung, is chanted.”¹⁹ The former, while not impossible, is problematic in that “it has to assume a meaning for שרת which is not attested elsewhere.”²⁰ Taking their cue from some ancient translations, the editors of the BHS have proposed emending the text to read נתתה (the second person perfect of נתן) or some

¹⁵ Willem VanGemeren, *Psalms* (EBC 5; Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 139, n. 1b.

¹⁶ Ibn Ezra and Kimhi read this “form as a feminine infinitive like *redah* in Gen. 46:3,” (Sarna, *Songs of the Heart*, 228 n. 37). Moses Bittenwieser similarly reads the MT text “as a correct text and to take it, with Sym., Hier., and Syr., as an infinitive, formed like that of the *primae Yod* verbs,” *The Psalms: Chronologically Treated with a New Translation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1938), 180. See Smith, “Psalm 8:2b-3,” 638.

¹⁷ See note 4 above and Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms* (FBL; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), 191-193, Soggin, “Textcritische Untersuchung,” 565-571, and Smith, “Psalm 8:2b-3,” 638-639.

¹⁸ Dahood, *Psalms I, 1-50*, 49, and Craigie *Psalms I-50*, 104.

¹⁹ So Schedl “Psalm 8,” 183, cf. RSV and Goldingay, *Psalms I*, 153 n. a.

²⁰ Helmer Ringgren, “Some Observations on the Text of the Psalms,” 308.

other form of the verb נתן.²¹ While Soggin dismisses these ancient attempts to retain נתן as “Verlegenheitslösungen,” not as “wirkliche Übersetzungen,”²² others have adopted the emendation to נתתה with BHS.²³

How ought a canon-exegetical approach to adjudicate between such competing interpretations? Insofar as the reader is dependent upon the tradents—either of the Church or the academy—to define and preserve the final form of the text, the interplay between the *norma normans* and the *norma normata* is incredibly tight at this point. While textual emendation may be necessary, it should always be done with great care. The reader ought first to ask whether the final form of the text as the Masoretes have preserved it can provide any meaningful interpretation, and then carefully consider later tradents, including the ancient translations, before positing changes to the text.

Can the MT rendering stand? Taken separately, there is no problem with אשר or תנה.²⁴ Taken together, however, “such a use of the *imper.* after אשר is unheard of.”²⁵

Nevertheless, one could read אשר, which “as a rule” functions as “a mere connecting

²¹ Of the translations that BHS cites, the Syriac and Targum (*djhbt*), Symmachus (ὅς ζεταξας) and the *Psalterium iuxta Hebraeos*, seem almost certainly to presuppose a form of נתן. Only the LXX’s rendering, ἐπήρθη, “is raised,” may reflect another verb—although, even the LXX may reflect the translation of a form of נתן. In addition to the feminine perfect form, BHS also proposes emending the text to read נתן and נתתה, BHS 1091.

²² Soggin, “Textcritische Untersuchung von Ps. viii vv. 2-3 und 6,” 566.

²³ Terrien, *Psalms* 124, 128; VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 138-139; NIV; NRSV.

²⁴ If one makes modifications to the following verb, the MT rendering of the word אשר may function as a causative conjunction, or as a relative pronoun (see GKC 444-446, 492). The slight awkwardness of the location of אשר does not render the word unintelligible, and may even enhance its poetic role, especially if the second of the above three options is the case. Similarly, if one accepts that תנה is an imperative form with a paragogic תנה and omits the word אשר, the phrase תנה הודך על-השמים is not so problematic, meaning simply “Oh, set (imperative) your splendor upon the heavens!”

²⁵ Delitzsch, *Psalms* 191.

link,²⁶ as a grammatically awkward but poetic and ejaculative use of the relative conjunction,²⁷ rendering the phrase in English as “Therefore, set your glory above the heavens!”²⁸ The psalmist’s grammatically awkward opening reveals that the psalmist, who “can only babble like an infant,” identifies with YHWH’s humble infantile instruments described in the following verse.²⁹ Furthermore, the use of the verb נתן fits in well in this psalm, which describes YHWH’s actions with concrete verbs of building in verses 3 (יסד) and 4 (כנן). So, it is possible to read the text as it stands in the MT in a poetically meaningful manner, although the occurrence of אשר poses a problem in this context.

Turning to later tradents, namely the ancient translations, the verbs used in the Targum, Syriac, Symacchus, and Jerome all point strongly toward some form of the verb נתן in the *Vorlagen* underlying these translations, yet none of these forms is imperative.³⁰ Similarly, some medieval Jewish interpreters followed the MT pointing, yet understood it to reflect an infinitive form of נתן functioning as a finite verb,³¹ a view shared by Cal-

²⁶ BDB, 81.

²⁷ On אשר used to connect consecutive clauses, sometimes combining with the imperfect to create a jussive force, see GKC 505 (paragraph 166b).

²⁸ Some older translators interpret these words as containing an imperative form of נתן, such as Charles Augustus Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *Psalms* (2 vols; ICC; New York: Scribners, 1906), I: 61, who translated the phrase to read “O set Thy splendour above the heavens!” Similarly, Delitzsch cites Gesenius as translating Ps 8:2b to read “quam tuam magnificentiam pone in coelis,” *Psalms* 191.

²⁹ Dahood, *Psalms 1-50*, 49. Note, however, the difference with Dahood who connects נופי grammatically with what has gone before. *Contra* Dahood, the psalmist is not one and the same with the babies and infants. Rather, he poetically identifies with them in their humility.

³⁰ BHS 1091.

³¹ See Sarna, 227-228, n. 37.

vin's commentary on the Psalms and the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project.³² The translations of the LXX (ἐπήρθη) and Vulgate (*elevata*), "lifted up/elevated," have some semantic overlap with the Hebrew נָתַן, but the correlation is not direct.³³ If, however, Soggin is correct that all of these ancient renderings are "Verlegenheitslösungen,"³⁴ then it seems that the ancient translators were as confused by the original text as modern commentators have been.³⁵ Thus, it could be that the *Vorlage* of the LXX was the same as the text preserved by the MT, with its exclamatory (mis)use of the relative pronoun, forcing the ancient translators to make some alteration in an attempt to provide a smooth paraphrase. In any event, the early translations do point strongly, if not univocally, in the direction of some form of the verb נָתַן.

Augustine's advice is relevant here: "When, on paying closer attention you still see that it is uncertain how something is to be phrased, or how to be pronounced, you should refer it to the rule of faith, which you have received from the plainer passages of scripture and from the authority of the Church."³⁶ Therefore, I propose a cautious course of action. While it is preferable to read the text as reflecting some form of the verb נָתַן, it

³² John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms I*, James Anderson, trans. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 93, n. 1, 94-95; HOTTP cited in Robert G. Bratcher and William D. Reyerburn, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Psalms* (HTS; New York, NY: United Bible Societies), 78.

³³ They could be seen as having some semantic overlap with other verbs such as Schedl's passive form of תְּנַחֵם, "chanted" or Dahood's imperfect form of שָׁרַח, "I will worship." Reformation era translations vary, with the Geneva Bible, KJV (both "hast set"), and Reina Valera ("has puesto") clearly reading the verb as a form of נָתַן, Louis Segund following the Vulgate ("s'élève"), and the Luther Bibel rendering the phrase "da man dir danket in Himmel."

³⁴ Soggin, "Textcritische Untersuchung von Ps. viii vv. 2-3 und 6," 566.

³⁵ But see Terrien, who believes that "the LXX appears to have read . . . different vocalic sounds," 128.

³⁶ *Doc. Chr.* Book III: 2. Similarly, Brevard Childs recommends deferring decisions about vv. 2b-3 until after a consideration of the clearer parts of Psalm 8, in "Psalm 8 in the Context of the Christian Canon," *Interpretation* 23 (1969), 23.

is less clear whether this reflects a) the consonants of the MT functioning either as an imperative or an infinitive functioning as a perfect, or b) a corrupted form of a now lost perfect form of the verb נָתַן. Therefore, in my translation above I have offered two possible renderings: “You who have set” and “Therefore, set,” both of which will be considered throughout the course of the interpretation of the psalm.

One more translational question demands special attention. The noun עָז in verse three is translated variously either as “praise” (NIV), as “a stronghold” (see RSV and NRSV), or, in the case of some of the more stringently literal translations, as “strength” (ASV, NASB, ESV).³⁷ The translation of the noun as “praise” reflects the LXX translation of עָז as αἶνον rather than reflecting the Hebrew itself, and such a translation is unnecessary in context.³⁸ Translating עָז as “a stronghold,” which fits well within the semantic range of the word, seems initially to make good sense in context; YHWH here establishes עָז in order to stop the enemies. Yet, as Lund has shown, the metaphor of YHWH establishing strength through the mouths of the humble is quite common in the rest of the Old Testament, even if the phrase “to found strength” is strange to 21st century ears.³⁹ Thus, I have chosen, with Craigie, to retain the broader semantic range of עָז by translat-

³⁷ BDB, 739.

³⁸ Moreover, rendering עָז as “praise” is as much an act of interpretation as translation insofar as it represents an attempt to understand and interpret what may initially seem to be a perplexing poetic image of YHWH using babies’ mouths to build עָז.

³⁹ Øystein Lund, “From the Mouths of Babes,” 78-99.

ing it with “the more general” term “strength” in order to preserve the polyvalent potential of the poetic text before looking more closely at its meaning in context.⁴⁰

Date and Setting

Scholars have posited dates for the origin of the composition of Psalm 8 ranging from the 12th to the 5th Centuries BC, and possibly beyond.⁴¹ Scholarly answers to the related question of the proper cultural/ideological context for understanding Psalm 8 have been equally diverse, positing Ugarit, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the synagogue as the proper context for understanding Psalm 8,⁴² at times emending the text of Ps 8 based in part on what one might expect to find in that ideological context.⁴³ Given the emphasis that the canonical approach places upon the final form of the text, this dissertation will be

⁴⁰ Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 105. Preserving the poetic polyvalent potential of the text in this way is especially important for a canonical exegesis, which seeks to allow the canonical context to shine light on more ambiguous words and phrases. Moreover, translating **צָרְחָה** with the narrower lexeme “stronghold” prejudices the discussion of whether or not verses 2-3 relate a primeval mythical battle at the outset by portraying YHWH as building a military fortification when the word itself need not be read so narrowly.

⁴¹ Dates range from “the early years of the Jewish settlement” (so Urassa, *Psalm 8*, 241), to the time of David (so Asensio, “El Protagonismo,” 18-19), to the Persian era (so Raymond J. Tournay, “Le Psaume VIII et la Doctrine Biblique du nom,” *Revue Biblique* 78 (1971), 18-30), and the era of the synagogue (so Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 1, with an Introduction to Cultic Poetry*, [FOTL 15; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans], 1988), 67-68), and Thorne Wittstruck cites Oswald Loretz as positing a detailed account of the development of Ps 8 over several stages, culminating in the Persian era (Oswald Loretz *Die Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen. Mit einem Beitrag von Erik Hornung: Der Mensch as “Bild Gottes” in Ägypten*, [SDIWP; Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1967], “Die Psalmen 8 und 67, Psalmstudien V,” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 8 [1976], 117-122, and “Psalmstudien III. Poetischer Aufbau von Psalm 8,” *UF* 3[1971], 104-112, as cited in Thorne Wittstruck, *The Book of Psalms: An Annotated Bibliography, vol. II [BoB 5]*; New York: Garland, 1994], 518).

⁴² For Ugarit, see Soggin, “Textkritische Untersuchung,” 565-571; Mark S. Smith, “Psalm 8 2b-3,” 637-641; Schedl, “Psalm 8,” 183-185; Helmer Ringger, “Some Observations on the Text of the Psalms,” 307-308. For Egypt, see Manfred Görg, who interprets Psalm 8 in light of Egyptian royal ideology in “Königliche Eulogie. Erwägungen zur Bildsprache in Ps 8,2,” *Biblishe Notizen* 37 (1987), 38-47. For Mesopotamia, see Jeffrey H. Tigay, who tentatively connects Psalm 8 with Assyrian astral worship in “What is Man that You Have Been Mindful of Him?” in *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in honor of Marvin H. Pope* (ed. John H. Marks and R. M. Good; Guilford, CT: Four Quarters Publishing Co., 1987), 169-171. For the synagogue, see Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 1*, 68.

⁴³ See, for example, the many emendations and deletions proposed by Schedl, “Psalm 8,” 183-185.

less concerned with discovering a now lost *Sitz im Leben*.⁴⁴ Moreover, the poetic nature of Psalm 8 results in a song that is adaptable to many contexts, so that to limit the psalm's meaning to one historical setting is to miss the multivalent beauty of the poetry.

Nevertheless, one can draw some limited conclusions concerning the background of the psalm. First of all, the psalm has many affinities with Genesis 1, making it almost certain that the two passages are somehow related.⁴⁵ Although this conclusion may not indicate a post-exilic date, a proper exegesis of Psalm 8 must understand that Psalm 8 is a song of creation that parallels the tradition preserved in Genesis 1. Secondly, while it is appropriate to understand Psalm 8 as a hymn of praise,⁴⁶ the psalm also “has an originality and distinctiveness which defy” categorization, so that some see an “apparent mixture of forms” within it.⁴⁷ Finally, while it is unclear how Psalm 8 originally func-

⁴⁴ Herman Gunkel identifies Psalm 8 as a hymn of early date (22, 27), possibly intended to be sung at night in conjunction with a festival at a large sanctuary (45), and meant for antiphonal performance with a choir in the cult (312), *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*, James D. Nogalski, trans. (MLBS; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998). Sigmund Mowinckel saw Psalm 8 also as an early hymn, albeit stylistically unique (I: 97), which was connected with YHWH's enthronement festival, and associated with a mythic presentation of creation at the festival (I: 85, 167), *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, D. R. Ap-Thomas, Trans. (2 vols.; Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1979). Similarly, A. A. Anderson associates Psalm 8 with the feat of Tabernacles, *Psalms 1-72* (NCBC; London, UK: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1981), 100.

⁴⁵ According to Childs, “Psalm 8 makes use of the priestly creation tradition, but whether in its literary or oral form is unclear,” *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 113. Craigie, however, is less confident, concluding that the “similarities [between Genesis 1 and Psalm 8] do not permit either precise dating or even a firm judgment as to historical sequence,” *Psalms 1-50*, 110. This study will defer a full examination of the relationship between Psalm 8 and the creation tradition until chapter four.

⁴⁶ Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms*, 22; Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 97.

⁴⁷ Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 106. See, for example, Walter Beyerlin, “Psalm 8: Chancen der Überlieferungskritik,” *ZTK* 73 (1976): 1-22. Odil H. Steck avers that “Nahe liegt die Vermutung, in v. 2b-9 einen weisheitlichen Text zu sehen, der mittels der Rahmenverse 2a, 10 zur hymnischen Verwendung durch die Kultgemeinde bestimmt wird.,” “Beobachtungen zu Psalm 8,” *BN* 14 (1981): 64.

tioned cultically,⁴⁸ the psalm is “certainly most appropriate for use in the cult’s mode of worship.”⁴⁹

Themes and Motifs

Interpreters have recognized several prominent motifs running throughout Psalm 8. As already mentioned, virtually all modern scholars identify the psalm as a hymn reflecting on creation.⁵⁰ Craigie, however, argues that “nature,” which he identifies elsewhere with “the created world,” “is not the central theme of the psalm;”⁵¹ taking his clue from the inclusio bracketing the Psalm (verses 2a, 10), Craigie identifies “the majesty of the divine name” as the central theme.⁵² Within Psalm 8’s reflection on the created order, the psalmist’s reflection on the specific place of humanity within that order takes up over half of the psalm, and so commends itself as a major theme, so that Asensio describes it as having a “cárcater teocéntrico-antropocéntrico.”⁵³ While some scholars would prefer to give pride of place to one of these three themes over another, none of these themes is particularly controversial; one could summarize Psalm 8 as a contemplation and celebration of 1) YHWH’s glorious name, 2) YHWH’s created order and 3) the

⁴⁸To find clues to the psalm’s original function, scholars have looked both to reconstructed festivals (Mowinckel [*The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, 97]; Anderson [*Psalms 1-72*, 100]), and to the psalm’s references to evening heavenly bodies (ירח וכוכבִּים) , (Briggs and Briggs, *Psalms*, I: 61; Anderson *Psalms 1-72*, 100; VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 137; all conclude that the psalm may have been connected with an evening cultic ceremony).

⁴⁹ Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 106.

⁵⁰ Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 188; A. A. Anderson, *Psalms (1-72)*, 100; Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, Keith Crim, trans. (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 62-64; Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (AOTS; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1984), 28-38.

⁵¹ Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 109.

⁵² Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 107.

⁵³ Felix Asensio, “El protagonismo del ‘Hombre-Hijo del Hombre’ del Salmo 8,” 17.

place of humanity within that created order. Such a summary, however, is inadequate for a theological exegesis which seeks to identify the distinct theological contribution of Psalm 8 to the canon. This summary fails to explain adequately 1) how these themes relate to one another in Psalm 8,⁵⁴ and 2) the nature of the intricate relationship between the major themes and other minor themes in the psalm, including the problematic children and sucklings of verse 3. Therefore, in order to clarify how the various themes of Psalm 8 cohere together, it will be important to consider the progression of the thought of Psalm 8.

A Close Reading of Psalm 8

How does the flow of thought in Psalm 8 progress? In order to address this question, this section proceeds in three parts: The first part outlines an initial skeletal framework for understanding the flow of the psalm by examining how the psalmist presents each of the major topics addressed by Psalm 8. The second part attends to a particularly problematic passage (v. 3) to assess how it fits into the psalm. The third part presents a summary of the psalm to make clear the central flow of the psalm that drives the psalm along from topic to topic and unifies its various themes.

An initial skeletal framework: Analyzing the topical presentation. How does the psalm present, develop, and connect the various topics which it addresses? The psalm “is framed in verse 1a and verse 9 by an envelope of praise to the regal Creator.”⁵⁵ The in-

⁵⁴ Is the psalmist reflecting on “special revelation,” whereby YHWH reveals himself to be the creator, so that her reflection on YHWH’s creation is derived from an a-priori theology (so Craigie, 109, and Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 36)? Or is she instead reflecting on “general revelation,” as YHWH makes his attributes known through creation in a way that is manifest to all? Is the human a main theme of the Psalm, or a secondary theme illustrating YHWH’s glory in creation (So James L. Mays, *Psalms*, 67)?

⁵⁵ Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms*, 36.

clusio and the body of the psalm are reciprocally interpretive. On the one hand, the refrain frames the psalm within “an inclusio of great power” proclaiming the psalm’s “central message of wondrous awe”⁵⁶ from the outset. On the other hand, the reader cannot fully appreciate the refrain’s import until after considering the thematic development of the body of the psalm, and then returning to the refrain where the “perfect circle is closed.”⁵⁷

In the body of the psalm, the psalmist moves from one topic to another, addressing the following primary topics (i.e., topics that occupy the direct attention of the psalmist at one point or another): YHWH’s majesty (v. 2), babies and sucklings vs. enemies (v. 3), the evening heavenly bodies (v. 4) and humanity (vv. 5-9). The psalmist does not move haphazardly from one topic to the next, with little or no logical connection. Rather, the poet treats each topic in a similar programmatic way and interweaves the topics together artfully, creating, in the words of Alter, “a single panorama with multiple elements held nicely together.”⁵⁸ One element of the psalmist’s programmatic presentation is the way in which he consistently defines the topic under consideration by comparing it with another secondary topic. The result is a series of juxtapositional pairings of primary topics with secondary topics. The last of these juxtapositional pairings, which places humanity in juxtaposition with the rest of the created order, makes up roughly half of the Psalm, delineating at length both the primary topic (humanity) and the secondary topic (the rest of creation). So, the presentation of topics in Psalm 8 is as follows:

⁵⁶ Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms I* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 199.

⁵⁷ Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 118-119.

⁵⁸ Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 118.

[Framing context: majesty of YHWH's name in all the earth (v. 2a)]

(A) YHWH's splendor *vis à vis* the heavens (v. 2b)

(B) The babies and sucklings *vis à vis* the adversaries/enemy and avenger (v. 3)

(C) The heavens/heavenly bodies *vis à vis* the human (vv. 4-5)

(D) Humanity *vis à vis* the rest of the created order (vv. 6-9)

- Humanity's exaltation (vv. 6-7)
- The creatures subjected to humanity (vv. 8-9)⁵⁹

[Framing context: majesty of YHWH's name in all the earth (v.10)]

In each case, the primary topic is somehow superior to the secondary topic: (A) YHWH's splendor is "above the heavens," (B) the babies and sucklings are able "to silence the enemy and the avenger," (C) a contemplation of the majestic heavenly bodies (v. 4) leads to a contemplation of humanity's "finitude and fallibility,"⁶⁰ and (D) a discussion of humanity's royal role in creation leads to a description of the rest of creation as "under [humanity's] feet."⁶¹ Thus the psalmist portrays each primary topic as occupying a relatively exalted position in reference to the created order, and each secondary topic as occupying a relatively insignificant position within that order, establishing a hierarchy.

In addition to the relationship between the primary and secondary topics within each individual topical pairing, each pairing relates somehow with the pairing that precedes it and follows it in the psalm, with one purposeful exception. The relationship between pairing (A) and what follows may not be clear at the outset, because there is no

⁵⁹ While verses 8-9 define the "all things" at length ("all sheep and oxen . . . whatever swims along the paths of the seas"), this list serves the purpose of describing the extent of the dominion of the human, and therefore never develops into a primary topic in its own right. For a careful assessment of the ordering of vv. 8-9, see Richard Whitekettle, "The Taming of the Shrew, Shrike, and Shrimp: The Form and Function of Zoological Function in Psalm 8," *JBL* 125 (2006), 749-765.

⁶⁰ Mays, *Psalms*, 67-68.

⁶¹ The final primary topic, humanity is presented in a slightly more nuanced manner, as it is juxtaposed against two secondary topics: "אלהים" and "all things," the first element (אלהים) actually being *higher* than/superior to humanity, and the second ("all things") is lower than//inferior to humanity. The intent of the phrase "מעט נאלהים" seems to be to communicate that humanity occupies the absolute highest place in the created order possible (hence my idiomatic rendering, "less than divine"). As a result, I am treating this entire complex of ideas as a juxtapositional comparison between humanity and the rest of the created order.

readily evident point of contact between (A) and (B). To quote Alter, However, “the heavens” in v. 2 “lead directly to the assertion of [verse] 4 about the awe-inspiring sign of heaven and moon and stars.”⁶² Thus pairing (C) is logically connected with pairing (A). Verse two speaks of setting (or worshipping or chanting) YHWH’s splendor above the heavens (A), and that leads to a contemplation of the impressive night sky, which evokes immediate feelings of insignificance resulting in a contemplation of the role of the “puny man”⁶³ (C). Thus, verse four presents the heavenly bodies as simultaneously awesome (compared with humanity) and puny (compared with God). Craigie puts it beautifully:

The vastness of the universe is subtly magnified, for the heavens are the work of God’s “fingers!” . . . The poet makes a striking point. In contrast to God, the heavens are tiny, pushed and prodded into shape by the divine digits; but in contrast to the heavens, which seem so vast in the human perception, it is mankind that is tiny.⁶⁴

So, the heavens are the hinge between pairing (A) and pairing (C).

Yet, where, then, does pairing (B) fit in? Along with the problematic phrase **אשרתנה** of the preceding verse, the material about babies and sucklings, enemy and avenger, is particularly problematic.⁶⁵ In his article on Psalm 8, Childs says of verses 2b-3 “it is a sound principle to work from the clearer portions and later attempt to place these more difficult verses in the larger context which emerges.”⁶⁶ Thus, for now, it suffices to

⁶² Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 119.

⁶³ Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 187.

⁶⁴ Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 108.

⁶⁵ As Lund observes, “[a]t first sight, Ps 8,3 seems to be composed of metaphors that perhaps can make sense separately, but it seems impossible to combine them” (“Mouths,” 78). For a list of works contributing to the ongoing debate about how these various metaphors are to be understood, see *ibid.*, 78, n. 2.

⁶⁶ Childs, “Psalm 8 in the Context of the Christian Canon,” 23. These words are reminiscent of Augustine’s advice, quoted earlier, to consult the “plainer passages of Scripture” to elucidate more problematic passages, *Doc. Chr.* Book III: 2.

recognize that pairing (A) and pairing (C) find a link in their mutually shared references to the heavens, and to defer a full consideration of the role of pairing (B) until after treating the thematic development of the clearer parts of the rest of the psalm.

Just as pairings (A) and (C) connect thematically, so too pairings (C) and (D) relate to one another. The topics considered in vv. 4-9 follow upon one another in logical succession. A contemplation of the majestic heavenly bodies leads the psalmist to a contemplation of the relatively frail human (vv. 4-5, pairing C). This, in turn, leads to a consideration of the status of the human, which culminates in a recitation of the various creatures that the human has dominion over (vv. 7-9, pairing D). The human is a hinge that links together juxtapositional pairing (C) with juxtapositional pairing (D) in a way that subverts the reader's expectations. The language of pairing (C) emphasizes the insignificance of the human, and pairing (D) immediately reverses this insignificance by declaring that YHWH has exalted the "puny man"⁶⁷ to be among the most significant beings on the hierarchy of creation. In the words of Gerald Wilson,

The psalmist lays out two ways Yahweh's creation of humans counters their seeming powerless insignificance. Having created them as weak and powerless creatures, with one foot firmly planted in the creaturely world . . . God goes on to plant the other human foot squarely and uniquely in the divine realm, both by the unique gift of the divine image and by the role of responsibility and authority given only to humans.⁶⁸

So, temporarily setting aside pairing (B) as per the advice of Childs,⁶⁹ each topical pairing is connected to the preceding pairing and the following pairing in such a way as

⁶⁷ Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 187.

⁶⁸ Wilson, *Psalms I*, 206.

⁶⁹ Childs, "Psalm 8," 23.

to move the psalm along through a series of descending comparisons. We can map out this reading to represent the flow of thought of the body of the psalm graphically:

[Framing context: majesty of YHWH's name in all the earth]

(A) YHWH's splendor

above→the heavens (v. 2)

[(B) sucklings and enemies]

(C) The heavens (v. 4)

demonstrating the insignificance of→humanity (v. 5)

(D) Humanity (vv. 6-7)

given dominion over

→the rest of the created order (vv. 8-9)

[Framing context: majesty of YHWH's name in all the earth]

The effect of this descending chain of juxtapositional pairings is that two pivotal primary topics (the heavens and the human) are *first* presented as relatively inferior, and then presented as occupying an exalted place in the created order. In this way, the psalmist manages to effect a series of reversals that “turn the tables” on the reader. She does so by describing something in insignificant terms before proclaiming how YHWH has taken that insignificant thing and put it in an exalted place within the created order.

These two reversals drive along the progression of the psalm, and the first reversal (heavens) sets the stage for the second reversal (human) which is the central moment in the psalm wherein readers see how YHWH makes his name majestic in all the earth.⁷⁰

The second reversal (pairing D) has special significance for several reasons. As noted above, it constitutes about half of Psalm 8, dedicating two verses to the exaltation

⁷⁰ The contemplation of the heavens occupies just over one verse, but the contemplation of the humans occupies over half of the Psalm. Also, the repetition of the key words *גִּדְלוֹ* and *כָּל* in connection with YHWH in the inclusio (“how (*גִּדְלוֹ*) majestic . . . in all (*כָּל*) the earth”) and with the human towards the center of the Psalm (“What (*גִּדְלוֹ*) is humanity . . . yet you have put all (*כָּל*) things under his feet”) further serves to highlight the centrality of humanity in the psalm. See J. Clinton McCann, Jr., “Psalms,” in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (12 vols.; Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994-2004), 4:712; Lund, “From the Mouths of Babes and Infants,” 96-97.

of the human and two verses to the subordination of the rest of the created order.⁷¹ Thus, in the case of the human, the psalm emphasizes the role reversal, as it describes at length what God has done to take the human from a place of evident insignificance and put the human in a place of royal significance (vv. 6-7). In the case of the rest of the created order, however, there is no role reversal (vv. 8-9). To the contrary, these verses list the creatures that are in submission to the human in an order that reverses the order of the Genesis 1 creation account, listing land, air, and sea animals, respectively.⁷² This “top down” listing is consistent with the movement of the rest of Psalm 8 (God→heavenly bodies→humanity→the rest of creation) and in no way reverses the reader’s expectations. Rather, it serves rhetorically to convince the reader of the veracity of verse 7’s claim of human dominion,⁷³ and rounds out the body of the Psalm in a way that leads into the worshipful reiteration of the refrain in verse 10. To quote Wilson,

Subtly our understanding of the ground for praising Yahweh has shifted from the first verse to the last. At the beginning our praise began by affirming the magnificence of the creator. At the end, we stand in awe at the unexpected grace that has elevated his human works to unimaginable height of glory, honor, and responsibility.⁷⁴

Babies and sucklings/enemy and avenger. Having adumbrated the thrust and thematic development of the clearer portions of Psalm 8, we are now in a position to turn

⁷¹ Beyerlin, “Psalm 8: Chancen der Überlieferungskritik,” 3-4; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Die Psalmen I* (NEB; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1993), 78-80; Gesrstenberger, *Psalms, Part 1*, 67-70. All three divide the body of Psalm 8 into two uneven sections: Ps 8:2b(or c)-3, and Ps 8:4-9.

⁷² For a thorough treatment of the way in which the psalmist has ordered the animals of verses 8-9, see Whitekettle, “The Taming of the Shrew, Shrike, and Shrimp,” 749-765. For an assessment of the structure of vv. 8-9 and their role in the overarching structure of the psalm, see Pierre Auffrett, “Qu’est-ce Que L’homme, Que Tu T’en Souviennes? Étude structurelle du Psaume 8,” *SeE* 54 (2002), 28-33.

⁷³ Whitekettle, “Taming of the Shrew, Shrike, and Shrimp,” 763-765.

⁷⁴ Wilson, *Psalms I*, 209. Thus, VanGemenen’s peremptory treatment of verse 10, “[s]ee comments at v. 1,” does not do justice to the second iteration of the refrain.

to the more ambiguous material in verse 3. This verse is problematic for at least three reasons: 1) The ambiguities arising from the letters **אשרתנה** in verse 2 result in uncertainty as to the grammatical relationship between verses 2 and 3.⁷⁵ 2) If a strong connection binds together the references to the heavenly bodies in verses 2 and 4, it remains to be seen how verse three fits between them. 3) Commentators and translators (including the LXX) have struggled with understanding the poetic imagery of this verse, asking, “How can God ‘found a bulwark [עז]’ ‘by the mouths of babes’” against his foes?⁷⁶ This last difficulty is of special importance, since arriving at a clear understanding of the meaning of the poetic imagery of this verse will go far to solving the other two difficulties.

Since the discovery of the Ugaritic texts at Rash Shamra, several scholars have looked to Canaanite mythology to find new answers.⁷⁷ So, Claus Schedl identifies the **ינקים** with the beings that the Rash Shamra texts describe as “gracious gods . . . who suck the nipple of the Athiaratu.”⁷⁸ Concerning the **עוללים** he avers that “[i]m Zusammenhang des Psalmes geht es aber nicht um Kinder auf Erden, sondern um . . . die ‘Göttersöhne,’” or **בני אלהים**.⁷⁹ Thus, he translates both words together as “mächtigen

⁷⁵ For a summary treatment of some of the ways in which scholars have struggled to understand Ps 8:3a and its relationship with Psalm 8:2b, see Soggin, “Textkritische Untersuchung,” 566-568.

⁷⁶ Gerstenberger, *Psalms Part 1*, 68.

⁷⁷ Soggin, “Textkritische Untersuchung,” 565-571; Schedl, “Psalm 8;” Smith, “Psalm 8:2b-3;” 637-641; Ringger, “Some Observations on the Text of the Psalms,” 307-308.

⁷⁸ Schedl, “Psalm 8,” 180-181. English translation taken from KTU 1.23 in Johannes C. De Moor, *An Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit*, Religious Texts Translation Series NISABA, 16 (New York: Brill, 1987), 122.

⁷⁹ Schedl, “Psalm 8,” 183.

Wesen,” from whose mouth the majesty of YHWH is sung about in heaven (verse 2b).⁸⁰

Smith follows Schedl in identifying the **עוללים וינקים** with Canaanite beings, but argues that the children of El in *CTA* 23 rebel against El and are expelled.⁸¹ Thus, he regards the phrases **עוללים וינקים** and **אויב ומתנפם** “as examples of hendiadys,” rendering verse three to read: “From [i.e., against] the mouths of suckling babes you established a strong place, for your stronghold you indeed ended the avenging enemy.”⁸²

There is good reason to question whether decades of recourse to Ugaritic literature has really resulted in any satisfying solution to the alleged problem of the poetic imagery of Ps 8:3. The use of **עולל** to refer to **בני אלהים** is unattested elsewhere in the Old Testament.⁸³ Furthermore, scholars who read Psalm 8 in light of Ugaritic mythology have failed to arrive at a consensus.⁸⁴ Also, while the Canaanite context is the most often appealed to, other scholars propose competing extra-biblical contexts as the proper place

⁸⁰ Schedl, “Psalm 8,” 183. Schedl points the verb in Ps 8:2b as **תָּנַה**, translating it as “besugen.”

⁸¹ Smith, “Psalm 8:2b-3,” 637-641.

⁸² Smith, “Psalm 8:2b-3,” 638-639.

⁸³ The term **עולל** refers to human infants 1) killed or captured in conquest (I Sam 15:3; 22:19, II Ki 8:12, Ps 137:9, Isa 13:16, Jer 6:11; 9:21; 44:7, Lam 1:5, Hos 13:6, Mic 2:9, Nah 3:10), 2) starving under siege (Lam 2:11, 19-20; 4:4), 3) who inherit from human parents (Ps 17: 14), or 3) as part of the congregation of human Israelites (Joel 2:16). See Goldingay, *Psalms 1-41*, 156.

⁸⁴ In addition to the disagreement between Smith and Schedl concerning the nature of the **עוללים וינקים**, scholars who read Psalm 8 in light of Ras Shamra disagree about how to interpret other parts of Psalm 8, as well. For example, Schedl posited many textual alterations to the MT version of Ps 8, from the beginning (repointing **אשר** and attaching it to the first clause in Ps 8:2a to read “Wie Herrlich ist, Jahwäh, deine Name, gerümt in der ganzen Weld”) to the end (deleting the second occurrence of **ים** in Ps 8:9 and inserting the now repointed letters **אשר** into Ps 8:10) of the psalm, but neither Smith nor Soggin have followed suit. Moreover, disagreement persists concerning the proper solutions to the text-critical question of understanding the letters **אשרתנה** the question of how the preposition **מן** of **מפי** in v. 3a ought to be understood, the very problems which they purport an investigation into the Ugaritic texts will solve.

for understanding the origins of Ps 8, such as Egyptian royal ideology⁸⁵ and Assyrian astral worship.⁸⁶ When one turns to assess proposals positing several putative stages for the gradual development of the psalm,⁸⁷ the options become bewildering. Moreover, all such proposals rest upon an accumulation of probabilistic inferences, which run the risk of falling into what Alvin Plantinga refers to as “the fallacy of creeping certitude.”⁸⁸

Even if one were to find the Ugaritic parallels compelling, one would have to acknowledge that the psalm’s final form had a different meaning, at least for the compilers of the Psalter. As Schedl himself admits, his proposal entails “archaische, mythologische Spuren” that “später . . . umgedeutet werden,”⁸⁹ and that the text survived intact only after the mythological worldview had been lost.⁹⁰ Furthermore, in the context of the Old Testament, the Hebrew terms עוללים (“babies”) and ינקים (“sucklings”) almost certainly refer to earthly beings and evoke weakness and vulnerability,⁹¹ especially when they appear together.⁹² This usage contrasts sharply with the depiction of the children of El in the Ugaritic Myth and Ritual text. So, while Schedl’s and Smith’s proposed recovery of an archaic interpretation of the psalm may have historical importance, a canonical exege-

⁸⁵ Görg, “Königliche Eulogie,” 299-308.

⁸⁶ Tigay, “What is Man that You Have Been Mindful of Him?” 169-171.

⁸⁷ Loretz, as cited in Wittstruck, *The Book of Psalms*, 518.

⁸⁸ Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 402.

⁸⁹ Claus Schedl, “Ps 8 in Ugaritischer Sicht,” 183.

⁹⁰ Claus Schedl, “Ps 8 in Ugaritischer Sicht,” 184.

⁹¹ See, for example, the עוללים in Lam 4:4 who are helpless to get food or drink for themselves, or the various references where helpless עוללים are killed in holy war (I Sam 15:3, Ps 137:9), see BDB 760. For ינקים see Num 11:12, I Sam 15:3, and Isaiah 66:11, BDB 413.

⁹² So, too, I Sam 15:3; 22:19, and Lam 2:11; 4:4, and Joel 2:16. Cf. Lund, “Mouths,” *SJOT* 11(1997): 85-86; Walter Beyerlin, “Psalm 8: Chancen der Überlieferungskritik,” *ZfTuK* 73 (1976): 15-17.

sis ought not to grant canonical status to this archaic interpretation; in Schedl's own estimation, it was not the interpretation of the tradents of the text, nor does it fit in with the mythological "weldbildes" of the broader canon.

Recently, other scholars, attending directly to the Old Testament rather than Ugaritic, Egyptian, or Mesopotamian literature for interpretive insight, have done work better suited for a canon-exegetical approach to the text. Øystein Lund has turned to other OT material to illuminate the poetic imagery of verse three.⁹³ In the estimation of Auffrete,

Lund a montré comment Ps 8,3 comme unite syntaxique prenait un sens pleinement satisfaisant pour peu qu'on comprenne, à partir d'une conception biblique parfaitement fondée, que la bouche des enfants et des rejetons reçoit bel et bien une *force* ('wz) qui leur permet de lutter efficacement contre tous les ennemis qui, dans le cosmos même, s'opposent à cette vie qu'ils ont reçue de créatur.⁹⁴

As Lund aptly demonstrates, the OT frequently describes "the mouth as an instrument for the display of power," even, at times, wielding weapons.⁹⁵ Thus, in Ps 8:3, "God provides the babes and infants with strength, and establishes this strength in a place where it is natural to locate it—in the mouth."⁹⁶ It is also natural that this strength, in turn, is able to "silence" (השביית) YHWH's enemies, as "a goal in the struggle against [enemies] is to neutralize the mouth, and silence then becomes the utmost symbol of this."⁹⁷

⁹³ Lund, "Mouths," 78-99.

⁹⁴ Pierre Auffret, "Qu'est-ce que L'Homme," 25.

⁹⁵ Lund, "Mouths," 79-83. Lund finds poetic descriptions of the mouth as a source of power in Isa 9:12; 11:4; and 48:2, Ps 18:9; 22:14; 57:5; 59:7; and 107:15, and II Sam 22:9, and other passages.

⁹⁶ Lund, "Mouths," 83.

⁹⁷ Lund, "Mouths," 82-83. Lund cites examples where shutting the mouth of something or silencing it amounts to neutralizing its power, especially Job 5:16 and Ps 107:42. See also R. E. Watts, "The Meaning of 'ĀLĀW YIQPESŪ MELĀKĪM PĪHEM in Isaiah LII 15," VT 40 (1990), 327-335, who argues that the phrase "shutting of the mouth" in Isa 52:15 is "a metonymy of effect signifying the subjugation of the arrogant kings to the servant," 335.

Furthermore, it is not altogether out of place to see YHWH as using the mouths of the **יונקים** and **עוללים** as a source of strength. The expectation of and/or request for God's intervention on behalf of the "lowly-poor-needy" over and against the "strong-arrogant-ruthless"⁹⁸ is a common theme in the Psalter. Such an action on the part of YHWH fits in perfectly in the immediate context of Psalm 8, which, as I have shown above, depicts God as reversing the readers' expectations. Furthermore, one other passage containing the word pair **יונק** and **עולל** describes how the helpless Israelites gather to pray (presumably with their mouths) for God to intervene for them against strong, oppressive enemies (Joel 2:16);⁹⁹ there, God's strength is manifest by his answering the prayers of the weak and helpless against the oppressors. Therefore, when one looks to the canon of the OT to clarify the poetic language in Ps 8:3, it makes the most sense to read the prepositional phrase **מפי עוללים ויונקים** as grammatically connected with what follows. Returning briefly to the question of the translation of **אשרתנה**, this reading fits better if, with the majority tradition, one reads **תנה** as reflecting a form of the verb **נתן**,¹⁰⁰ although it is not entirely incompatible with other proposals.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ James L. Mays, *Psalms*, 23. Here Mays describes the prayers in the individual lament psalms.

⁹⁹ Cf. Lund, "Mouths," 86.

¹⁰⁰ So Auffret, "Que'est-ce que l'homme," 25-26.

¹⁰¹ So, for example, while Dahood translates Ps 8:2b-3 to read "I will adore your majesty above the heavens, with the lips of striplings and sucklings" (*Psalms*, 48), one could accept his pointing of the verb **אשרתנה** yet accept Lund's reading of verse three, rendering the verses to read "I will adore your majesty above the heavens. Out of the mouths of striplings and sucklings you have established strength . . ." So, too, while the RSV renders vv. 2b-3a as a syntactical unity, one could conceivably agree with the RSV's rendering in following the pointing that results in a pual form of the verb **תנה**, and yet render vv. 2b and 3a as syntactically separate to read "your glory is chanted above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have established strength/a stronghold . . ."

Who, then, are the **ינקים** and **עוללים**? In addition to the mythological interpretation of Schedl and Smith, scholars have identified them with: 1) the children of “Tochter Zion,”¹⁰² 2) Israelite children—a democratization of an idea formerly connected with the son of the Pharaoh,¹⁰³ 3) children in general,¹⁰⁴ 4) the psalmist himself,¹⁰⁵ or a poetic representation of either 5) all human beings,¹⁰⁶ or 6) weak and humble human beings.¹⁰⁷ The last of these interpretations is the most compelling, and it is better to understand Ps 8:3 as a malleable poetic scene of YHWH’s triumph over his foes than to posit a specific historical or mythological referent for the **ינקים**, **עוללים**, **עז**, **צורר**, **אויב**, or **מתנקם**. The alternation between the perfect (**יִסְדַּת**, **כּוֹנְנַתָּה**, **שָׁתָה**) and the imperfect (**תִּזְכְּרֵנוּ**, **אֲרֵאֵהָ**, **תִּזְכְּרֵנוּ**, **תִּמְשִׁילֵהוּ**, **תַּעֲטְרֵהוּ**, **וּתְחַסְרֵהוּ**, **תִּפְקְרֵנוּ**) verb tenses give the psalm a timeless quality, making a single historical referent unlikely.¹⁰⁸ The result is a picture of, on the one hand, a creation that has been established at some point in the past, and, on the other, the psalmist’s experience of and contemplation of the resulting created order. While one could read the perfect verbs, especially **יִסְדַּת** in verse 3, as alluding to a past mythical event, elsewhere the the word pair **יִוֹנֵק** and **עוֹלֵל** refers to earthy humans, not mythic crea-

¹⁰² Beyerlin, “Psalm 8,” 15-17.

¹⁰³ Manfred Görg, “Der Mensch als königliches Kind nach Ps 8.3,” *BN* 3(1977), 7-13.

¹⁰⁴ Lund, “Mouths,” 86.

¹⁰⁵ Dahood, *Psalms*, 49-50.

¹⁰⁶ Steck sees Ps 8:3 and Ps 8:5-9 as reiterating the same theme twice: that of “Shöpferwirken auf Erden am Menschen zur Bändigung von Feinden” (v. 3) or “Shöpferwirken auf Erden am Menschen zur Bändigung der Tiere” (vv. 5-9) (“Beobachtungen zu Psalm 8,” 57).

¹⁰⁷ Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 107.

¹⁰⁸ Concerning the tenses of the verbs in Psalm 8, see Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 105 n. 7.a., 110-113.

tures.¹⁰⁹ Also, the status of a human as vice-gerent in the cosmos implies the ongoing necessity to maintain the created order, making it difficult to see the **צורר, אויב**, or **נותנקם** of verse 3 as past enemies that have now been “sabbatized” or caused to cease (**השבת**).

Thus, it is better to understand Psalm 8 as viewing creation phenomenologically, emphasizing the created order as it is (or ought to be), rather than mythologically, emphasizing the way that the created order came to be.¹¹⁰ Understood this way, the MT’s choice to point **תנה** as an imperative form of **נתן** makes some sense. The psalmist begins his phenomenological contemplation of the created order with a terse prayer: “Oh [YHWH]! Set your glory above the heavens!” Or, “Continually intervene over and against those who would upset your intended order and thus defame your glory!” This is not to deny that “old fashioned creation mythology” wherein “creation is not a peaceful affair but a war against chthonic powers” lies in the background of Psalm 8¹¹¹ Rather, it is to view Psalm 8 as a piece that is not time-bound, one which does indeed speak of YHWH’s original establishment of creation, but does not limit itself to a recitation of a mythic event. Rather, its phenomenological focus on the created order results in a poetic dynamism that is able to encompass simultaneously the reality of creation past, present, and future.

¹⁰⁹ So, too, I Sam 15:3; 22:19, and Lam 2:11; 4:4, and Joel 2:16. Cf. Lund, “Mouths,” 85-86; Beyerlin, “Psalm 8: Chancen der Überlieferungskritik,” 15-17.

¹¹⁰ Contra, e.g., Alberto J. Soggin, who argues that “in diesem Fall ist das von Jahwe erbaute Bollwerk,” so that the **עז** (“strength”=“Bollwerk”) of v. 3, is “mit der **רקיע** von. Gen. i 6 identisch,” in “Texteritische Untersuchung,” 569-570.

¹¹¹ Gerstenberger, *Psalms 1*, 69.

Thus, in the light of the foregoing analysis of the thematic development of Psalm 8, verse 3 makes the most sense as a programmatic, idealized summary of the rest of the psalm. Towards the beginning of the psalm, it gives one poetic scene which embodies in sum the thrust and theme of the rest of the psalm and is not time-bound. So far I have argued that the flow of thought of the body of the psalm is driven by two parallel reversals. In each case the reader is first introduced to a relatively inferior thing (heavens/humans), and then lead into a contemplation of the exalted position that the inferior thing has in the created order. We find all of these elements in brief in the juxtaposition of the babies/sucklings and the enemy/avenger.¹¹² Thus, Ps 8:3 serves as a brief excursus which deviates slightly and intentionally from the main thrust of the psalm. Verse 3 speaks to the way in which YHWH maintains the created order, as he continues to take relatively insignificant things and exalt them over and against stronger enemies. The point of this verse, then, is to illustrate the thrust of the rest of the Psalm by relating how, in the words of Bellinger, God “create[s] strength even out of weakness.”¹¹³

Tying it all together. Having surveyed the thrust of thought throughout the body of the psalm, I will now summarize how the thematic development of Psalm 8 ties the various themes of the psalm together. The body of the Psalm consists of two unequal parts, as follows:

¹¹² By YHWH's action, the mouths of the humble and weak עוללים and ינקים are used to thwart (השבית) the foes of YHWH (צורריך, אויב, and מתנקם) with their God given strength (עז).

¹¹³ W. H. Bellinger, *Psalms: Reading and Studying the Book of Praises* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 86.

Inclusio: “how[גִּדְוָה] excellent your name in all [כָּל] the earth” (v. 2a)

A. Reversals One and Two (vv. 2b-4):

Insignificant heavenly bodies (vv. 2b, 4)

Imbedded paradigmatic reversal: babes and infants/enemy and avenger
(v. 3)

Majestic heavenly bodies (v. 4).

B. Reversal Three (vv. 5-9):

Insignificant human: “what [גִּדְוָה] is the human?” (v. 5)

Majestic human: “you have placed all things [כָּל] under his feet” (vv. 6-7)

Denouement:

Animals from creation day six (v. 8)

Animals from creation day five (v. 9)

Inclusio: “how[גִּדְוָה] excellent your name in all [כָּל] the earth” (v. 10)¹¹⁴

The first iteration of the inclusio turns the reader’s attention to YHWH’s majestic name in verse one. This flows into the first line of the first part of the body (part A), that begins with a terse prayer for YHWH to glorify himself above the relatively insignificant heavens in verse two.¹¹⁵ Employing three concrete verbs of creation (נָתַן, יָסַד, and כִּנֵּן), Part A demonstrates YHWH’s majestic splendor in the created order through two intertwined reversals: 1) a timeless, paradigmatic scene in which YHWH takes the evidently weak babes and infants and uses them to neutralize (הִשְׁבִּיתָ) his enemies (verse 3), and 2) a celebration of the way that God takes things that are but “finger toys” to him (the heavenly bodies) and imbues them with awesome majesty (verses 2b, 4). The second section (Part B) begins with the third reversal. Here, YHWH takes the even less signifi-

¹¹⁴ For the strategic positioning of the words לֵב and גִּדְוָה see McCann, “Psalms,” 712, and Lund, “From the Mouths of Babes and Infants, Strength,” 96-97. For two different but insightful and harmonious treatment of the structure of Psalm 8, see Auffret “Qu’est-ce que l’Homme que tu t’en Souviennes?” 25-35, and Terrien, *The Psalms*, 124-126.

¹¹⁵ The initial iteration of the inclusio and the first line of v. 3 are in parallel with one another (YHWH’s majestic name (v. 2) // YHWH’s splendor (v. 3), and “in all the earth” (v. 2) // “above the heavens,” heavens and earth being a common hendyadis for the entire created order, as in Gen. 1:1). Thus, Verse 2a begins the body of the psalm by restating the framing context. See Alter, 118. That verse 1 can serve a double function, standing in parallel with verse 2 while at the same time anticipating the reiteration of the refrain in verse 10, should not surprise anyone who is familiar with the Psalter. For example, Ps 103:1a forms an inclusio with Ps 103:22c, and Ps 103:1a also stands in parallel with Ps 103:1b.

cant human, makes him “a little less than divine,” and puts him over “all things.” The thematic development of the psalm, the place and length of Part B in the Psalm, and the use of the key words *נזה* and *כל*, which frame the psalm in the inclusio, all serve to highlight verses 5-7 as the central moment in the body of the psalm. This leads into verses 8-9, the *denouement* of part B, describing the domain of the human ruler in top-down fashion, completing the panoramic portrait of creation.

The psalm then returns to reiterate in the refrain the majesty of YHWH’s name. In its second iteration the refrain takes on the “sense accrued through the intervening eight lines of what concretely it means for His name to be majestic throughout the earth.”¹¹⁶ The reader of Psalm 8 now understands that YHWH makes His name excellent in all the earth by establishing and maintaining the created order through the exaltation of things that seem otherwise to be insignificant. Thus, YHWH simultaneously subverts human expectations and all attempts to thwart his order.

Tracing Trajectories for Canonical Exegesis

Having adumbrated the main themes and sense of Ps 8, the question now remains as to how one ought to proceed to bring Psalm 8 into dialogue with the rest of the canon. In order to address this question, it will be helpful to distill some key theological motifs and questions from the foregoing analysis of Psalm 8, paying special attention to the way in which interpreters, both ancient and modern, have interacted with the theology of the psalm. Then, looking to Childs’s article “Psalm 8 in the Context of the Christian Canon” for guidance, this section will propose several ways of discerning “points of entry,” or parts of Scripture which have special affinities with Psalm 8 and can, therefore, serve as

¹¹⁶ Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 119.

contact points to illuminate the Eighth Psalm and to be illuminated by it, concluding the chapter and setting the trajectory for the rest of the dissertation.

Theological Motifs

From the above analysis, four motifs emerge as deserving special attention throughout the rest of this dissertation: 1) YHWH's majestic name, 2) the created order, 3) the role of humanity, and 4) the reversal motif—whereby YHWH makes evident his majestic name and maintains the created order by taking seemingly insignificant things, most notably, humans, and imbuing them with strength. The following will highlight how each of these themes, individually and in concert with each other, gives rise to issues and questions that will be illuminated by bringing Psalm 8 into dialogue with the rest of the canon.

YHWH's majestic name. This theme will inform the following chapters in two ways: 1) A distinct question arises from the declaration of the LORD's majestic name "in all the earth:" Are humans, according to Psalm 8, able to know God or something about God by means of the created order?¹¹⁷ Or is the emphasis rather upon the need for

¹¹⁷ John Calvin says of verses 8-9, that "[t]here is no man of a mind so dull and stupid but may see, if he will be at the trouble to open his eyes, that it is by the wonderful providence of God that horses and oxen yield their service to men" (*Commentary on the Book of Psalms I*, 107). So, too, Mays: "The LORD who is sovereign over the congregation that sings the hymn possesses a cosmic majesty evident in all the earth" (*Psalms*, 63), Terrien: "The revelation of the name allows humans to raise slightly the veil of transcendental mystery" (*Psalms*, 128), and Goldingay: There is "something splendid about creation that makes people wonder at God's glory" (*Psalms*, vol. 1, 154).

special revelation?¹¹⁸ Psalm 8 alone is not sufficient to settle the question of if (and how) God reveals himself by means of the creation to finite humans, and an exhaustive treatment of this complex question is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, the following chapters may shine some light on the question by bringing Psalm 8 into dialogue with the rest of the canon. 2) More central to our purposes is the hymnic tenor and worshipful stance of the psalm. In bringing Psalm 8 into dialogue with the rest of the canon, we will consider some passages that share the psalm's worshipful tone (i.e., Eph 1:20-23), and others that reflect a more pessimistic outlook (i.e., Job 7). The distinct focus of Psalm 8 upon the majestic name of YHWH will play a role in informing our understanding of a) the distinct theological contribution of Psalm 8 to the rest of the canon, and b) the way in which the rest of the canon can inform our understanding of the hymn that is Psalm 8.

The created order. According to Susan Gillingham's survey of the history of interpretation of Psalm 8, the psalm's expositors have chosen to focus either upon salva-

¹¹⁸ Craigie insists that "[n]ature . . . does not contain in this context any inherent qualities of revelation" (Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 109). Similarly, In a section entitled "The Knowability of God," Karl Barth undertakes an excursive exegesis of Psalm 8, asking whether one can "understand Ps. 8 in the sense that an appeal is made to man in the cosmos in himself and as such as a witness of God," so that Ps 8 argues for a "natural theology." He concludes that one cannot understand Psalm 8 in this way, which can only properly be understood as pointing one to the special revelation which is to be found in "the man," who is Jesus (*Church Dogmatics* G. W. Bromiley, O. Bussey, J. W. Edwards, J. L. M. Hare, W. B. Johnston, Henry Kennedy, Harold Knight, A. T. MacKay, John Marks, T. H. L. Parker, G. T. Thomson, and T. F. Torrance, trans.; 4 vols.; [New York: Charles Scribners, 1949-1962], 3/2, 112-113). Hans Kraus seems to agree: "How can mankind . . . know this [that YHWH has created everything]? In the type of statements about creation to which we turn first, the name of Yahweh (Ps. 8:1) is the key to the secret of creation . . . The statement that Yahweh created the word is not something obvious, but it is a confession of faith, based on the self-communication of Yahweh's name" (*Theology of the Psalms*, 36).

tion or upon creation in their interpretation.¹¹⁹ According to the reading of Psalm 8 proposed above, Psalm 8 itself emphasizes the created order as it ought to be, as YHWH intends to maintain it, yet it also hints at the need for salvation by mentioning the existence of enemies in the paradigmatic scene in verse three, indicating that the maintenance of the created order currently entails a struggle necessitating divine intervention. Summarizing pre-modern Christian interpretations of Psalm 8, Peterson states, “[c]reation is not as it should be However, at the resurrection of the dead, there will be a new creation.”¹²⁰ Bringing Psalm 8 into contact with other passages will enable this seminal tension between the way that things ought to be and the way that things are to germinate into a robust theology of the already and the not yet. Thus, both creation and the need for redemption will be in the fore of the discussion as this study turns to other passages that emphasize disorder in creation (e.g. Job 7) and others that speak of salvation (e.g. Hebrews 4).

The role of humanity. When Christian interpreters have considered Psalm 8 in connection with salvation, they have often also used Psalm 8 to speak of the savior. In her dissertation surveying 10 pre-modern interpreters, including Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin, Margaret Kim Peterson finds that they all “without exception interpret the Psalm

¹¹⁹ Gillingham cites the LXX translation, the NT authors, various other patristic writers (including Theodore of Mopuestia and Ambrose of Milan), and Thomas Aquinas as examples of salvation/redemption-oriented readings (“Psalm 8,” 169-170, 176-180). Augustine sees salvation/redemption throughout the psalm. For example, “the man” in verse 5a as referring to fallen, unregenerate humans, and the “son of man” in verse 5b as referring to both Christ and spiritual humans, indicating a movement from fall to redemption that is accomplished in Christ, *Enerrat. Ps. 8:10-11* (Saint Augustine, *Expositions of the Psalms: 1-32. The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21’st Century, Part III, vol. 15*, Maria Boulding, trans. [Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2000]).

¹²⁰ Peterson, “Psalm 8,” 234.

christologically, although they do so in somewhat different ways.”¹²¹ The precedent for this is found in the quotation of Psalm 8 in the New Testament.¹²² Some interpreters in our own era have seen images of Christ in Psalm 8, either in ways that differ substantially from pre-modern exegesis,¹²³ or by looking to the pre-modern tradition as an aid in understanding the psalm and its New Testament appropriations.¹²⁴ How is a Christian to understand Psalm 8 as bearing witness to Christ without allowing voices that are foreign to the psalm to override the psalm’s meaning? This dissertation, by seeking to read Psalm 8 on its own terms, while at the same time bringing it into contact with other passages of Scripture, will grapple directly with this question.

Another salient theological issue that arises when one considers the message of Psalm 8 concerning the role of humanity in the cosmos is that of how humans ought to govern the rest of the created order. In recent years, Psalm 8 has become something of a *locus classicus* for biblical scholars and theologians concerned with issues related to the just human rule of creation, especially ecological issues.¹²⁵ At issue is the question of whether the corporate human monarch has license to exploit the rest of nature for its own ends, or if the human, as vice-gerent and steward, is to attend benevolently to the rest of

¹²¹ See also Peterson’s helpful, if somewhat simplistic in its harmonization, summary of the pre-modern interpreters’ understanding of Christ in Psalm 8 (“Psalm 8,” 236-241).

¹²² Gillingham “Psalm 8, Through the Looking Glass,” 176-177.

¹²³ E.g., Creach, *Psalms*, 74-76, Mays, *Psalms*, 70.

¹²⁴ Asensio, “El Protagonismo del ‘Hombre-Hijo del Hombre’ del Salmo 8,” 17-51.

¹²⁵ Focusing on Genesis 1, James Barr argues that “the biblical foundations of” the doctrine of creation “tend . . . away from a license to exploit and towards a duty to respect and to protect,” “Man and Nature: The Ecological Controversy and the Old Testament,” *BJRL* 55 (1972): 30. More recently, scholars have given increasing attention to Psalm 8, often alongside Genesis 1 (see Ute Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung: Ein Beitrag zur alttestamentlichen Anthropologie am Beispiel von Psalm 8, Genesis 1 und verwandten Texten* [WMANT 101; Germany: Neukirchener, 2004]; Marvin E. Tate “An Exposition of Psalm 8,” *PRS* 28 (2001): 356-359).

creation. An entire book could be dedicated to investigating Psalm 8 alone in order to address this question.¹²⁶ The present work, however, will defer a full treatment of this question for the following chapters, when a fuller answer will emerge as Psalm 8 comes into interaction with the rest of Scripture.

A related question pertains to how humans ought to relate to and govern one another. Some contemporary scholars have seen egalitarian overtones in Psalm 8, describing it as “democratizing.”¹²⁷ Is this correct? On the one hand, it is correct that the portrayal of corporate humanity in Psalm 8 as ruling the created order together contrasts with Egyptian¹²⁸ and Mesopotamian¹²⁹ royal ideology, resulting in an increased sense of dignity for the common human. On the other hand, Psalm 8 does not say anything explicitly about the form that human government ought to take. Moreover, one must ask why, if Psalm 8 is anti-royal, the tradents associated Psalm 8 with David in the title; to speak of Psalm 8 as “democratic” goes beyond the evidence of the psalm itself. Once again, bringing Psalm 8 into dialogue with other passages will elucidate the issue of proper human government from a canonical perspective.

The reversal motif. Since this motif permeates and interweaves each of the other three motifs and is part of the distinct theological contribution of Psalm 8, it will inform

¹²⁶ Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzener Schöpfung*, does not treat Psalm 8 exclusively, but she dedicates over 100 pages to her exegesis of Psalm 8 alone (20-135), and focuses heavily on Psalm 8 throughout the course of the rest of the 350 page book.

¹²⁷ Eckart Otto, “Myth and Hebrew Ethics in the Psalms,” in *Psalms and Mythology*, Dirk J. Human, ed. (LHB/OTS 462; New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 29, 35, Manfred Görg, “Der Mensch als königliches Kind nach Ps 8.3,” 13. Cf. Terrence E. Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 47.

¹²⁸ So Görg, “Der Mensch als königliches Kind,” 7-13.

¹²⁹ So Otto, “Myth and Hebrew Ethics in the Psalms,” 29, 35.

much of the discussion that follows in the dissertation. When we consider how other passages relate to the interpretation of Psalm 8, questions emerging from the other three motifs may influence the understanding of the reversal motif. When the trajectory runs in the other direction, with Psalm 8 elucidating the other passages that we will consider, the question becomes “how does the distinct theological contribution of Psalm 8, summarized in the reversal motif, inform the present text?”

Selecting Passages for Canonical Exegesis

The study that follows will look to texts that are especially well suited to bring Psalm 8 into dialogue with the rest of Scripture. How, then, ought this dissertation to select texts to engage with? In Childs’s seminal article, he considered Psalm 8 alongside several other texts throughout the canon, and the way in which he selected these texts can prove helpful for the present study. While Childs did not explicitly delineate the criteria that he used for choosing the other passages that he brought into dialogue with Psalm 8, a careful reading of his article reveals three types of passages that Childs turns to: 1) passages that have strong thematic parallels with Psalm 8, indicating either direct dependence or indirect dependence;¹³⁰ 2) passages that aid in dealing with an exegetical problem growing out of Psalm 8 and that exhibit some thematic parallels and/or semantic similarities;¹³¹ 3) passages that cite Psalm 8.¹³² To these three categories I will add a fourth category that Childs did not address: 4) The immediate literary context of Psalm 8; one must attend to the Psalter and to the burgeoning literature on the shape and shaping

¹³⁰ Genesis 1 (“Psalm 8,” 21-22).

¹³¹ Job 7 (with reference to Psalm 144); Ecclesiastes 3 (“Psalm 8,” 28-30).

¹³² Heb 2:6-9 (with reference to Matt 21:16; 1 Cor 15:27; Eph 1:22. “Psalm 8,” 24-26).

of the Psalter to develop a fully informed canonical exegesis of Psalm 8. I will also modify category 2 slightly, focusing only upon passages which overlap semantically with Psalm 8 in order to reign in the number of passages considered.

In what follows, then, the study will consider passages that fit into one or another of these four categories, and I will utilize these passages as “entry points” through which Psalm 8 may enter into dialogue with the rest of the canon. It should be pointed out, however, that the fundamental question underlying the selection of texts and contexts in the following chapters will not be whether or not a given text fits into one of the four categories mentioned above. Rather, the driving question is: “Which texts are best suited to serve as representative entry points through which Psalm 8 can engage the rest of the canon?” These four categories are simply meant to serve as heuristic tools to assist in locating texts that are well suited to serve as “entry points.” In structuring the study, Psalm 8 will be the interpretive center. The chapters that follow will first consider the material nearest “the center” in the canon (the Psalter, chapter three), then move on to the more remote material in the Old Testament (chapter four) and then finally the New Testament (chapter five). The hope is to allow Psalm 8 and the other passages to be mutually interpretive. Interpretive influence runs two ways: centripetally, so that Psalm 8 informs the passage under consideration, and centrifugally, so that the rest of the canon in turn informs a canonical understanding of Psalm 8. In this way, each passage will be able to speak on its own terms, without being overwhelmed by the message of another passage.

CHAPTER THREE

Psalm 8 in the Context of the Psalter

Turning to the canonical literature most immediately connected with Psalm 8, the Psalter, of the four types of texts described in chapter two that will serve as entry points for a canonical exegesis, this chapter will focus exclusively upon the fourth type—that of the immediate literary context of the passage.¹ Thus, this chapter focuses exclusively upon the shape of the final form of the Psalter and the hermeneutical implications that this has for a canonical exegesis of Psalm 8; the primary focus will be the text itself, not the community that gave it that shape.² Moving from the more immediate to the more distant contexts, this chapter will examine Psalm 8 in the context of Pss 7-10, Pss 1-14, Book I of the Psalter, and finally the entire MT 150 Psalter. Throughout, I will trace the mutually interpretive influences of Psalm 8 and the rest of the Psalter, paying special attention to the way in which the shape of the Psalter points the reader “to the substance (*res*) of its witness, to the content of its message, namely to the ways of God in the

¹ The Psalter contains Psalms that fit into category two—passages that aid in dealing with an exegetical problem growing out of Psalm 8 and that exhibit some thematic parallels and/or semantic similarities—e.g., the other creation psalms (Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* [AOTS; Minneapolis MN: Augsburg, 1984], 28-38), and Psalm 144 (see Jerome F. D. Creach, *Psalms* [IBS; Louisville: Geneva, 1998], 74-75; James L. Mays, *Psalms* [Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994], 68). I will defer a full treatment of such passages until chapter four, when we can consider them in connection with the rest of the Old Testament.

² Like William H. Bellinger, “I am interested in the shape of the Psalter . . . rather than the shaping of the Psalter” (“Reading from the Beginning (Again): The Shape of Book I of the Psalter,” in *Diachronic and Synchronic: Reading the Psalms in Real Time: Proceedings of the Baylor symposium of the Book of Psalms* [LHB/OTS 488; ed. Joel S. Burnett, William H. Bellinger, and W. Dennis Tucker; New York: T & T Clark, 2007], 115).

world.”³ The chapter will conclude by summarizing the thematic development of the Psalter, emphasizing the role that Psalm 8 plays in that development.

Psalm 8 in the Context of Psalms 7-9/10

Psalm 8 sits between two individual lament/complaint psalms, Psalm 7 and Pss 9-10⁴—the latter of which, when read together, form a unified acrostic poem.⁵ Thus, to use Brueggemann’s terminology, Psalm 8 is a psalm of orientation immediately surrounded by psalms of disorientation.⁶ Furthermore, as the following analysis will demonstrate, several verbal links create a strong connection between Pss 7, 8, and 9, indicating that the decision to place Psalm 8 in its “current position is an editorial one.”⁷ The linkage is

³ Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 2001), 4.

⁴ The identification of the genre of Psalm 7, which follows nicely the pattern of the typical lament of the individual (see Herman Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*, James D. Nogalski, trans. [MLBS; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998], 121-221), is uncontroversial. Gunkel, however, saw a mix of forms in Pss 9-10 (*Introduction to the Psalms*, 309), and some recent commentators have identified this poem as a thanksgiving of the individual (Ernest C. Lucas, *Exploring the Old Testament, Volume Three: A Guide to the Psalms and Wisdom Literature* [Downer’s Grove, IL: Zondervan, 2002], 11; Susan E. Gillingham, *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible* [OBS; New York: Oxford University Press, 1994], 231). While thanksgiving elements are present in the poem, Mitchell Dahood (*Psalms I, 1-50* [AB 16; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965], 54-55) and William H. Bellinger (*Psalms: Reading and studying the Book of Praises* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990], 45) are correct to identify Pss 9-10 as a lament of the individual.

⁵ For a brief recounting of the evidence for the unity of Pss 9-10, well recognized by now, see Hans J. Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, Hilton C. Oswald, trans. (ACC; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 191.

⁶ Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms*.

⁷ Patrick D. Miller, “The Beginning of the Psalter,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (JSOTSup 159; ed. J. Clinton McCann; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 89. Cf. Joseph P. Brennan, “Psalms 1-8: Some Hidden Harmonies,” *BTB* 10 (1980): 28-29. While Brennan regarded Psalm 8 as a later insertion between Pss 7 and 9, there is no way to know for sure when or how Pss 7-10 came together into their current final form.

strong enough to justify reading Pss 7-10 as a miniature psalm cluster.⁸ Therefore, the following will analyze Pss 7, 8, and 9-10, paying special attention to the way in which the three psalms relate to one another, and then move on to consider what hermeneutical implications arise from reading Pss 7-10 in connection with one another.

Psalm 7, the first psalm in this mini-cluster, contains two roughly equal halves, the first part being a prayer to God for deliverance from unjust persecutors (vv. 2-9a), and the second part being a description of the expected deliverance by YHWH (vv. 9b-18).⁹ In the first half of Psalm 7, verses 5-7 anticipate Ps 8:3 when the psalmist speaks, in chiasmic arrangement, of **צוררִי** “my foe” (Ps 7:5, 7 // **צוררִיךָ** in Ps 8:3) and **אויב**, “the enemy” (Ps 7:6, // **אויב** in Ps 8:3). The second half of Psalm 7 anticipates the hymn of Psalm 8 in a somewhat different way.¹⁰ Verses 16-17 anticipate the reversal motif of Psalm 8 by describing a divine reversal wherein the wicked attempt to ensnare the inno-

⁸The strong connections led Max Löhr to argue that “Ps 7 9 und 10 haben ursprünglich ungetrennt neben einander gestanden” (“Psalm 7 9 10,” *ZAW* 36[1916]: 225-226), though he would also contend that “Ps 8 is erst später zwischen 7 und 9 eingefügt worden” (226). While Kraus is correct to reject Löhr’s view on the grounds that “[r]elated themes and motifs do not provide a right to reconstruct literary complexes,” there are enough “related themes and motifs” in Pss 7-10 to create a strong literary bond between them (*Psalms 1-59*, 168).

⁹ Terrien discerns a chiasmic structure in Psalm 7, with the words **אלהים צדיק**, “God the righteous (so NJPS)” in verse 9b at the center (Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* [ECC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003], 118), outlining Ps 7 as follows:

Prelude (vv. 2-3)

I. The Enemies (vv. 4-6)

II. Request for Trial (vv. 7-9a)

III. (Core): Just God! (vv. 9b-11)

IV. retribution (vv. 12-14)

V. The Enemies (vv. 15-17)

Postlude (v. 18)

¹⁰ The second half of the Psalm, despite Terrien’s misleading heading for verses 15-17, drops the language of enmity, emphasizing instead the moral depravity of the **רשעים**, “the wicked” (verse 10).

cent, but are instead caught by their own traps.¹¹ The motif of the wicked falling into their own trap, common in the psalms (e.g., Ps 9:15; 35:7-8; 57:6), occurs for the first time in the Psalter here in Ps 7:16-17.¹² This reversal is followed by Psalm 7's concluding postlude: "I will sing praise to the name of YHWH, the Most High" (v. 18).

From there, Psalm 8, "vollzieht dieses Lob" of the name of YHWH that the conclusion of Psalm 7 calls for.¹³ Then, as the first part of Psalm 7 prayed for YHWH to thwart the psalmist's צורר and אויב, the body of Psalm 8 begins by describing a reversal wherein YHWH has thwarted his own צורר and אויב in verse 3. Whereas the description of the expected reversal in Ps 7:15-17 left off with imperfective verbs (יפל, ישוב, ירד), Ps 8:3 describes a reversal with a perfect verb (יסדה). When read in connection with Psalm 7, the choice of a perfect verb form connotes a shift in emphasis from a hope that God will restore order in Ps 7:15-17 to a celebration of the fact that God has, does, and will maintain the created order in Ps 8:3.¹⁴ From there, the hymnic praise of the name of YHWH develops thematically, as I have shown in chapter two, around two more reversals—that of the heavens and that of the human, both of which are first shown to be relatively insignificant, but then shown to hold exalted positions within YHWH's created order (Ps 8:4-7). The latter reversal's focus upon humanity at the center of Psalm 8

¹¹ Kraus quotes the expositions of the reformers to capture aptly the image of divine reversal described in these verses: "Luther declares: 'This is the incomprehensible manner of divine judgment, that God does not catch the wicked except properly in their own scheme and leads them to the ruin they have themselves devised' (WA 5; 246, 26 f.). In Calvin we find the statements: '. . . By the wondrous providence of God things have been turned to the opposite goal'" (Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 174).

¹² But see Ps 5:11, which prays "let them [enemies] fall by their own counsels."

¹³ Franz Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Die Psalmen I, 1-50* (DNEB 29; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1993), 82. Cf. Bellinger, "Reading from the Beginning," 120; Brennan, "Psalms 1-8," 28-29.

¹⁴ Although, as noted in chapter two, the scene depicted in Ps 8:3 serves a paradigmatic function, and the use of a perfect verb here ought not to be interpreted narrowly as referring to a specific, past event.

(בן־אדם/אנוש), verse 5), points backward and forward to the focus upon humanity that one finds in Pss 7 and 9, as well.¹⁵ The balance of the body of Psalm 8 describes the rule of the human over the created order (verses 6-9), and the psalm concludes by repeating the opening declaration of the majesty of YHWH's name in the created order (Ps 8:10).

Psalm 8 “leads quite directly to” the first stanza of Psalm 9, which praises YHWH and echoes the final words of Psalm 7: “I will sing praise to your name, Oh Most High!” (v. 3).¹⁶ Miller notes that the slight variation of wording between the almost identical phrasing in Ps 7:18b (וּאֶזְמְרָה שְׁמִי־יְהוָה עֲלֵיוֹן) “and I will sing praise to the *name of YHWH* the Most High”) and 9:3b (אֶזְמְרָה שִׁמְךָ עֲלֵיוֹן) “I will sing praise to *your name*, oh Most High”) serves to link together Pss 7, 8, and 9 editorially; by substituting שִׁמְךָ for שְׁמִי־יְהוָה, Ps 9:3b echoes the שִׁמְךָ found in the inclusio of Ps 8:2, 10.¹⁷ Psalm 9's second stanza then carries forward the note of praise in a way that “introduces another prayer for help”¹⁸ in the verses that follow.

At this point, it is important to recognize that the MT 150 Psalter probably preserves two alternate traditions concerning the relationship between Pss 9 and 10: one where each of the two psalms was read as its own distinct poem, and one where the two

¹⁵ Löhr argues that אנוש is “das Stichwort” binding Pss 7, 8, and 9-10 together (“Psalm 7 9 10,” 226).

¹⁶ Miller, “The Beginning of the Psalter,” 90; cf. Brennan, “Psalms 1-8,” 28.

¹⁷ Miller, “The Beginning of the Psalter,” 90.

¹⁸ Bellinger, “Reading from the Beginning,” 120.

psalms were read as a single unit.¹⁹ Thus, for our purposes, it is worth considering both traditions. Following the former tradition, Pss 7, 8, and 9 parallel one another in several interesting respects, such that, when read together, Pss 7-9 form a coherent, balanced psalms grouping. Paralleling the discussion of enemies in the earlier parts of Pss 7 and 8, Psalm 9 only speaks of the enemies (אויב) in the beginning praise section (Ps 9:4, 7—Psalm 10 does not speak of the psalmist’s enemies).²⁰ Furthermore, the description of YHWH’s thwarting of the enemy in Ps 9:6-7 parallels that of Ps 8:3, although the fate of the wicked is more devastating in Psalm 9 than in Psalm 8:

להשבית אויב	האויב תמו
To silence the enemy—Ps 8:3	The enemy came to an end—Ps 9:7.

Later in Ps 9:13—just before the psalmist turns to voice his petition—the concept of God’s remembrance of and attention to humanity, which lies at the structural heart of Ps 8,²¹ comes into view once again: Just as Ps 8:5 wonders at the fact that YHWH “remembers” (זכר) and “attends to” (פקד) the בן־אדם/אנוש, Ps 9:13 reassures the reader that YHWH will “remember” (זכר) and “not forget” (לא שכח) the plight of the afflicted. Furthermore, the description of hoped for deliverance in the latter part of Psalm 9 echoes

¹⁹ On the one hand, Pss 9 and 10 are divided into two separate units, perhaps preserving a tradition that considered each psalm to be a discreet poem in its own right. On the other hand, read together, the two psalms form a somewhat imperfect acrostic, and Psalm 10 lacks a superscription—an anomalous situation in Pss 3-41, indicating that the two psalms together form one poem. See Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, (SBLDS 76; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 135, 173-174.

²⁰ Ps 10:5 uses the word צורר, but there the word describes the foes of the wicked.

²¹ In addition to the treatment of the thematic development of Psalm 8 in chapter two above, see J. Clinton McCann, *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993), 57-58, *idem*. “Psalms,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (12 vols.; Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994-2004), 4:712, and Lund, “From the Mouths of Babes and Infants,” 96-97.

that of Psalm 7.²² Significantly, both psalms describe a divine reversal, wherein “the wicked is snared by his own devices” (Ps 9:17 // Ps 7:15-17). Once again, this reversal motif occurs for the first time in the Psalter in Pss 7 and 9.²³ Thus, just as Psalm 7 transitions from lament to praise in ways that anticipate the themes of Psalm 8, Psalm 9 transitions back from praise to lament in ways that recall the themes of Psalms 7 and 8.

When one reads Pss 9 and 10 as a unit, the return to the lament theme of Psalm 7 is emphasized even more emphatically than it is in reading Pss 7-9 without Psalm 10. The close of Psalm 10 returns briefly to praise, with the affirmation that *יהוה מלך*, “YHWH is king/rules” (v. 16).²⁴ Thus, after an extensive outpouring of prayer for divine intervention in the midst of chaos, Psalm 10 assures the reader that YHWH will hear the prayers of Pss 7 and 9-10 in order to maintain the created order of Psalm 8 by thwarting the enemies, because YHWH is king.

In sum, whichever tradition one follows, when one reads Pss 7-9 or Pss 7-10 together, one is able to discern a degree of thematic development that goes beyond the mere editorial juxtaposition of psalms that happen to share similar vocabulary. Read together, Pss 7-9/7-10 form a poetic triptych that moves from lament (Psalm 7) to hymn (Psalm 8)

²² For a treatment of the various verbal and thematic connections between Psalm 7 and Pss 9-10, see Hossfeldt and Zenger, *Die Psalmen 1-50*, 82-83.

²³ These intertextual connections and thematic parallels make it likely that the tradition which considered Psalm 9 a poem in its own right was the starting point for the editorial linkage binding together Pss 7-9. However, the focus of this chapter is not the editorial process leading to the final form of the text, but the final form of the text itself.

²⁴ As will be discussed fully below, the declaration that *יהוה מלך* is common throughout the Psalter, but it is especially emphasized in Books IV-V. See Gerald H. Wilson, *Editing*, 214-228; Nancy DeClaisse-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning: The Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 73-91.

back to lament again (Psalm 9/ Pss 9-10).²⁵ Psalm 7 transitions from lament to praise in a way that anticipates Psalm 8's intertwined hymnic themes, and then Psalm 9/Pss 9-10 transitions from praise to petition in a way that echoes the themes already put forward in Pss 7 and 8. Two types of reversals run throughout, one at the center (the glorification of the seemingly insignificant, Ps 8:3, 5), and the other in the triptych's exterior panels (the demise of the wicked by their own devices, Pss 7:15-17; 9:17).

This reading yields some implications for the reciprocally interpretive influence between Psalm 8 and its immediate context. As the center of the triptych of Pss 7-9/10, Psalm 8 reminds the reader why she can expect God to intervene on her behalf: Because YHWH shows his name to be majestic in all the earth by maintaining the created order. Brennan summarizes the role that Psalm 8 plays in this context as follows:

Psalm 8 can thus be interpreted as a brief outburst of jubilation . . . its reminiscences of the priestly account of creation make it clear to the reader that the struggle in which we are invited to participate [in the surrounding laments] is not one with limited national and geographical implications. Its goal is nothing less than the restoration of that cosmic order for which humanity was given responsibility by its creator.²⁶

Furthermore, Psalm 8 reminds the reader that YHWH accomplishes the maintenance of the created order in a surprising way—he takes relatively insignificant human beings and uses them to thwart his enemies (v. 3b) and govern as God's vice-gerent over the rest of YHWH's subjects (vv. 7-9). Thus, when read in connection with Psalm 8, the reversals described in Pss 7:15-17 and 9:17 make sense as part of God's programmatic way of

²⁵ For a full treatment of the semantic and thematic connections that Pss 9-10 share with the preceding psalms (esp. Pss 5, 7, and 8) and the following psalms, see Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 1-50, 82-83.

²⁶ Brennan, "Psalms 1-8," 28.

maintaining the created order—through a reversal that exalts the seemingly insignificant over and against the self-strong enemies of God.²⁷

Conversely, Pss 7 and 9-10 inform how a reader encounters Psalm 8. Psalm 7:18b (ואזמרה שמִיְהוָה עֲלִיּוֹן) and Ps 9:3b (אזמרה שִׁמְךָ עֲלִיּוֹן) make clear to the reader that the ultimate focal point of YHWH's activity in Psalm 8 is the glorification of his name, not the glorification of the human for the human's own sake. Moreover, Pss 9 and 10 pick up the term אֲנֹשׁ (Ps 8:5),²⁸ but they use it to describe the enemies that YHWH militates against; thus, the reader of Psalm 8 is reminded that the glorified humans of Ps 8:5-9 can become the enemies of Ps 8:3 if they oppose king YHWH's rule (Ps 10:16-18). As Craigie says, the "position of strength" given to the human in Ps 8:5-9 "is not a natural human right (persons who think that it is are enemies), but something God-given."²⁹ Furthermore, reading Psalm 8 in the context of Pss 7:16-17 and 9:16-17 produces a level two canonical meaning for the scene described in Ps 8:3. In the context of Psalm 8, verse three declares *that* God effects a power reversal by using the mouths of infants to thwart his foes, but it does not describe *how* God does this. Pss 7 and 9 lead the reader to enact figurally such a reversal. First, the reader of Pss 7-9 prays to YHWH for deliverance (using her mouth; Pss 7:2-10 and 9:14-15). Then, the psalmist declares (and the reader affirms) that YHWH will hear the reader's prayer to effect a divine reversal by using the weapons of the wicked against the wicked themselves (Psalms 7:16-17 and 9:16-17).

²⁷ For a discussion of the "enemies" of Ps 8:3 as those who seek to claim strength in their own power while denying the name of YHWH, see Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (WBC 19; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 107.

²⁸ Löhr, "Psalm 7 9 10," 226.

²⁹ Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 107.

Thus, the insignificant (עוללים וינקים) pray with their mouths (מפי), and YHWH then neutralizes (השביח) the enemies (אויב ומתנקם) with their own weapons.³⁰

Finally, a tension runs throughout the triptych which permeates the whole of the Psalter and, therefore, deserves special attention: the tension between the king and the common individual, between the royal “I” and the “I” of the reader. As Miller notes, Pss 7 and 9 imply a royal orientation by identifying the “enemies” as the עמים, “peoples” (Ps 7:9) and גוים, “nations” (Ps 9:17, 20).³¹ On the other hand, as Miller says elsewhere of the Psalter as a whole: “The Psalms are by their *history* [and] . . . *content* not time bound,”³² so that the common reader of Pss 7-10 may—indeed, ought to—pray these psalms as her own prayers, rather than to read them as the prayers of a king.³³ Furthermore, Ps 10:12 introduces another dynamic into the question of kingship by affirming that “YHWH is King!” Mays aptly describes the resulting dilemma for the interpretation of Psalm 8 in its context in the Psalter:

The epithets of royalty (splendor, glory, honor) are used in the psalms for God, king, and humanity to indicate royal identity. The Davidic king is given dominion over the nations; humankind, over living creatures . . . The two are side by side in the Psalter. How is their relation to be understood? The theory of “democratization” suggests that the office was trans-

³⁰ For a discussion of the description of mouths as weapons and sources of strength in the OT, see Øystein Lund, “From the Mouths of Babes and Infants you have Established Strength,” 78-99.

³¹ Miller, “The Beginning of the Psalter,” 90. The Davidic association in the superscriptions of Pss 7-10 is strengthened by the now obscure reference to an event in the life of David in Ps 7:1. Furthermore, while the meaning of the term עלמות לבן in Ps 9:1 is disputed, some translate this phrase to read “upon the death of a son,” possibly implying an intended historical reference point from the life of David for Pss 9-10, as well (so NIV). See Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms* (EBC 5; Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 144-145.

³² Patrick D. Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1986), 22-23, emphasis original.

³³ See Brennan, “Psalms 1-8,” 28-29.

ferred to all people when there was no longer a king in Israel. That does not do justice to the prominence of the anointed king in the Psalter.³⁴

Psalm 8, rather than favoring one of these three royal identities (YHWH, humanity, or Davidic king), uses language that could be amenable to all three. Psalm 8 makes it clear that YHWH maintains his created order by effecting a divine reversal by means of human agents, and describes these human agents in royal terms, allowing for one to affirm both that “YHWH is king” and that “humanity is king.” Furthermore, as I have already pointed out in Chapter Two, Psalm 8 says nothing about human to human relationships and politics.³⁵ To appreciate fully the way in which Psalm 8 and the Psalter deals with the tension implied by speaking of three different types of royalty, we must consider Psalm 8’s role within the context of the rest of the Psalter.

Psalm 8 in the Context of Psalms 1-14

Turning to the broader context surrounding Pss 7-10, the shape of the Psalter contains several clues indicating that Psalm 8 has a special role. Psalms 7 and 9-10 each conclude and introduce, respectively, a series of laments of the individual (Pss 3-7 and 9-14).³⁶ So, on the one hand, the surrounding songs of lament ground the idealized imagery of Psalm 8 in the chaotic reality of a beleaguered world, “suggest[ing] a crucial interpretive question . . . : What is the coherence between a weak, needy, suffering humankind and a humanity ‘crowned . . . with glory and honor’ (Psalm 8:5)?”³⁷ On the other

³⁴ Mays, *Psalms*, 67.

³⁵ Psalm 8 does, however, situate king YHWH’s human vice-gerents in a hierarchical context, leaving open the possibility that, within human-to-human political relations, God might choose to govern in a hierarchical fashion, utilizing an individual human to rule other humans as king.

³⁶ See Bellinger, “Reading from the Beginning,” 120.

³⁷ McCann, *Great Psalms of the Bible* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2009), 18.

hand, Psalm 8 offers hope to the one who prays through the otherwise lament-dominated collection of Pss 3-14. As the reader asks God to intervene in a disordered world, she encounters in Psalm 8 a beacon of hope and order in the midst of chaos.³⁸

Preceding Pss 3-14, Pss 1 (a wisdom psalm) and 2 (a royal psalm) together serve an introductory function, both for Book I, and for the entire Psalter.³⁹ Thus, as Bellinger notes, when one reads the Psalter “from the beginning,” there is a “primacy effect” wherein Pss 1 and 2 together set the framework for the way in which the reader is to understand all that follows.⁴⁰ When Psalm 8 is read in connection with both Pss 1 and 2 and the prayers of petition that surround it in Pss 2-7 and 9-14, the עוללים/יונקים and בן-אדם/אנוש of Psalm 8 become part of the same story as the various other characters of Pss 1-14. The insignificant ones glorified by YHWH and used by him to thwart his enemies (Ps 8:3, 5) identify to a certain extent with others who delight in the Torah and seek godly counsel (Psalm 1), submit to king YHWH and “kiss” his anointed (Psalm 2), and look to YHWH to act on their behalf in the midst of tribulation (Pss 3-7, 9-14).⁴¹

Yet it would be unwise simply to conflate all of these several characters in Pss 1-14, without recognizing the diverse identities involved. The introductory nature of Pss 1

³⁸ See Miller, “The Beginning of the Psalter,” 89.

³⁹ Wilson (*Editing*, 204-209) and Brevard S. Childs (*Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1979], 513-514) both regarded Psalm 1 alone as the introduction to the Psalter and Psalm 2 as the introduction to Book I of the Psalter. Recent commentators, however, have largely regarded Pss 1 and 2 as together introducing the Psalter (Bellinger, “Reading from the Beginning,” 119; Miller, “The Beginning of the Psalter,” 84-85; Jerome F. D. Creach, *The Destiny of the Righteous in the Psalms* [St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2008], 55-59). For a helpful summary of the views regarding the historical and literary relationship between Pss 1 and 2 and their role in introducing the psalms that follow, see deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 38-41.

⁴⁰ Bellinger, “Reading from the Beginning,” 115, 119-120. Bellinger’s title, which enjoins us to “read” the Psalter “from the beginning,” is taken from DeClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*.

⁴¹ Jerome F. D. Creach first brought this reading to my attention by via personal correspondence.

and 2 combined with the strategic place of Psalm 8 increases the tension between the royal “I” and the “I” of the common reader already present in Pss 7-9. To quote Miller,

Psalm 8 . . . contribut[es] to the need to read the two subjects of Psalms 1 and 2 in lively tension with each other to the extent that they identify the voices and subjects of the psalms that follow them. For in Psalm 8, we encounter one of the clearest collections of royal motifs outside the explicitly royal psalms. But there, the royal figure is not a specific king or ruler . . . The *’iš* of Psalm 1 is as much a ruler as the ruler of Psalm 2 is an *’iš*.⁴²

Looking at the canonical shape of the Psalter from a slightly different point of view, Matthias Millard’s careful work offers further insight into the role that Psalm 8 plays in the beginning section of the Psalter.⁴³ Building upon the work of Claus Westermann, who identified a movement from lament to praise across the entirety of the Psalter,⁴⁴ Millard divided the Psalter into smaller *Kompositionsbögen*, identifying Pss 1-10 as the first *Kompositionsbogen*.⁴⁵ According to Millard, each *Kompositionsbogen* moves through several stages, as follows: an introduction (containing a wisdom psalm, a royal psalm and sometimes a song of thanksgiving), *Kern I* (containing lament psalms), the centerpiece (containing an oracle and/or a wisdom psalm), *Kern II* (containing a hymn and sometimes a song of thanksgiving), and a conclusion (containing royal, lament, and

⁴² Patrick Miller, “The Beginning of the Psalter,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, 92.

⁴³ Matthias Millard, *Die Komposition des Psalters* (FAT 9; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994).

⁴⁴ Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, Keith R. Crim and Richard N. Soulen, trans. (Atlanta GA: John Knox Press, 1981), 250-258.

⁴⁵ Millard, *Die Komposition des Psalters*, 127-135.

wisdom psalms).⁴⁶ Within the *Kompositionsbogen* of Pss 1-10, Millard identifies Psalm 8 as the centerpiece of this *Kompositionsbogen*, perhaps functioning as an oracle.⁴⁷

While Millard's work is not without its problems,⁴⁸ several insights about the shape of the Psalter emerge from his and Westermann's work that elucidate the interpretive implications arising from Psalm 8's position within the first section of the Psalter: 1) A discernible movement from lament to praise runs across the entire Psalter.⁴⁹ 2) A movement from lament to praise also seems to take place within smaller groupings of psalms, so that those who pray the words of the psalmists "journey" from lament to praise. 3) As the first hymn of praise following the first series of lament psalms, Psalm 8 represents the first instance where the reader's lamentation turns to praise.

Thus, if one reads the entire Psalter, "from the beginning," as deClaissé-Walford and Bellinger have enjoined,⁵⁰ Psalm 8's place within the first part of the Psalter gives it

⁴⁶ Ibid. 162-168.

⁴⁷ Millard, *Die Komposition des Psalters*, 127-135, 162-163, 168.

⁴⁸ Millard's claim that Pss 1-10 functioned as a post-exilic liturgy is not impossible, but it is far from certain, and an over emphasis on a theoretically reconstructed historical context such as the one that Millard posits could lead one away from a consideration of the text itself, which is the focus of a canonical exegesis. Furthermore, the way in which Millard envisions the structure of the *Kompositionsbogen* of Pss 1-10 is problematic, particularly in his treatment of Pss 9 and 10. He draws on both of them to serve several functions within his schema, with 9 functioning as a thanksgiving psalm, a wisdom psalm (together with 10) and a lament psalm, while 10 functions as a wisdom psalm (with psalm 9) and a concluding lament. This confusion gives the reader the impression that his decision to demarcate the end of the first *Kompositionsbogen* after Psalm 10 is forced and arbitrary, determined as much by a presupposed schematic form as by a close reading of the text itself. See Millard, *Die Komposition des Psalters*, 26, 127-135, 162-163. For a balanced critique of the problems inherent in Millard's approach, see Patrick Miller, review of Matthias Millard *Die Komposition des Psalters: Ein Formgeschichtlicher Ansatz*, *JBL* 116 (1997), 539-541.

⁴⁹ Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 257-258. For further evidence of this movement from lament to praise, see J. Clinton McCann, "Books I-III and the Editorial Purpose of the Hebrew Psalter," in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, 96-98.

⁵⁰ DeClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, and Bellinger, "Reading from the Beginning."

a special relevance for the entire Psalter. As “the first hymn of praise in the Psalter,”⁵¹ Psalm 8 shapes how one reads both Pss 1-14 and the rest of the Psalter. When the reader, with the psalmists, once again expresses her anguish and suffering and asks for divine intervention in the individual laments of Pss 10-14, she will remember Psalm 8’s depiction of creation, and in this she will have hope. This initial journey in Pss 1-14 and Psalm 8’s role in that journey will, in turn, strongly influence the way in which the reader understands both the rest of Book I and the whole of the Psalter.

We can outline the contents of Pss 1-14, then, as follows: Psalms 1, 2, and 8, as psalms of orientation, offer a framework of hope, while Pss 3-7 and 9-14 lead the reader through an honest articulation of anguish in a world “characterized by violent opposition.”⁵² Various characters and themes appear throughout: the wise person (Psalm 1), the king (Psalm 2), the afflicted and needy (Pss 3-7; 9-14), the **עוללים/יונקים** and the **אֲדָרָם**-**אֲנִישׁ/בֶּן** (Psalm 8:3, 5, both exalted through a divine reversal), and the sundry enemies. All of these characters become part of the same drama, yet tension emerges from the close association of various royal figures and the juxtaposition of psalms of orientation and psalms of disorientation. As the reader prays through Pss 1-14, she journeys with the various characters, from the introductory orienting framework of Pss 1-2, through lament (Pss 3-7), to praise (Psalm 8), and back to lament (Pss 9-14), feeling all of the tension. This initial journey, with Psalm 8 occupying a key role, will shape the reader’s understanding as he continues his journey through the rest of the Psalter. Therefore, we now turn to consider Psalm 8 in the context of Book I.

⁵¹ Mays, *Psalms*, 65.

⁵² McCann, *Great Psalms of the Bible*, 18.

Psalm 8 in the Context of Book One of the Psalter

Book I of the Psalter contains many indicators of structure and development, and a good deal of literature has already been written on the subject.⁵³ In what follows, I will attempt to outline Book I's structure by surveying three structural markers: 1) the Psalms at the "seams"—or at the beginning and end of Book I, 2) the major psalms groupings in Book I, and 3) the location of acrostic poems in Book I. After surveying the data, I will proffer an outline of Book I of the Psalter for heuristic purposes, and then I will summarize the internal movement of Book I and Psalm 8's place within that movement.

Concerning the psalms at the seams of Book I, we have already briefly discussed the introductory nature of Pss 1 and 2. At the end of Book I, G. H. Wilson and others consider Psalm 41 to have a special function.⁵⁴ Wilson recognizes that, while the king is not explicitly identified in the psalm, Psalm 41 echoes the kingly concerns of Psalm 2 and has strong affinities with Psalm 72, the explicitly royal psalm that concludes Book II.⁵⁵ As Creach notes, Psalm 41 describes as "blessed" one who carries out traditionally royal duties, and "Psalm 41 is . . . like the psalms at the beginning of the Psalter in that it seems to identify the king as the model of righteousness."⁵⁶ Thus, "Book 1 ends just as

⁵³ For a brief survey of recent research on the shape of Book I of the Psalter, see Bellinger, "Reading from the Beginning," 116-119. Also, see Peter Enns, *Poetry and Wisdom* (IBRB 3; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1997), 135-138 for a brief bibliography of works on the macro-structure of the Psalter. Also, see deClaisse-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 1-14 for a summary of two of the major approaches (the canonical approach of Childs and the canon-critical approach of Sanders) to discerning the Psalter's shape.

⁵⁴ Wilson, *Editing*, 209-211; Miller, "The Beginning of the Psalter," 88; McCann, "Books I-III and the Editorial Purpose of the Hebrew Psalter," 94; Creach, *Destiny of the Righteous*, 61-63.

⁵⁵ Wilson, *Editing*, 209-210. Although, see *idem.*, "The Use of Royal Psalms at the 'Seams' of the Hebrew Psalter," *JSOT* 35 [1986]: 87-88, where Wilson modifies his view, claiming that Psalm 41 ought not to be understood in royal terms.

⁵⁶ Creach, *Destiny of the Righteous*, 61.

the Psalter began.”⁵⁷ It is fitting, then, to see Psalm 41—which begins with the key word that brackets Pss 1 and 2 (אשרי, Ps 1:1; 2:11)⁵⁸—as forming an envelope with Pss 1-2 around Book I.⁵⁹ By looking back to Pss 1 and 2, Psalm 41 does two things: 1) It brings the reader back to the twin themes of torah wisdom and God’s provision for his anointed, highlighting these themes as important to an understanding of Book I. 2) As a transitional psalm that leads into Book II, it sets the tone for what follows, highlighting the themes that introduced the Psalter in Pss 1 and 2 as important for understanding Pss 43-150.

Between the “seams,” W. H. Bellinger helpfully identifies four groupings of psalms in the body of Book I, as follows: 1) Psalms 3-14, discussed above.⁶⁰ 2) Pss 15-24, which, like the rest of Book I, contains many prayers of petition, yet constitutes a “distinct part of the first book” in that, as several scholars acknowledge, it is arranged chiasmatically with “a creation psalm of praise centered upon torah” at the climax.⁶¹ 3) Psalms 25-34, a psalms grouping that is characterized by a “hopeful” and “positive

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ DeClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 55.

⁵⁹ Some readers may object to this reading, believing that this violates the majority view that sees Pss 1-2 as together introducing the Psalter, not Book I. I, however, contend that Pss 1-2 serve a dual introductory function: introducing Book I and the Psalter. Introductions frequently function in this way, so that, for example, Genesis 1 serves an introductory role for the primeval history of Gen 1-11, the whole of Genesis, and the whole of the Torah. Or, again, the first stanza of Sir Walter Scott’s *The Lady of the Lake*, which bears affinities with Pss 1-2 in that its lack of enumeration sets it off from the Canto First (just as Pss 1 and 2 have no superscription), though Scott includes it as part of Canto First, so that it introduces both the first canto and the entire poem.

⁶⁰ Bellinger, “Reading from the Beginning,” 120.

⁶¹ Bellinger, “Reading from the Beginning,” 120-121. Cf. Millard, *Die Komposition des Psalters*, 25; Miller, “the Beginning of the Psalter,” 86.

tone.”⁶² 4) Psalms 35-41, where “prayer again dominates, and enemies are ever-present,” yet “God’s protecting presence,” is ever-present as well.⁶³ The only modification that I would offer to Bellinger’s survey is to treat Psalm 41 as the conclusion of Book I.⁶⁴

The meaningful arrangement of Book I becomes more evident when one considers these four major psalms groupings in connection with the location of the acrostic poems in Book I. Building on the work of David N. Freedman,⁶⁵ Les Maloney argues that the four acrostic psalms in Book I have certain affinities indicating that their placement in the Psalter is significant.⁶⁶ The acrostic Pss 25 and 34 exhibit stylistic and metrical similarities that set them apart as “a distinctive, in fact unique, pair.”⁶⁷ These two psalms introduce and conclude Book I’s third psalm grouping, Pss 25-34. Psalms 9-10 and 37 also exhibit stylistic similarities, such that “Ps 9/10 and Ps 37 serve as bookend songs to the . . . alphabetic acrostics” in Book I.⁶⁸ These two psalms are situated towards the middle of the first and final psalms groupings that Bellinger identifies. Some

⁶² Bellinger, “Reading from the Beginning,” 122.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Even this slight alteration is of less consequence than it might appear at first blush. In the first place, just as Pss 1 and 2 serve a dual introductory function, Psalm 41 concludes *both* the preceding collection of Pss 35-41 and Book I. In the second place, as I say below, the purpose of this survey of formal indicators of the structure of Book I is to adumbrate heuristically the thematic development of Book I of the Psalter, not to draw dogmatic conclusions about the intention of the editor(s) of the Psalter.

⁶⁵ David N. Freedman with Jeffrey C. Geoghegan and Andrew Welch, *Psalm 119: The Exaltation of Torah* (BJS 6; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 1-23.

⁶⁶ Les D. Maloney, “Intertextual Links: Part of the Poetic Artistry within the Book I Acrostic Psalms,” *RQ* 49 (2007): 11-21.

⁶⁷ Freedman, *Psalm 119*, 9. Freedman points out, for example, that “Psalms 25 and 34 have single line units [and] . . . a bicolon for each [acrostic] letter” (2), and that Pss 25 and 34 share some “deliberate deviations” from established acrostic patterns, in that “[b]oth psalms omit the *waw* line or bicolon, and both psalms add a second *peh* line after the *taw* line that normally would end the poem” (9). See also Maloney, “Intertextual Links,” 11-12 n. 3 and 18 n. 24.

⁶⁸ Maloney, “Intertextual Links,” 21, c.f. Freedman, *Psalm 119*, 13-19, wherein Freedman delineates remarkable structural similarities between Ps 9/10 and 37.

readers, however, might not find these observations compelling enough to warrant identifying Book I's acrostic psalms as structural markers, legitimately asking whether or not these affinities are actually due to intentional editorial activity. Nevertheless, taking note of the location of the acrostic psalms within Book I can serve as a helpful tool for the present purposes; the purpose of this structural survey is to adumbrate heuristically Book I's thematic development, not to draw conclusions about the intention of the editor(s) of the Psalter.

By way of synthesis, then, we can bring together the psalms at the seams, the psalms groupings, and the acrostic poems to outline Book I as follows:

Introduction/Seam: Psalms 1-2: The way of wisdom and the anointed king.

A. Psalms 3-14: Lament dominates. Acrostic A (Pss 9-10) embedded.

B. Psalms 15-24: Framed by temple liturgy (Pss 15, 24) and centered on Torah (Ps 19).

B'. Psalms 25-34: Framed by wisdom acrostics B and B' (Psalms 25, 34). Hopeful tone.

A'. Psalms 35-40: Lament dominates. Acrostic A' (Psalm 37) embedded.

Conclusion/Seam: Psalm 41: The wise way of the anointed king.⁶⁹

Thus, Book I of the Psalter, begins and ends with the twin themes of the way of wisdom and the wise anointed king, with the sovereign LORD overseeing both. The body of the book, although dominated by lament songs,⁷⁰ oscillates between praise and lament, orientation and disorientation, assurance and agony, so that hope undergirds the afflicted and gives them strength to voice their complaints to God. The oscillation continues throughout, but there is a general movement as follows: The book begins dominated by lament, with Psalm 8 serving as an isolated island of hope (A), but the theme of

⁶⁹ The reader should bear in mind that these groupings outlined above are not discrete units, each block in isolation from what precedes and follows.

⁷⁰ See Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 257, and Bellinger, *Psalms: Reading and Studying the Book of Praises*, 45. Bellinger identifies 22 individual and two communal lament songs in Book I of the Psalter.

lament begins to lessen via a temple pilgrimage and meditation on Torah (B). Then, joy and praise briefly come to the fore (B'), until the distressing realities of life once again dominate the rest of the body of the book (A').

What role does Psalm 8, the first hymn of praise in this lament dominated book, play? The way in which Psalm 37 thematically and structurally recalls Pss 9-10 is instructive here. Psalm 37, a didactic poem contrasting the fate of the wicked with the fate of the righteous,⁷¹ is the last orientation psalm in Book I and is followed by prayers of petition. Thus, the location of Psalm 37 at the end of Book I mirrors the location of Psalm 8 at the beginning of Book I. Furthermore, Maloney points out several intertextual resonances between Psalm 37 and its fellow “bookend” acrostic poem, Pss 9-10.⁷² Among these, Ps 37:14-15’s recapitulation of the “theme of ironic divine reversal” (// Ps 9:16-17) is noteworthy.⁷³ As Maloney points out, aside from one brief, suggestive prayer in Ps 5:11, Ps 37:14-15 contains the only appearance of the motif of the demise of the wicked by means of their own instruments in Book I of the Psalter outside of Psalm 7 and Psalm 9.⁷⁴

Thus, one who reads “from the beginning,” upon coming to Ps 37:15 may recall the reversals in Pss 7-10. There, the prayers of the afflicted, represented by the mouths of the infants, are answered; God brings the weapons of the wicked down upon the wicked themselves, effecting a reversal that sustains the created order. Psalm 8 promises just such a reversal, providing the central moment of hope in Pss 7-10. The other points of

⁷¹ See Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 404.

⁷² Maloney, “Intertextual Links,” 14-17.

⁷³ Maloney, “Intertextual Links,” 16. In Ps 37:14, the wicked draw (lit. “open”) their swords (חרב פתחו), but in Ps 37:15, they are stabbed by those very same swords (חרבם תבוא בלם).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

intertextual resonance and structural similarity shared by Pss 9-10 and 37 that Maloney and Freedman identify⁷⁵ increase the likelihood that a careful reader of Ps 37:14-15 would recall the complex of reversals in Pss 7-10. Thus, the hope stated in Pss 7-10 (especially in Psalm 8) is part of the orienting hope sustaining the petitioner as she prays the prayers of disorientation that Psalm 37 introduces (Pss 37-40). Finally, Psalm 41, which does not fully abandon the tone of lament, reminds the reader of the hope for the righteous (Ps 41:11-12//Ps 1) and of the royal figure “who considers the poor” (Ps 41:1//Ps 2), providing hope that God will hear and reinstate the order that Psalm 8 describes.⁷⁶

I do not argue here that every informed reader of Pss 37-41 would immediately think of Pss 7-10 in a conscious fashion. Yet, the opportunity for an attentive reader to hear the resonance is there, and it is one of many points throughout the Psalter which create the possibility of the recollection of Psalm 8. Within the canonical exegesis that this dissertation proposes, such resonances would not only shape the way in which a reader reads the text, but they would also influence the prayers of the reader, leading the reader into an encounter with the divine *Res* to whom the Scriptures point. Thus, as the first hymn of the Psalter, the primacy effect ensures that Psalm 8 casts a long shadow across Book I; even towards the end of the book, Psalm 8’s promise that YHWH will maintain the created order by acting on behalf of the seemingly insignificant is shaping the reader and her encounter with the rest of the Psalter.

⁷⁵ Maloney, “Intertextual Links,” 14-18; Freedman, *Psalms 119*, 13-19.

⁷⁶ See also Creach, *The Destiny of the Righteous*, 61-62.

One more element of the theology of Book I demands acknowledgement before we move on to consider the Psalter as a whole. Across Book I, the tension between the royal “I” and the “I” of the common reader persists. On the one hand, quoting Wilson,

If Book One is viewed as an independent unit bounded by Pss 2 [or, in the view of this author, Pss 1 and 2] and 41, the resulting effect is a very Davidic group of pss in which the proclamation of YHWHs special covenant with his king in Ps 2 is matched by David’s assurance of God’s continued preservation in the presence of YHWH.⁷⁷

On the other hand, each individual psalm in this book that is dominated by prayers of the individual is “by [its] content not time bound,”⁷⁸ and is intentionally adaptable to the situation of any individual. Further, the plight of the poor (עני, e.g. Ps 10:2) and weak (לר, e.g. Ps 9:18) is very much central to Book I. Such language may be implicitly associated with a young anointed David on the lam, or a king outnumbered by his foes, but the most obvious referent to whom the “poor” and “needy” point is the common afflicted person, to the extent that she is, or, at least, ought to be, “righteous.”⁷⁹ Once again, this tension has special significance for Psalm 8, which applies royal language to the human race. Rather than proposing a trite harmonization at this point, the next section will move on to consider Psalm 8 within the context of the entire Psalter, paying special attention to the way in which the entire Psalter handles the tension between the various types of royalty, namely the divine king, the corporate king, and the Davidic king.

⁷⁷ Wilson, *Editing*, 210. For an alternative view, see Bellinger, who concludes that “I do not find the royal dimension so structurally important in Book I” (“Reading from the Beginning,” 124).

⁷⁸ Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 22-23.

⁷⁹ Bellinger correctly notes that “ritual prayers are spoken out loud or ‘sung’ in public; therefore, people accused in the prayers are often present, able to overhear them or at least to hear about them” (“Reading from the Beginning,” 123). Even the “enemies” who hear the prayer, however, are enjoined to repent and become “righteous” and, thus, identify with the “poor” and “needy” whom they are oppressing.

Psalm 8 in the Context of the Entire MT 150 Psalter

An Overview of the Shape of the Psalter

Before we can proceed to look specifically at Psalm 8 within the context of the Psalter, it is necessary to adumbrate the shape and themes of the Psalter, first by identifying the formal indicators of shape running across the Psalter already recognized by scholars in recent years, and then by utilizing the canon-exegetical principles put forth in this dissertation to interpret those indicators of shape. In his seminal work *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, G. H. Wilson identifies several indicators of shape in the Psalter.⁸⁰ Following Childs and taking his cues from some Qumran manuscripts, Wilson identifies Psalm 1 as an introduction to the Psalter as a whole.⁸¹ Noting significant differences between Books I-III and Books IV-V,⁸² he argues that the former emphasizes the Davidic king, and the latter emphasizes the kingship of YHWH.⁸³ In subsequent works, Wilson elaborates by demonstrating that royal psalms and wisdom psalms had been placed strategically throughout the Psalter.⁸⁴ Many scholars accept Wilson's identification of the

⁸⁰ Wilson, *Editing*. DeClaisse-Walford (*Reading from the Beginning*), McCann (*A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms*), and Miller ("The Beginning of the Psalter") largely accept Wilson's view. Wilson's detractors include Norman Whybray (*Reading the Psalms as a Book* [JSOTSup 222; Sheffield UK: Sheffield Academic, 1996]), and M. A. Vincent ("The Shape of the Psalter: An Eschatological Dimension?" in *New Heaven and New Earth: Prophecy and the New Millennium, Essays in Honour of Anthony Gelston* [P. J. Harland and C. T. R. Hayward, eds.; VTSup 77; Leiden: Brill, 1999], 61-82).

⁸¹ Wilson, *Editing*, 204-207. See also Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 513-514.

⁸² Wilson, *Editing*, 207-208; *idem*. "The Shape of the Book of Psalms" *Int* 46 [1992]: 129-142.

⁸³ Wilson, *Editing*, 209-228.

⁸⁴ Gerald H. Wilson, "Royal Psalms," 85-94; *idem*. "The Shape of the Book of Psalms," 133-134; *idem*. "Shaping the Psalter: a Consideration of Editorial Linkage in the Book of Psalms," in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, 72-82.

various indicators of the Psalter's structure as correct,⁸⁵ with the only significant modification being that most scholars now see Pss 1 and 2 both as introductory, whereas Wilson sees Psalm 1 alone as the Psalter's introduction.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, there is not a universally accepted scholarly consensus concerning how these markers ought to be interpreted.⁸⁷

For his part, Wilson concludes from the data that Psalm 1 places the Psalter's emphasis upon "meditation rather than cultic performance," and the importance of Torah obedience rather than hope in the Davidic king.⁸⁸ Books I-III, with the strategic placing of Ps 89, describe "a [Davidic] covenant remembered, but a covenant *failed*."⁸⁹ Books IV-V, then, replace hope in the Davidic king with Torah obedience and trust in king YHWH.⁹⁰ According to Wilson, the juxtaposition of the wisdom Psalm 1 with the royal Psalm 2, combined with the strategic placement of other wisdom psalms at the seams and alongside royal psalms, serves to editorially integrate Books I-III and IV-V into a single volume. In its final form, then, the "Psalter counters continuing concern for the restoration of the Davidic dynasty and kingdom with the wise counsel to seek refuge in a kingdom 'not of this world'—the eternal kingdom in which YHWH alone is king."⁹¹ A shift from a focus on the individual and lament to a focus on the community and praise ac-

⁸⁵ Most of the works that Enns lists in his bibliography on the Psalter's macrostructure (*Poetry and Wisdom*, 135-138), accept the bulk of the data as put forth by Wilson, even if they do not agree with Wilson's interpretation of the data. For a critical survey of the secondary literature on the Psalter's structure, see Whybray, *Reading the Psalms*, 15-35.

⁸⁶ See deClaisse-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 37-47.

⁸⁷ Whybray, *Reading the Psalms*, 31-35, highlights some of the major differences of opinion among scholars concerning the significance of the final form of the Psalter.

⁸⁸ Wilson, *Editing*, 204-207.

⁸⁹ Wilson, *Editing*, 213.

⁹⁰ Wilson, *Editing*, 214-228.

⁹¹ Wilson, "Shaping the Psalter," 81.

companies the movement from an emphasis upon king David to an emphasis upon king YHWH.⁹² Thus, says Wilson, the final form of the Psalter responds to the crisis of exile and the failure of the monarchy.⁹³ DeClaissé-Walford, McCann, and others largely agree with Wilson's interpretation of the Psalter's structure.⁹⁴

Other scholars, however, call for some modifications to Wilson's view.⁹⁵ Most significantly, several scholars convincingly and correctly argue "that the Psalter does not, in the end, speak of the 'failure' and 'rejection' of the Davidic Covenant."⁹⁶ First of all, Wilson's initial assessment was influenced largely by his conclusion that Psalm 1, a wisdom psalm, introduced the Psalter, and Psalm 2, a royal psalm, introduced Book I—resulting in a Wisdom frame for the entire Psalter that muted the Davidic frame around

⁹² Wilson, "The Shape of the Book of Psalms," 138-139.

⁹³ Wilson, "The Shape of the Book of Psalms," 139; cf. McCann, "Books I-III and the Editorial Purpose of the Hebrew Psalter," 98-99; deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 21-31.

⁹⁴ See, deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, McCann, *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah*. As already noted, however, both deClaissé-Walford and McCann see Pss 1 and 2 together, not just Psalm 1, as introducing the Psalter.

⁹⁵ Whybray notes six "disputed matters" among scholars seeking to discern the editorial message of the final form of the Psalter (*Reading the Psalms*, 31-32). Many of those areas of disagreement, however, are not of pressing concern for a canonical exegesis. So, persisting disagreement and/or uncertainty concerning whether the Psalter was intended for personal or corporate use (Whybray's "disputed matters" number 1 and number 2), or concerning the "identify of the final compilers of the Psalter" ("disputed matter" 3) are of some interest to a canonical exegesis, but they are not the most pressing concerns. This is because a canonical exegesis focuses primarily upon the final form of the text and its divine author, not the editors responsible for the final form or the original community's use of the final form.

⁹⁶ David M. Howard, Jr., *The Structure of Psalms 93-100* (BJS 5; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 201-207. Others express concerns about Wilson's overstatement of the demise of the Davidic covenant in the final form of the Psalter, including Jamie A. Grant ("The Psalms and the King," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, David Firth and Philip S. Johnston, eds. [Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005], 108-109; *The King as Exemplar: The Function of Deuteronomy's Kingship Law in the Shaping of the Book of Psalms* [AB 17; Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2004]) and David C. Mitchell (*The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms* [JSOTSup 267; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1997], 243-271). Vincent allows for the possibility of seeing a general trend that indicates a failure of the Davidic monarchy, but expresses some concern about seeing this as the final editorial word on the matter ("The Shape of the Psalter" 61-82).

Book I. Since it is more likely that Pss 1-2 form a dual introduction to the entire book,⁹⁷ Psalm 2's positive assessment of the Davidic hope presents itself as an integral part of the overall message of the entire Psalter, not just of Book I.⁹⁸ Thus, as Howard points out,

[t]he juxtaposition of wisdom and royal psalms noted by Wilson (e.g., Psalms 1 and 2, [41 and 41,] 72 and 73, 89 and 90, 144 and 145) can just as easily be seen as the Psalter's *affirmation* of both traditions, rather than the subordination or negation of one of them.⁹⁹

Moreover, while YHWH's kingship does come to the fore in the latter part of the Psalter, focus on the Davidic covenant "does not completely disappear, (see, e.g., Psalms 132, 144)"¹⁰⁰ and "Royalist/Zion" motifs are evident in Book IV of the Psalter.¹⁰¹ As Grant points out, Wilson's contention that "David no longer reigns—Yahweh does! . . . does not seem to give full voice to the royal emphases which are found in Books IV and V."¹⁰²

At this point, the present study must address two salient questions: 1) If the formal indicators of structure do not signal a complete rejection of the Davidic covenant, how ought a canonical exegesis to go about interpreting them? 2) What implications do these structural markers have for a canonical exegesis of Psalm 8? Concerning the first question, a canonical approach seeks to read the constituent parts of the Bible as reciprocally interpretive. While Psalm 8 may elucidate other psalms and passages of Scripture, and vice-versa, each passage of Scripture must retain its own distinct voice; one part of

⁹⁷ As already noted, most scholars today agree that Pss 1 and 2 are better understood as together forming the introduction to the Psalter. See DeClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 38-41.

⁹⁸ Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93-100*, 202-205.

⁹⁹ Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93-100*, 203, emphasis original.

¹⁰⁰ Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93-100*, 205.

¹⁰¹ Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93-100*, 205-207.

¹⁰² Grant, "The Psalms and the King," 108.

the canon cannot negate or override another part of the canon. When reading different voices within the canon in light of one another, as Childs says in another context, “the Christian interpreter [ought], first of all, [to] commit himself only to hearing both witnesses as clearly as possible, but then in relation to one another.”¹⁰³

Applying this to the Psalter, in contrast with other biblical books (e.g., Isaiah), the final form of the MT 150 text preserves the 150 Psalms of the Psalter as distinct units, and a canonical exegesis ought to attempt to respect the integrity of each unit. So, for example, the juxtaposition of Pss 1 and 2 ought not to lead one to conclude that either psalm overrides the other. Thus, a canonical exegesis ought not to minimize the role of the מִשִּׁיחַ in Psalm 2 by insisting that he is not really a royal figure, but merely an exemplar of Psalm 1’s wisdom piety, so that “wisdom has had the last word.”¹⁰⁴ Neither ought a canonical exegesis to reverse the priority, with Psalm 2 overriding Psalm 1, such that “[t]he principal focus of Psalm 1 when read in concert with Psalm 2 is not Torah nor wisdom, but rather [Psalm 2’s] individual of kingly and military trappings.”¹⁰⁵ Thus, the various wisdom-royal pairings throughout the book ought to be read in concert and, perhaps, tension, without allowing one tradition to negate the other. Similarly, a canonical exegesis ought to respect the integrity of both orientation psalms and disorientation psalms (and even new-orientation psalms),¹⁰⁶ even if they seem to contradict one another. Even within individual psalms or poems, an oscillation between lament and praise is common. The psalmist’s claim in Ps 10:1-2 that YHWH “stands far away” and “the

¹⁰³ Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 159.

¹⁰⁴ Wilson, “The Shaping of the Psalter,” 81.

¹⁰⁵ Robert Cole, “An Integrated Reading of Psalms 1 and 2,” *JSOT* 98 (2002): 75.

¹⁰⁶ Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms*.

wicked hotly pursue the poor” stands in tension with, but does not negate, the claim in Ps 9:6-7 that “the enemy came to an end” and “YHWH sits enthroned forever.” The psalmists’ ability to voice despair and then, soon thereafter, confess hope within a single psalm has implications for the various tensions found in the Psalter. For example, Psalm 89 reminds YHWH of his promise towards David that “I will establish his offspring forever and his throne as the days of the heavens” (v. 29) and then contends with YHWH that “now you have cast off and rejected . . . you have defiled [David’s] crown in the earth” (vv. 38-39). The two claims remain in tension, and the latter admission of disillusionment does not negate the former reminder of YHWH’s promise.

Moreover, tension between any two themes in the final form of the Psalter exists precisely because the final form of the Psalter preserves both of those themes.¹⁰⁷ Thus, a canonical exegesis ought not to insist on false alternatives, forcing the interpreter to choose between wisdom and royal motifs, or between king YHWH, king David, and king מלך. Indeed, Books IV-V shift the reader’s primary focus towards king YHWH; yet, the preservation of the royal psalms leaves the possibility open that “since God is king his promises will yet be fulfilled,”¹⁰⁸ and the Davidic monarch might yet be restored to function as YHWH’s vice-gerent to assist in YHWH’s rule.

Psalm 8 and the Shape of the Psalter

What, then, is the mutually reciprocal influence between Psalm 8 and the rest of the Psalter, in light of the above survey of the Psalter’s themes and shape? To address

¹⁰⁷ Those who maintain that the editors of the Psalter wished to portray the Davidic Covenant as an abject failure must explain why those editors did not expurgate the positive Davidic elements that are still so prominent in Books I-III.

¹⁰⁸ Vincent, “The Shape of the Psalter,” 77.

this question, the following will utilize some psalms in Book V of the Psalter as entry points through which Psalm 8 may come into dialogue with the latter part of the Psalter. Psalm 144 exhibits certain affinities with Psalm 8 that are worth noting. While Psalm 8 is the first hymn of the Psalter, Psalm 144 is the last lament of the Psalter. Also, whereas Psalm 8 introduces the concept of the corporate royalty of humanity for the first time in the Psalter, Psalm 144 is the last royal psalm of the Psalter and contains the last reference to the Davidic covenant in the Psalter. Psalm 144 also uses language similar to that found in Psalm 8 in several places,¹⁰⁹ most prominently when the psalmist asks: “Oh YHWH, what is the human, that you take knowledge of him? Or the child of humanity, that you think of him?” (Ps 144:3).¹¹⁰ All of these factors, together, make Psalm 144 a suitable entry-point through which to consider how the continuing resonance of Psalm 8 would influence a reader’s understanding of the latter part of the Psalter.

Another commonality shared by Pss 8 and 144 is the fact that they both introduce acrostic psalms, Pss 9-10 and 145, respectively. Les Maloney argues that these two acrostic poems, as the first and last acrostic psalms in the Psalter, seem to serve a “bookending” function.¹¹¹ Thus, Pss 9-10 and 145 form the first (“א”) and the last (“ת”) of the Psalter’s acrostic poems which sum up “the memory and praise of YHWH as sovereign from א to ת.”¹¹² Interestingly, the Psalter contains eight acrostic poems all together.

¹⁰⁹ Other points of resonance include a shared concern about enemies (Ps 144:7-8, 10-11//Ps 8:3), descriptions of the enemies using their “mouth” as weapons (Ps 144:11//Ps 8:3), and claims that YHWH subdues people “under me” (Ps 144:2//Ps 8:5).

¹¹⁰ Mays, *Psalms* 68; Childs, “Psalm 8 in the Context of the Christian Canon,” *Int* 23 [1969]: 29.

¹¹¹ Maloney also contends that the two Psalms share “two juxtaposed roots,” הלל and ברך, though he does not explain how these roots are “juxtaposed” in these two psalms (“Intertextual Links,” 16).

¹¹² DeClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 99.

er: four in Book I and four in Book V. Thus, Psalm 145's function as the last of four acrostic psalms placed throughout Book V mirrors Pss 9-10's function as the first of four acrostic psalms placed throughout Book I.¹¹³ Furthermore, the acrostic genre is a genre associated with wisdom, making Pss 9-10 and 145 worth considering as places in the Psalter where the tension between wisdom and royalty might be addressed.

Once again, the present survey need not demonstrate that Maloney's observations prove intentional editorial activity in the placement of the acrostic psalms, nor does it need to demonstrate that the editor(s) of the Psalter intentionally placed Psalm 144 at the end of the Psalter to serve as a mirror for Psalm 8 at the beginning; the goal here is not to uncover the aims of the human editor who compiled the text. Rather, the present study asks how a canonically informed reader might read Psalm 8 in light of the rest of the Psalter. Independent of the question of editorial intention, in the final form of the Psalter we find affinities between Pss 8 and 144 and affinities between Pss 9-10 and 145. These affinities, combined with the respective locations of Pss 8-10 and 144-145 within the Psalter, make Pss 8-10 and Pss 144-145 convenient points for considering the thematic shape of the Psalter, and bringing Pss 144-145 into dialogue with Pss 8-10 should yield insight into how one might read Psalm 8 in light of the rest of the Psalter and vice versa.

Briefly, then, we must first hear the discreet witness of Pss 144-145 "as clearly as possible,"¹¹⁴ before fruitful dialogue with Pss 8-10 is possible. Psalm 144 is a prayer for David and for the community that asks for God to deliver the king (Ps 144:3-11) and then

¹¹³ Maloney, "Intertextual Links."

¹¹⁴ Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 159.

to bless the community (Ps 144:12-15).¹¹⁵ Psalm 145 is a hymn that then turns to praise YHWH. Intertwined with promises that the individual (Ps 145:1-2, 21), the community (Ps 145:4-7), and creation (Ps 145:10-12) will praise YHWH are declarations of the greatness of YHWH (Ps 145:3, 8-9, 13-20). “The LORD’s kingship” and “the LORD’s covenant fidelity” are of special interest to Psalm 145.¹¹⁶

In their immediate context, the preceding psalms (Pss 138-143) are part of the last Davidic collection in the Psalter, which Pss 144 and 145 conclude. This Davidic collection moves from thanksgiving (Psalm 138) and wisdom (Psalm 139), to individual lamentation (Pss 140-143). Then come Pss 144-145, which, as the last two Davidic psalms, are of special import for an understanding of the overall message of the Psalter concerning the Davidic Covenant. The *hallel* psalms that follow constitute the conclusion of the Psalter (Pss 146-150). Thus, Psalm 145 serves the dual function of concluding the preceding collection of Davidic psalms while at the same time serving, as a hymn, as a transition into the series of hymns that follows (Pss 146-150).

Thus, Pss 144-145 round out the body of the Psalter and introduce the concluding hymns of praise. Psalm 144 picks up the Psalter’s meditations on the beleaguered Davidic line by using language strikingly similar to that of Psalm 18 in a way that “chang[es] the perspective from a royal thanksgiving [Psalm 18] to a royal lament [Psalm 144],”¹¹⁷ while still affirming that God “gives victory to kings” and “rescues David his servant

¹¹⁵ The two sections of Psalm 144, vv. 1-11 and vv. 12-15, are so markedly distinct as to lead Leslie C. Allen to conclude that “vv 12-15 [are] puzzling . . . in relation to vv 1-11,” *Psalms 101-150* (WBC 21; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 361. Yet, once brought together into a single poem, “the canonical unity reveals the need for God to act (a royal lament vv. 1-11) and the resultant blessings of his actions (a psalm of blessing, vv. 12-15), VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 982.

¹¹⁶ VanGemeren *Psalms*, 987.

¹¹⁷ Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 361.

from the cruel sword”(Ps 144:10). This affirmation leads to a prayer for the king’s deliverance (verse 11) and the concluding prayer for the blessing of the nation (verses 12-15). Ps 144:12-15’s benediction gives way to an outpouring of praise (Psalm 145) that in turn paves the way for the Psalter’s conclusion (Pss 146-150).¹¹⁸

We can now turn to “hearing both witnesses” of Pss 8-10 and of Pss 144-145 “in relation to one another.”¹¹⁹ First of all, the function of Pss 8-10 is somewhat symmetrical with that of Pss 144-145. The former finds its place just after the beginning of the Psalter, and the latter just before the ending. While Pss 8 and 9-10 connect king מֶלֶךְ with the acrostic genre “used by wisdom writers,” Pss 144 and 145—the last two Davidic Psalms—connect king David with the acrostic genre.¹²⁰ As a hymnic meditation on YHWH’s glorification by means of all humans, Psalm 8 foreshadows the emphasis in Books IV-V upon praise and the community. Symmetrically, Psalm 144 recalls the emphases of Books I-III by carrying forward a tone of lament while at the same time reaffirming YHWH’s commitment to “David his servant” (v. 10). Psalms 9-10 transition from the hymnic praise of Psalm 8 back to the tone of lament that dominates Book I, while still anticipating Books IV-V by stating in its conclusion that יהוה מלך עולם ועד (“YHWH is king forever and ever,” Ps 10:16). Conversely, Psalm 145 transitions from the royal lamentation of Psalm 144 to hymnic praise, while implicitly recalling the prayers of lamentation that have preceded in the Psalter by reassuring the reader that YHWH hears and will act on behalf of “all who are falling” (Ps 145:14).

¹¹⁸ For the function of Pss 146-150 as together concluding the Psalter, see Wilson, *Editing*, 193-194, 226-228 and deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 99-103.

¹¹⁹ Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 159.

¹²⁰ DeClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 99.

Thus, the positioning of Pss 8 and 9-10 *vis a vis* Pss 144 and 145 create the strong possibility that one who “reads the Psalter from the beginning” will read the latter psalms in light of the former. As noted above, the reader’s initial encounter with Psalm 8 as an isolated beacon of hope and as “the first hymn of praise in the Psalter”¹²¹ gives the reader reason to look for hope and the restoration of order through divine reversal, even in the midst of chaos, as she prays through the rest of the book of Psalms. A reader of Psalm 144 so influenced by reading Psalm 8 may hope and expect that, even though the human king and the community are beset by enemies, YHWH will act on behalf of his king and nation. Psalm 8 would also temper the resulting Davidic hope that Ps 144:10 evokes by reminding the reader that YHWH uses corporate humanity (Ps 8:5), not just the Davidic king, to effect reversals and bring about order. The fact that Pss 8 and 144 each directly precede acrostic poems with wisdom motifs could reinforce this tempering of the Davidic hope by reminding the reader of Pss 144-145 that, just as the ideal Davidic king is to function as YHWH’s vice-gerent through wisdom and Torah piety, so also is corporate humanity to function as YHWH’s vice-gerent through wisdom and Torah piety.¹²²

Furthermore, all human hope, be it in Ps 144’s king David or Ps 8’s corporate humanity, is tempered by the fact that Ps 8:5 and Ps 144:3 both ask, in similar terms “what is the human child,” that YHWH should give it this royal status? King YHWH, not any human, is the one deserving of attention. Finally, the symmetrical positioning of

¹²¹ Mays, *Psalms*, 65.

¹²² One may ask, then, why I prefer not to describe this tempering as “democratizing” (*contra*, e.g., Grant, *The King as Exemplar*, 280-289). I prefer to avoid this terminology for two reasons: 1) I agree with Mays that this language “does not do justice to the prominence of the anointed king in the Psalter” (Mays, *Psalms*, 67). As I have insisted throughout, the Davidic King is not rejected by the final form of the Psalter. 2) On a related note, the term “democratizing” has a political meaning (though, often, those who apply it to Psalm 8 do not seem to have that meaning primarily in mind), which I believe Psalm 8 does not support, as I have argued above.

Pss 8 and 144 reminds the reader to hold all of the themes that run throughout the Psalter in constant tension, in the Psalter as in life. Even in the midst of chaos, Psalm 8 promises hope, and, even as the Psalter is moving towards its exultant conclusion of overflowing praise, Psalm 144 confesses that chaos still exists (esp. Ps 144:4, 7-8).¹²³

In summary, then, using Psalm 144 as a point of entry through which to consider the hermeneutical influence of Psalm 8 upon the Psalter provides us with a window through which to examine how Psalm 8 might shape a reader's understanding of other parts of the Psalter, and vice-versa. Yet, Psalm 144 is just one psalm. Therefore, the following section will conclude this chapter by briefly summarizing the thematic development of the entire Psalter as we have surveyed it above, focusing on how this thematic development informs a canonical exegesis of Psalm 8.

Summary and Conclusion

As noted above, the Psalter begins with a dual introduction focusing the reader's attention upon meditation and Torah observance (Psalm 1), the Davidic king (Psalm 2), the contrast between the fate of the righteous and the fate of the wicked, and the sovereignty of YHWH (Pss 1 and 2) all as central themes of the Psalter. These psalms exert a primacy effect as the reader prays through the individual laments that follow in the next cluster of Psalms (Pss 3-14) and later throughout the Psalter. Thus, when the reader comes to Psalm 8, the insignificant babies and human ruler in Psalm 8 cohere with the righteous characters of Pss 1-7, 9-14, and the enemy and avenger in Ps 8:3 is parallel with the wicked who will perish (Pss 1 and 2) and the enemies who oppress (Pss 3-7, 9-14).

¹²³ Once again, I do not intend to imply that all readers of Psalm 144 would consciously think of Psalm 8 in this way. Nevertheless, it is possible to read Psalm 8 and Psalm 144 in light of one another, and in so doing to generate some level 2 canonical meanings.

As the first hymn in the Psalter, Psalm 8 itself exerts an influence upon the way in which one reads the laments of the rest of the Psalter, most of which are to be found in the first three books. Thus, as the Psalter oscillates between lament and praise, with the latter increasing and the former fading into the background, the reader's constant expectation is that YHWH will intervene into a disordered world to take insignificant humans and use them to neutralize his enemies.

In addition to the shift from lament to praise, there is another shift, from an emphasis on the Davidic king in Books I-III to an emphasis on king YHWH in Books IV-V, with the decisive break coming at Psalm 89:38, where the psalmist cries out "But now you have cast off and rejected; you are full of wrath against your anointed!" Nevertheless, the human king does not completely disappear, and, in fact, reappears in Psalm 144 at a pivotal point in the Psalter. Furthermore, reading Psalm 144 and other royal Psalms in light of Psalm 8 tempers, but does not negate Davidic hope. Read in light of Psalm 8, the Davidic covenant is another opportunity for YHWH to intervene on behalf of the insignificant to effect a reversal over and against his enemies and maintain the created order. It is, therefore, overstating the shift to describe the Davidic covenant as "failed" and "rejected." Moreover, from the perspective of a post-exilic reader living under the boot of Greek and then Roman rule,¹²⁴ what more surprising, and yet, longed for, reversal could there be than for YHWH to somehow once again intervene on behalf of David and reestablish a Davidic reign? Psalm 8 reminds the reader that it is his responsibility, not to seek to use human strength to bring about a new Davidic regime, but rather to identify

¹²⁴ For a brief, helpful survey of the historical situation of Second Temple Judaism in which the final form of the Psalter took shape, see deClassé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 106-112.

with the weak and humble, the “babies and sucklings,” and to allow YHWH to somehow establish strength from their weak, prayerful mouths.

Yet, there is a shift in emphasis from Books I-III to IV-V, reminding the reader of Psalm 8 and the Psalter that, in the final analysis, it is the reign of king YHWH which the Psalter puts at the center of an ordered cosmos, and all other rule within that hierarchy is subject to his rule. To say “YHWH reigns” is to affirm that: 1) YHWH rules, with or without a Davidic king on the throne, and 2) YHWH is capable of acting on behalf of the Davidic covenant when and how he sees fit. This shift is accompanied by another shift from lament to praise, which points the reader to expect God to effect divine reversal and maintain the created order, as described in Psalm 8, and, indeed, even to look for ways in which God is now already maintaining order.

All throughout, the Psalter does not provide neat and tidy resolutions to the many tensions that permeate the book of Psalms and permeate life. YHWH is effecting order, yet there is still chaos. YHWH reigns, yet he uses human rulers. Thus, with James L. Mays, one may ask of the themes that give rise to these tensions “[h]ow is their relation to be understood? . . . Is the question only taken up in the New Testament?”¹²⁵ In order to address Mays’s question here, we must consider Psalm 8 in light of the entire Christian canon. We turn, therefore, to consider other Old Testament passages that might serve as entry-points for bringing Psalm 8 into dialogue with the canon, and will, therefore, elucidate a canonical exegesis of Psalm 8.

¹²⁵ Mays, *Psalms*, 67. Mays is speaking specifically here of the relationship between the various royal figures in the Psalter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Psalm 8 and the Old Testament

This chapter will move beyond the immediate literary context of Psalm 8 (the Psalter) to consider the canonical relationship between Psalm 8 and other Old Testament texts. Due to the massive amount of material available for consideration, this chapter must exercise special care in selecting texts to serve as entry points into the rest of the OT. If the present study is to yield a reading that is canonical, insightful, and relevant, it must seek to bring Psalm 8 into meaningful dialogue with the voluminous material that constitutes the Old Testament canon.¹ Thus, this chapter will focus upon texts that are especially well suited to bring Psalm 8 into dialogue with the rest of the Tanakh by examining the relationship between three texts that exhibit a high degree of semantic and thematic affinity with Psalm 8: Gen 1:1-2:3, Job 7:17-18, and Ps 144:3-4; I will argue below that all three of these texts either allude to Psalm 8 (Job 7 and Psalm 144) or underlie Psalm 8 (Genesis 1).² Taken together, these texts are uniquely qualified to serve as entry points by which Psalm 8 can come into dialogue with the broad sweep of Old Testament literature in two significant ways:

¹ The reader should bear in mind, however, that the canonical approach does not amount to a scientific method that dictates which passages are to be considered. Thus, there is not only one legitimate method that one might employ to bring any given text into dialogue with the rest of the canon.

² For connections between Genesis 1 and Psalm 8, see Franz Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Die Psalmen I, 1-50* (DNEB 29; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1993), 77, 80, and Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (WBC 19; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 106. See also Ute Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung: Ein Beitrag zur Alttestamentlichen Anthropologie am Beispiel von Psalm 8, Genesis 1 und verwandten Texten* (WMANT 101; Göttingen: Universität Göttingen, 2004).

1) Insofar as the various texts exhibit an awareness of Psalm 8 (or vice versa) they represent an inner-biblical dialogue concerning the central themes of Psalm 8—God’s glory, the created order, and humanity’s place within that created order. Even if some readers do not find the arguments for the historical dependence between Psalm 8 and these other texts compelling, the semantic and thematic affinities between the texts are strong enough to represent an inner-canonical dialogue; they allow the reader to consider how different canonical texts utilize language that overlaps with Psalm 8 to reconsider themes taken up in Psalm 8 in new contexts and in new ways.³ 2) Each of these three texts provides a bridge between Psalm 8 and other sections of the Tanakh. Genesis 1 serves as a point of contact linking Psalm 8 with the Torah and with a creation theology that runs throughout the Tanakh. By asking the same question posed in Ps 8:5 in a new context, Job 7 and Psalm 144 bring the idealized view of the world reflected in Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 into dialogue with a more disordered and chaotic view of the world. Furthermore, Job 7 serves as an entry point between Psalm 8 and other wisdom literature and the rest of the Writings. Similarly, Psalm 144 bridges the gap between the Psalter and the Nevi’im by addressing the Davidic covenant and YHWH’s promise to maintain it, which is a theme that runs throughout much of the Former Prophets and the Latter Prophets.

The following will examine each of these texts in three stages: 1) In order to hear the distinct voice of each witness “as clearly as possible,”⁴ the first stage will summarize

³ Put another way, I will argue that Genesis 1, Job 7, and Psalm 144 all belong to the first category of entry points discussed in chapter two (texts exhibiting affinities resulting from direct or indirect dependence). Nevertheless, even if these texts did not belong to “category one,” they would still be of interest as entry points for a canonical exegesis because all three passages certainly belong to the second category listed in chapter two (passages that aid in dealing with an exegetical problem growing out of Psalm 8 and have semantic similarities with Psalm 8).

⁴ Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 159.

the message of each passage by reading the passage “in itself,”⁵ 2) Next, the question of the nature of the literary dependence between the text under consideration and Psalm 8 will be addressed. 3) Finally, we will consider the various witnesses “in relation to one another,” focusing upon the question of how Psalm 8 might be read in light of the other passages.⁶ This chapter will conclude by synthesizing the findings to articulate a canonical exegesis of Psalm 8 that reads the psalm in light of the entire OT canon. The next section begins, then, by considering Psalm 8 in light of the first creation account in Gen 1:1-2:3 (or simply, “Genesis 1”).⁷

The First Creation Account and Psalm 8

Reading Genesis 1:1-2:3 “In Itself”

“Genesis 1,” writes Bill T. Arnold, “has been studied, debated, and expounded as much as any text in world history.”⁸ The following treatment, therefore, will only lightly touch on the issues pertaining to reading Genesis 1. After briefly addressing the state of the field regarding the historical origins of the first creation account, I will adumbrate the

⁵ Here I am following the example of R. W. L. Moberly, a practitioner of canonical exegesis, in first reading a text “in itself” before bringing it into dialogue with other interpretive contexts, and, like Moberly, am putting the phrase “in itself” in “scare quotes . . . to indicate that the notion of reading a text ‘in itself’ is less straightforward than it sounds.” R. W. L. Moberly, *The Theology of the Book of Genesis* (OTT; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 43 n. 2.

⁶ Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis*, 159.

⁷ Although the first creation account technically runs from Gen 1:1-2:3 (or 2:4a, depending upon whether one connects Gen 2:4a with what precedes it or with what follows it), throughout this chapter the following terms are used interchangeably: Genesis 1, Genesis 1:1-2:3, the first creation account, and (acknowledging the traditional nomenclature, without positing any judgment as to the validity of the nomenclature) the priestly creation account.

⁸ *Genesis* (NCBC; New York: Cambridge, 2009), 29.

literary structure of Gen 1:1-2:3.⁹ Concerning the current state of scholarship on the first creation account, there is something of a critical consensus in Pentateuchal scholarship which views the first creation account as representing a literary unit that, unlike the second creation account (Gen 2:4[b]-24), originates from a “Priestly” writer or source (P) writing during or after the exile.¹⁰ Yet, it would be misleading to characterize the question of the origins of Genesis 1 as a settled matter. Wellhausen’s Documentary Hypothesis has fallen into disfavor, and no universally accepted model has replaced it.¹¹ Instead, there is now broad disagreement concerning the nature and origin of “P,”¹² and the other

⁹ Many commentators, on the basis of the identification of the תולדות formula as part of P, read Gen 2:4a in connection with the first creation account, so that the entire account runs from Gen 1:1 to Gen 2:4a (Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11, A Commentary* [John J. Scullion, trans.; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984], 12, 14, 76-78 and E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* [AB C1; New York: Doubleday, 1963], 3-13, and John E. Hartley, *Genesis* [NIBC 1; Grand Rapids: Hendrickson, 2000], 51, 55). Victor Hamilton, however, notes that Gen 2:4a makes more sense as an introduction to Gen 2:4-25 for the following reasons. 1) All of the other occurrences of the תולדות formula introduce what follows. 2) The ancient translations construe Gen 2:4a as part of the following verses, rather than the preceding verses. 3) The “X תולדות” formula introduces a recitation of the progeny of X, not an account of the origin of X; while the first creation account recounts the origin of the “heavens and the earth,” the second creation account speaks of the things which the heavens and the earth produce (*The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17* [NICOT 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990], 4-5). Thus, I agree with Childs that Gen 2:4 “serves as a superscription to the account which follows” while at the same time serving to “connect the creation of the world [Gen 1:1-2:3] with the history which follows” (*Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979]; cf. *idem. The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984], 145-146).

¹⁰ For a summary of the state of the field in the early 1990’s, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 26.

¹¹ For a thorough critique of the documentary hypothesis, see Roger N. Whybray, *The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study* (Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1987). For a helpful treatment of recent trends in Pentateuchal scholarship outlining the demise of the documentary hypothesis and attempts to forge a new model for the origins of the Torah, see Gordon J. Wenham, “Pondering the Pentateuch: The Search for a New Paradigm” in *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches* (ed. David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold; Grand Rapids MI: Baker, 2004), 116-144.

¹² While several scholars argue for a later date for P than the exilic date posited by the documentary hypothesis (John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975; *idem., Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* [Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1992]), other scholars have argued that P is earlier than the documentary hypothesis had claimed (Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (WBC 1; Waco, TX: Word, 1982; *idem.* “Pondering the Pentateuch,” 142-144).

sources of the Pentateuch have been called into question.¹³ Furthermore, some conservative scholars continue to argue that Moses is primarily responsible for the shape and contents of the book of Genesis.¹⁴ Finally, an increasing number of scholars are treating Genesis as a literary unity and attending to the question of the role that Genesis 1 plays in the final form of the book of Genesis, without placing their primary focus upon the question of the historical origins of the passage, and at times using “canonical” language similar to the canonical exegesis employed here.¹⁵

The present dissertation fits at home most comfortably with this last type of scholarship, for several reasons. First, if one turns to the final form of the text itself to find some explicit explanation of the origins of the text, one is bound for disappointment; there is no more mention of Mosaic authorship within the text itself than there is of authorship by an anonymous Priestly writer. Furthermore, as many recent works have recognized, when one reads Genesis and the Torah as a whole, one discovers a high degree of artistry working towards a satisfying unity.¹⁶ This artistry and unity is of most interest to a hermeneutic that takes as its starting point the canonical form of the text.

¹³ Already in 1991, Blenkinsopp notes that, among the four sources originally posited by the documentary hypothesis, only P has “stood up . . . to scrutiny” (*Pentateuch*, 26). See also Wenham, “Pondering the Pentateuch.”

¹⁴ Duane Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), John H. Sailhammer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition, and Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009).

¹⁵ David J. A. Clines, *Theme of the Pentateuch* (JSOTSup 10; Sheffield UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), Moberly, *The Theology of the Book of Genesis*, Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Interpretation; Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1982), and Thomas W. Mann, *The Book of the Torah: The Narrative Integrity of the Pentateuch* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1988).

¹⁶ In addition to the readings of Genesis as a whole presented by Clines (*Theme of the Pentateuch*) and Mann (*The Book of the Torah*) see Gordon J. Wenham’s “The Coherence of the Flood Narrative,” (*VT* 28[1978]: 336-348) for one example of a reading of a text as a unity that is arguably more compelling than the fragmentary readings posited by the Documentary Hypothesis.

Turning to the literary structure, Gen 1:1-2:3 exhibit a formalized surface structure organized around the seven days of creation organized into a “three days plus three days plus one day” arrangement; days one through three and days four through six each form two parallel panels, with Gen 1:1-2 serving as a brief introduction, and day seven rounding off the passage.¹⁷ This surface structure drives the passage’s narrative development; God forms the **תהו** (“formless,” verse 2) world, on days 1-3, fills the **בהו** (“void,” verse 2) world on days 4-6 (though the filling actually begins on day 3b), and rests on day 7.¹⁸ Yet the contents of the two main units (days 1-3 and 4-6) do not parallel each other perfectly,¹⁹ as Wenham points out, days one, two, and four focus on one pole, the “heavens” (**אור** “light,” Gen 1:3, **רקיע** “expanse,” Gen 1:6, and **בריקע מארת** “lights in the expanse,” Gen 1:14), while days three, five, and six deal with the “earth” (plants, Gen 1:11, sea and air creatures, Gen 1:20, and land creatures, Gen 1:24).²⁰ Also, the plants of day three have clear affinities with the **נפש חיה/חיים** (“living things/living creatures”) of days 5-6, all of which are to reproduce and **פרה** (“produce fruit”).

Neumann-Gorsolke has set forth an alternative two-paneled schema, grouping days 1-4 together as describing the “Grundgegebenheiten der Welt” and days 5-6 together

¹⁷ David W. Cotter, *Genesis* (Berit Olam; Colleagueville MN: Liturgical Press, 2003) 11; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 88-90. For a thorough examination of the structure of MT Genesis 1 in comparison with the structure of the LXX Genesis 1, see William P. Brown, *Structure, Role, and Ideology in the Hebrew and Greek Texts of Genesis 1:1-2:3* (SBLDS 132; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993).

¹⁸ See Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 7; Bruce K. Waltke with Kathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 2001), 57.

¹⁹ Brown points out that the two part triadic structure is more clearly developed in the LXX version of Gen 1:1-2:3 than in the MT Hebrew edition. Nevertheless, Brown overstates the case severely when he concludes that “the MT of Gen 1:1-2:3 exhibits both an inconsistent formal structure and an unclear thematic organization” (*Structure*, 31).

²⁰ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 7.

as describing the “Bevölkerung der Weltbereiche.”²¹ Yet, Neumann-Gorsolke’s new arrangement creates as many problems as it solves; her schema still leaves many organizational questions unresolved, and it ignores the parallelism evident between days one and four, two and five, and three and six. It is better, therefore, to understand the apparent aberrations as a result of themes interweaving between the two main units of the passage. Thus, rather than destroying the two panels, these interweaving themes strengthen the integrity of the section as a unit by tying them together like a lace woven through two pieces of material. Read in this way, the first panel anticipates the second, while the second panel recalls the first. The thematic overlap between the panels is the strongest between days three and four, at the point of transition from panel one to panel two.²² In summary, then, the complex surface structure of Gen 1:1-2:3, is as shown in figure 1.²³

		Introduction (1:1, 2)		
Day 1 (1:3-5)	Light (Inorganic/Heavenly)	Day 4 (1:4-19)	Heavenly Bodies/Lights (<i>Inorganic/Heavenly</i>)	
Day 2 (1:6-8)	Expanse(Inorganic/Heavenly) Sky (Inorganic/Heavenly) Seas (Inorganic/ <i>Earthly</i>)	Day 5 (1:20-23)	Birds & (Organic/Earthly) Fish	
Day 3 (1:9-13)	Dry Land (Inorganic/ <i>Earthly</i>) Vegetation (<i>Organic/Earthly</i>) (filling begins)	Day 6 (1:24-31)	Land Animals/Human Beings (Organic/Earthly) (filling ends)	
	Day 7 (2:2,3)		God Rests	

Figure 1. The structure of Genesis 1:1-2:3

²¹ Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen*, 154.

²² Furthermore, day three actually inaugurates the “filling” that pertains to days four through six, as the earth תִּשְׂא (“brings forth”) and the vegetation flourishes. So also the “forming” of days 1-3 is incomplete until the sun, moon, and stars make concrete the demarcation of day and night in day 4.

²³ For a brief explanation of the ways in which the seventh creation day in Gen 2:2-3 is distinct from the first six creation days, see Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 167-169. For the way in which Gen 2:2-3 parallels Gen 1:1 and forms a fitting conclusion to the entire passage, see Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 7, 34-35.

Genesis 1 and Psalm 8

How, then, does Genesis 1 relate to Psalm 8? As a beautiful hymn of creation praise,²⁴ Psalm 8 picks up the same themes found in Genesis 1 and instructs its readers about the world as it should be—as it was at the creation. How might a reader attempting a canonical exegesis understand the relationship between these two passages? Once again, the canonical approach this dissertation undertakes is not a scientific method which is intended to be applied consistently and methodically in order to produce assured scientific results; rather, it is an approach to the text that aims at an encounter with the divine for the believer today. Therefore, the following does not pretend to set forth a single, scientifically assured reading of the two texts, but sets forth a possible way of reading the two texts in tandem.

To this end, the following treatment will read Psalm 8 in light of Genesis 1 in two stages: First, the question of literary dependence and priority will be addressed; I will argue that Psalm 8 is drawing either upon Genesis 1 or, perhaps more likely, upon another version of the creation tradition that is incredibly similar to Genesis 1. From there, the study will explore the ways in which Psalm 8 recasts material from the seven day creation tradition; this section will attempt to “discern the influence of one text on another, the meaning effects generated when a later text alludes to and absorbs an earlier text, thus activating it and bringing it into interaction with a new context.”²⁵ There the question of the historical relationship between the two texts will only be of secondary importance; the primary focus will be the literary relationship between the two texts within the canon.

²⁴ A. A. Anderson, *Psalms (1-72)*, (NCBC; London, UK: Marshall, Morgan, & Scott, 1981), 100.

²⁵ Andrew C. Brunson, *Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John: An Intertextual Study on the New Exodus Pattern in the Theology of John* (Hemsbach: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 10.

The argument will not, therefore, depend upon an establishment of a historical relationship between the texts, because it proceeds from the acknowledgment that the two texts now constitute the Church's canon, and, within the community of faith, can and should be read in light of one another.

Literary dependence. How do the two passages under consideration relate? The secondary literature widely recognizes that “there are certain affinities with [Psalm 8] and Genesis 1” indicating some sort of direct or indirect compositional relationship.²⁶ Most scholars see these affinities as a result of Psalm 8 drawing either on Genesis 1 or on a creation account related to Genesis 1.²⁷ While it is impossible to establish the historical relationship with certainty, the evidence seems to support this scholarly consensus. As already noted in chapter two, Psalm 8 gives a “top down” description of creation that looks very much like the ordering of creation described in Genesis 1, if selectively described, rearranged and, at times, in reverse order. If one were to ascribe priority to Psalm 8, this would mean that Genesis 1 (or some other intermediate creation tradition derived from Psalm 8 and giving rise to Genesis 1) has, for some reason, rearranged and expanded upon the creation order described in Psalm 8; while this relationship is possible, it is hard to imagine what would give rise to the new arrangement and expansion.

²⁶ Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 106. See also James L. Mays, *Psalms* (Interpretation ; Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1989), 67.

²⁷ Briggs and Briggs, conclude that verse 4 and 5 of Psalm 8 are drawing on a compacted version of the creation account derived from Genesis 1 some time after Ezra (Charles Augustus Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *Psalms, vol I*, ICC [New York: Scribners, 1906], 62). Craigie agrees that Psalm 8 derives from the first creation account, but is less certain about the date (Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 106). Similarly, Childs avers that the psalmist “was dependent on the tradition of the priestly writer which is reflected in Genesis 1” (“Psalm 8 in the Context of the Christian Canon,” *Interpretation*, 23 [1969]: 22). Elsewhere, however, he expresses uncertainty regarding whether this is an oral or a literary version of the tradition (*Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* [London: SCM Press, 1992], 113).

Yet, if Psalm 8 is drawing upon Genesis 1 or a related creation myth, there are good explanations for why the psalmist has chosen to focus on certain elements of that creation myth and rearranged those elements; as the analysis of Psalm 8 in light of Genesis 1 below will show, Psalm 8 offers a contemplation upon the heavenly rulers (the moon and stars) and the earthly rulers (the human) in order to make its point. Psalm 8 also seems to assume that the singer/reader is familiar with some version of the myth of creation. For example, in verse 5(4), the psalmist asks a rhetorical question about the nature of humanity, and then, in verses 6-9, she answers her own question by recounting the created order of Genesis 1 in reverse order, as though this created order were common knowledge.²⁸ Additionally, the intertextual comparison of the two texts below will show that Psalm 8 seems to select material from Genesis 1 at strategic points (namely, days four and six), possibly betraying an awareness of the broader context of the creation tradition preserved in Genesis 1, rather than a mere awareness of the parts selected.

The question remains, however, whether the psalmist is utilizing Genesis 1 as we have it, or some other version of the first creation account. As the following intertextual comparison will show, while the two passages share strong thematic and structural parallels, the vocabulary is, at points quite different.²⁹ In light of these divergences, it seems

²⁸ See Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 108.

²⁹ Psalm 8 uses vocabulary distinct from that of Genesis 1 to express concepts similar to those found in Genesis 1 at the following points: The framing context of Psalm 8 is God's glory **בכל הארץ** ("in all the earth," Ps 8:1, 10), while Genesis 1 describes the creation of **את השמים ואת הארץ** ("the heavens and the earth," Gen 1:1, 2:3). Ps 8:4 meditates upon the creation of the evening heavenly bodies, calling them **ירח וכוכבים** ("the moon and the stars"), whereas Gen 1: refers to the same heavenly bodies as **קטן המאור** ("the lesser light") and **הכוכבים** ("the stars"). Finally, while Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 both list animals that humans are to rule over (Gen 1:26, 28 // Ps 8:8-9) the two lists differ; Genesis 1 mentions **עוף** ("birds"), and **רמש** ("creeping things"), which are not found in Psalm 8, and Psalm 8 mentions **עוף** ("birds"), **צנה** ("sheep") and **אלפים** ("goats"), and **עבר ארצות ימים** ("things passing through the paths of the sea"), which are not mentioned in Gen 1:26, 28.

reasonable to conclude that Psalm 8 reflects another version of the creation account that is similar in substance to, yet distinct in vocabulary from Genesis 1. Nevertheless, this question cannot be answered conclusively. Furthermore, attempts to account for the precise nature and provenance of the creation myth underlying Psalm 8 are problematic; hypotheses positing that the psalm draws upon either a later, condensed version of Genesis 1³⁰ or an earlier oral version of the priestly account³¹ are interesting, but inconclusive.

What, then, is the present canonical exegesis to make of the relationship between the two texts? On the one hand, it bears repeating that the focus of the present chapter is canonical, asking how a reader today may understand the two scriptural texts in tandem. Historical questions, therefore, are not the primary focus. What follows, then, is a theological reading of the texts, not a case for the dependence of Psalm 8 upon Genesis 1. Yet, on the other hand, an awareness of their historical relationship has some relevance for such a canonical reading. First of all, in considering the level one meaning of the text, an awareness of the fact that Genesis 1 (or something conceptually similar to it, to be more precise) lies in the background of Psalm 8 ought to inform how one reads Psalm 8 “in itself;” indeed, such an awareness has already informed the exegesis of Psalm 8 proffered in chapter two. Secondly, this awareness strengthens the level two canonical connection of the two passages, encouraging the reader to consider the two texts in tandem. Of course, the canonical exegesis argued for in this dissertation does not insist that there be any sort of historical relationship between any two texts before they are read in light of one another; the mere fact that any two texts are part of the community’s received canon means that members within the community can and should read these texts in light of one

³⁰ Briggs and Briggs, *Psalms, vol I*, 62.

³¹ Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*, 113.

another. Yet, in looking for texts to bring into interaction with Psalm 8, it is reasonable to look for texts that a) Psalm 8 itself gestures towards and b) many others within the community of faith will find beneficial for illuminating Psalm 8.³²

Reading Psalm 8 in light of Genesis 1. We now turn, therefore, to reading Psalm 8 in light of Genesis 1. Since it is probable that Psalm 8 draws upon material from some version of the first creation account and, whether one looks to the Jewish, Orthodox, Catholic, or Protestant tradition, Genesis 1 always precedes Psalm 8 in the arrangement of the canon, it is worth exploring how Psalm 8 has responded to Genesis 1. Therefore, we will first survey the points of contact between Psalm 8 and Genesis 1, and then explore simultaneously the way in which Psalm 8 has reconfigured the themes of Genesis 1 and the way in which a knowledge of the first creation account shapes the reader's understanding of Psalm 8.

What, then, are the points of verbal and semantic overlap between Psalm 8 and Genesis 1? The first and last indication that Psalm 8 is drawing upon some version of the first creation account is found in the inclusio's extolling of the manifestation of God's glorious name **בכל הארץ** ("in all the earth," Ps 8:2, 10); Genesis 1 sets God's creative activity in the context of **הארץ** ("the earth"), using the word 21 times. Thus, the phrase **בכל הארץ** in Ps 8:2 functions in a similar way to the phrase **[את] השמים ו[את] הארץ** ("the heavens and the earth") that brackets the first creation account in Gen 1:1 and 2:1;

³² Furthermore, the reader must remember that a) the canonical approach does not posit a static formula for determining which two texts ought to be read in light of one another, and b) the canonical approach recognizes that the reader's own context informs the way in which the reader will choose to read the canon. Therefore, it is fully expected that another reader from another context could very well choose different texts to consider along side of Psalm 8. For example, if a reader's concern is to hear the biblical witness concerning the way in which God uses children, that reader might begin with Psalm 8, and then read Psalm 8 in tandem with other texts speaking about children (e.g., Deut 6:7, Ps 127:3, Eph 6:1, etc.), texts which will not be examined in this dissertation.

both phrases indicate the universe in its totality.³³ Moreover, when the first iteration of the inclusio is read in conjunction with the first line of the body so that **הַשָּׁמַיִם** and **הָאָרֶץ** stand in parallel,³⁴ the language in Psalm 8 is even closer to that of the first creation account; the inclusio and the first line of the body of Psalm 8 use the same vocabulary that Genesis 1 uses to refer to the totality of creation by hendiadys; if a reader comes to Psalm 8 with Genesis 1 in mind, he will see a connection between the all encompassing glory of YHWH in Psalm 8 and the universal creation of YHWH in Genesis 1.

Turning to the body of the psalm, I have argued in chapter two that Ps 8:2b serves a dual function both as a parallel line joined to the inclusio and as the first line of the body of the psalm. Likewise, Ps 8:2b seems to serve as a transition from the inclusio's contemplation of the totality of the created order (// Gen 1:1-2:3) to a more focused contemplation on one part of the created order: God's creative work "upon the heavens." In Genesis 1, God does creative work in the heavenly realm on days two (Gen 1:8) and four (Gen 1:14). Of these two creation days, the language of Ps 8:2b points most strongly to day four. Just as Ps 8:2b speaks of God setting (from **נָתַן**) his "glory upon the heavens," so also Gen 1:14-19 describes how God **יָתַן** ("set") lights **הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּרָקִיעַ** ("in the expanse of the heavens"); by contrast, Gen 1:6-8 describes the creation of the heavens themselves, not of something upon or in the heavens, and there is no use of the verb **נָתַן** or any other

³³ See Westermann's treatment of **אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ**, *Genesis 1-11*, 101. Westermann is correct that this phrase does not reflect an opposite duality, as in Egyptian thought. There is no substantial nuance of difference in meaning from **אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ** in Gen 1:1 and **בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ** in Ps 8:2, 10.

³⁴Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 119.

similarly concrete verb in the creation account of day two.³⁵ More imagery reminiscent of creation day four appears in Ps 8:4(3). There, the psalmist again contemplates “the heavens” (הַשָּׁמַיִם) turning to the יָרֵחַ וְכּוֹכָבִים (“the moon and the stars”), which parallels the creation of קָטָן הַמְּאֹר (“the lesser light”) and הַכּוֹכָבִים (“the stars”) in Gen 1:16. Once again, the psalmist uses the verb נָתַן, this time describing the way in which God created the יָרֵחַ וְכּוֹכָבִים, exactly paralleling the use of the same verb in Gen 1:17.

What, then, ought one to do with Ps 8:3, which does not speak of creation day four? First of all, there are no clear semantic parallels between verse three and the first creation account, and past attempts to connect the “babes and sucklings” with a newly created Adam and Eve are unconvincing.³⁶ Since the psalmist is meditating on the created order, not giving a homily on Genesis 1, it is more judicious to avoid forcing every part of Psalm 8 to correspond to the Genesis 1 account. Secondly, chapter 2 argues that verse three is a programmatic excursus within Psalm 8 that describes God’s *modus operandi* in ordering creation by exalting weak and humble things. Recognizing language in verses two and four that points towards creation day four, therefore, reinforces this view. So, when reading Psalm 8 in light of Genesis 1, one finds in Ps 8:2-4 language reminiscent of Gen 1:16 (Ps 8:3, 4) woven around the “babes and sucklings” excursus.³⁷

³⁵ John H. Walton is correct to point out, however, that the thrust of Gen 1:14-19 puts the emphasis upon God’s creative activity through speaking, not through such concrete activity as manufacturing (*Genesis* [NIVAC; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001] 124-126). My point here is to note that the language of Psalm 8 more closely resembles the description of God’s creative activity on day four than it does the description of day two, not to claim that the process of creation on day four is somehow more concrete than the process of creation on day two.

³⁶ *Contra* Briggs and Briggs, *Psalms Vol. I*, 63.

³⁷ See Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 119.

Thus, reading Psalm 8:2b-4 with Genesis 1 in mind strengthens the connection between the two references to **הַשָּׁמַיִם** in verses 2 and 4 and connects both with day four of creation. Read in this way, Ps 8:2b and 4 tell and then re-tell of God’s establishment of the luminaries (=creation day four) through a chiasm:

- A. You who have set
- B. your glory
- C. upon the heavens
- (babes and sucklings excursus)
- C’. When I consider the heavens
- B’. the moon and stars,
- A’. which you have set in place

Turning, then, to Ps 8:5-7, the preceding contemplation of the heavenly bodies (Ps 8:4//day four) has lead the psalmist to consider the created glory of humans, paralleling day six of Gen 1. While **אָדָם** and **אֱלֹהִים** are the only direct verbal parallels to Gen 1:26-31 found in Ps 8:5, 6 (both occur twice in Gen 1:26 and 27), there are other clear conceptual parallels.³⁸ The psalm’s declaration that God has “made (the human) a little less than divine” (**מֵאֱלֹהִים מֵעַט תַּחְסְרֶהוּ**, Ps 8:5) parallels the declaration of Gen 1:26 that God has made humans **בְּצַלְמֵנוּ** (“in our [God’s] image”) and **כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ** (“according to our [God’s] likeness”).³⁹ Similarly, Ps 8:6 declares that God has “crowned” the human “with glory and honor” and “caused (the human) to rule” (**תַּמְשִׁילֶהוּ**) over the works of God’s hands; this parallels God’s decision to “let (the human) have dominion” (**וַיִּרְדּוּ**) over other animals and God’s command that humans are to “subdue (the earth) and have domi-

³⁸ See Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen* and James L. Mays, “The Self in the Psalms and the Image of God,” in *God and Human Dignity* (ed. R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2006).

³⁹ In Willem VanGemeren’s words: “human beings are not divine; they are in ‘the image and likeness of God’ (Gen 1:26-27). In this exalted status, he may be said to be ‘less than God’” (*Psalms* [EBC 5; Grand Rapids: Zondervan], 141).

nion over” (וּכְבֹּשֶׁה וּרְדוּ) other animals in Gen 1:26, 28. Finally, both Gen 1:26, 28 and Ps 8:8-9 elaborate on what, exactly, the human will rule with lists of animals that are similar, but not identical.⁴⁰

Within this framework, then, we can return to address the question of the role of the “babes and sucklings excursus” within this reading; what are we to make of the fact that Ps 8:3 does not seem to reflect directly the language or concepts of the first creation account while the rest of the psalm does? On the one hand, as I have already argued, it is wise to avoid forcing verse three to fit into the creation motif reflected in the rest of the psalm by making it say more than it does—e.g., by understanding the “babies and sucklings” to be either monsters of chaos vanquished at creation or an infantile Adam and Eve.⁴¹ On the other hand, reading Psalm 8 as a meditation upon creation days four and six may still yield insight for the role of verse 3 within that meditation. While the second half of the chiasm bracketing Ps 8:3 (Ps 8:4) leads the psalmist to meditate upon the role of the human, the first half of the chiasm (Ps 8:2) similarly leads towards a preliminary meditation upon the nature of humanity in the “suckling and babies” excursus. In Ps 8:2b-3, a contemplation of YHWH setting his majesty “above the heavens” leads to a meditation upon the insignificant “sucklings and babies” that wonders at how God uses them to continually maintain creation; in Ps 8:4-5, a contemplation of the heavenly night time luminaries leads to a meditation upon the comparatively insignificant Human/Child

⁴⁰ Genesis 1 rehearses the formulaic litany of דגה (“fish”), עוף (“bird”), בהמה (“beast/cattle”), and רמש (“creeping things”). the list in Psalm 8 includes בהמה and דגה, but replaces עוף with צפור, omits רמש, and adds צנה (“sheep”) and אלפים (“goats”), and (perhaps in description of the “fish”) ימים ארחות עבר (“things passing through the paths of the sea”).

⁴¹ Contra Mark S. Smith, “Psalm 8 2b-3: New Proposals for an Old Problem.” *CBQ* 59 (1997): 638-639 and Briggs and Briggs, *Psalms Vol. I*, 63.

of Humanity that wonders at how God exalts the human.⁴² Thus, it is possible to read Ps 8:3 as anticipating Ps 8:5-9 by briefly painting a picture of divine reversal through human agents that parallels the psalm's central moment of reversal in Ps 8:5-6.

Having surveyed the points of contact between the two passages, we are now in a position to consider the way in which Psalm 8 recasts the material from the first creation account. At this point, it is important to bear in mind that I am not making a case about the historical development of Psalm 8 or the creation tradition, nor am I attempting to divine the intentions of the original historical author of Psalm 8. Rather, I am exploring ways in which the two texts may be read inter-textually; by approaching the text as a canonical reader who approaches Psalm 8 with Genesis 1 as part of my "cave of resonant signification,"⁴³ I am undertaking to investigate how themes in Genesis 1 are addressed later in the canon in Psalm 8.

Significantly, while the *inclusio* points the reader to consider the entire created order, the body of the psalm then goes on to focus its attention only on two parts of that created order: the evening heavenly luminaries of day four and the human of day six. What is significant about the Psalm's focus upon these two points of the creation account? Within the structure of Gen1:1-2:3 (fig. 1), the heavenly bodies occupy a place that looks forward to the rest of the second panel (days four through six), while, as inorganic and heavenly creations, looking back towards the first panel. Furthermore, though

⁴² For a discussion of the way in which the contemplation of the heavenly bodies in Ps 8:4 relates to the declaration of the exaltation of the humans in Ps 8:5, see Jeffrey H. Tigay, "What is Man that You Have Been Mindful of Him?" in *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope* (ed. John H. Marks and R. M. Good; Guilford, CT: Four Quarters Publishing, 1987), 169-171. See also Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 108.

⁴³ John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 65; cf. Brunson, *Psalm 118*, 9-10.

day four belongs to the second panel, it is at the middle of the seven day week.⁴⁴ Similarly, the creation of humanity is the point of culmination of God's creative activity,⁴⁵ and, when humans are given dominion of the rest of creation (Gen 1:28-30//Ps 8:7-9), the account of day six recalls the creation of the cosmos that has lead up to day six. So, when the reader of Psalm 8 meditates upon the creation of the luminaries and of the human, this meditation points the reader to consider the totality of the created order as described in Genesis 1. Thus, when one reads Psalm 8 with Genesis 1 in mind, the scope of the meditation is wider than merely a meditation upon humans and the evening luminaries; these are merely two examples of the way in which YHWH makes his name great **בכל הארץ**.

Furthermore, similarities exist between the creation of the luminaries on day four and the creation of the humans on day six that stand out. Both the evening heavenly bodies and the human represent a point of filling culmination in the creation process. The luminaries are at the pinnacle of the inorganic/heavenly creations, and the humans are at the pinnacle of the organic/earthly creations. Furthermore, while Psalm 8 makes reference only to the governing function of the human vice-gerent, Genesis 1 describes the luminaries and the humans both as reigning over (**משל**) their respective domains. Thus, the psalmist alludes to two parts of creation that have similar privileged status and corresponding responsibility. In "acting as God's representative(s),"⁴⁶ they maintain order in the universe that God has ordered. Throughout chapters two and three, we have seen that Psalm 8 reflects upon the way in which God maintains his created order. The obser-

⁴⁴ See Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 7, 21-22.

⁴⁵ See Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 30-32. For a careful look at the structure of Gen 1:1-2:4a with an eye to the role that the creation of humanity plays in that structure, see Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen*, 154-167.

⁴⁶ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 33.

vation that Psalm 8 focuses its attention upon the tools that God uses to govern the cosmos reinforces this reading. When read in light of Genesis 1, then, Psalm 8 speaks to God’s concern that the entire created order be governed properly, and highlights his method of ensuring that order and governance.

The evening heavenly bodies and the human beings, however, are not exactly on the same plane in the first creation account. The account of the sixth day of creation is longer than that of any other day (7 verses), and the creation of humans dominates this section. Also, as Brueggemann notes, “the special clustering of the word ‘create’ [ברא] in [Genesis chapter one] verse 27 suggests that the text wishes to *focus on the creation of humankind*.”⁴⁷ Furthermore, after day six “the identification formula is . . . modified . . . to emphasize the perfection of the final work.”⁴⁸ Wherever one locates the culmination of the passage, day six occupies a place that is more significant than day four and the ruling function of the humans is articulated more extensively than is the ruling function of the heavenly luminaries.⁴⁹ When Psalm 8 recasts the creation material, the focus upon humanity is even more emphatic, with the human figure dominating the psalm, and the heavenly bodies taking a secondary role.⁵⁰ Thus, the two uneven meditations serve to clarify the place of the human in creation by contrasting the human with the heavenly bo-

⁴⁷ Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 31.

⁴⁸ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 34.

⁴⁹ While the heavenly luminaries are said to **משל** (“rule”) their domain, the humans, are told to **כבש**, **משל** (“subdue”) and **רדה** (“have dominion over”) their domain. Furthermore, Westermann identifies a “gradual ascent—toward the creation of human beings” (*Genesis 1-11*, 177), though Brueggemann identifies the culmination of the text as Gen 2:1-4a (*Genesis*, 35).

⁵⁰ The body of Psalm 8 has two unequal parts (Ps 8:2b-4, 5-9) which are parallel in content but unequal in weight. As already noted in chapter two, the meditation on the role of humanity in creation is introduced at the crux of the psalm (Ps 8:5-7), occupies the psalmists attention for over half of the poem (Ps 8:5-9), and is already anticipated in Ps 8:3, at the crux of the chiasm that makes up Ps 8:2-4.

dies. The psalmist's failure to mention the moon's governing function, the disproportionate emphasis upon the human ruler, and the counterintuitive observation that the human, not the moon, has "all things under his feet" all serve to humble the human reader. When the reader of Ps 8:2b, 4 is aware of the special governing role that the moon plays in Genesis 1, this heightens the feeling of reversal evoked by Psalm 8.

Westermann speaks of Genesis 1 as demythologizing ancient Near Eastern conceptions of creation by stripping the heavenly luminaries of any divinity;⁵¹ similarly, Tigay argues that, when read in light of ancient Assyrian astral worship, Psalm 8 subverts the reader's expectation by making the human, and not the moon and stars, the royal representative of the divine.⁵² Regardless of what one thinks of Westermann's view of the origins of Genesis 1 or Tigay's more tentative suggestions about a possible Assyrian setting of Psalm 8, reading Psalm 8 in light of Genesis 1 generates a trajectory that simultaneously minimizes the heavenly royalty (the luminaries) and magnifies the earthly royalty (humanity). Genesis 1 has already put the heavenly luminaries "in their place" in relation to YHWH by describing them as objects that he has set in place to serve his purposes.⁵³ Psalm 8 goes further, first by omitting the governing language that Genesis 1 had applied to the luminaries, and then by utilizing the luminaries to introduce the real ruler of creation: the human.⁵⁴ These glorious lamps of the night are not astral deities, forming the creation with their hands, as some ancient accounts of creation would have it; rather, they are the works of God's hands (Ps 8:3a). Yet, according to Genesis 1, they rule the

⁵¹ Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 127.

⁵² Tigay, "What is Man," 169-171.

⁵³ Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 127.

⁵⁴ Tigay, "What is Man," 169-171.

night sky, not as lesser divine beings, but as the instruments of YHWH, put there to establish order by marking time (Gen 1:14).

To summarize, then, when one reads Psalm 8 in light of Genesis 1, the body of Psalm 8 becomes two meditations upon the way in which YHWH establishes his ruling agents within the cosmos, as follows:

YHWH's majestic name is displayed in the creation:	
Ps 8:2b, 4: YHWH's majesty in the creation of the moon and the stars (// creation day four)	Ps 8:(3) 5-9: YHWH's majesty in the creation of humanity (// creation day six)
A reflection upon the relatively insignificant heavenly bodies.	A reflection the relatively insignificant humans.
The heavenly bodies in their exalted place by God.	The human ruler installed in its exalted place by God.
Reader's response: awe, humility.	Reader's response: awe, praise.

In the first meditation, the reader marvels at the way in which God has created lights that are but play things from the divine perspective, but unfathomably majestic rulers of the night sky, from the human perspective. In the second meditation, the marvel and wonderment is even greater, as the reader contemplates how YHWH has taken the human creature, which seems even less significant than the night sky, and made that creature his agent of order and governance. More than that, even within the human race, the most insignificant “sucklings and babies” are the agents through which YHWH chooses to continue to maintain his created governance.

Reading Psalm 8 in this way impacts upon many theological issues germane both to the interpretation of Psalm 8 and to the situation of the 21st century Church. Specifically, we have already noted that both passages highlight the human and the human's place in the created order as deserving of special attention; the question posed in Ps 8:5,

“What is the human?” is as relevant and pressing today as it has ever been.⁵⁵ Thus, this question deserves special attention for a canonical exegesis of Psalm 8. Our assessment of this question must be limited at this point for three very important reasons: 1) The literature addressing this question in light of these two passages is already copious;⁵⁶ a full assessment of all of the literature and issues involved would require more space than the limits of the present project will allow. 2) Among the literature addressing the question, some of the more fruitful work has approached the question not simply by thoroughly examining these two passages in isolation or in relation to one another, but by examining these two passages canonically in light of the broader context of Scripture, including both the Old and New Testaments.⁵⁷ 3) We have already noted that Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 both describe the world in fairly idealized terms, speaking of the world as it ought to be, while other parts of the Bible speak to the world as it is now, in far less idealized language. Thus, attempting to draw ethical conclusions about who the human is in the present chaotic world and how the human ought to act by reading Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 in isolation from the rest of Scripture could be misleading. As a result, the present study will not attempt to cull some propositional truths from Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 that one might then apply to 21st century ethical dilemmas. Rather, the study will trace a trajectory through biblical texts addressing the place of humanity in the cosmos, asking how the

⁵⁵ Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen*, 1.

⁵⁶ Studies focusing on this question and paying special attention to Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 in order to cull answers to the question include: Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen*; James Barr, “Man and Nature: The Ecological Controversy and the Old Testament,” *BJRL* 55 (1972), 9-32; Marvin E. Tate, “An Exposition of Psalm 8,” *PRS* 28 (2001): 356-359; Mays, “Self;” Marsha M. Wilfong, “Human Creation in Canonical Context: Genesis 1:26-31 and Beyond,” in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (Ed. William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 42-52. For a brief list of other literature on the issue, see Tate, “Psalm 8,” 357 n. 64.

⁵⁷ Mays, “Self;” Wilfong, “Human Creation;” Childs, “Psalm 8.”

various answers that the Old Testament gives to the question “what is the human?” relate to one another.

Nevertheless, if we are to trace such a trajectory, we must make at least some limited observations about the idealized view of humanity that emerges when one reads Psalm 8 in light of Genesis 1. Where does the ideal human fit in relation to the human’s creator and in relation to the rest of creation? In relation to the creator, Brueggemann highlights three aspects of the human’s status from Gen 1:26-31, all of which are echoed in Ps 8:5-9: 1) The humans are unique in that, in Genesis 1, they are the only creatures to whom God speaks.⁵⁸ Similarly, Ps 8:5 wonders why YHWH is mindful of (פָּקַד) and cares for (זָכַר) humans, and both verbs carry a subtle communicative element. 2) The description of humans as bearers of “the image of God (vv. 26-27) must be understood in juxtaposition to Israel’s resistance to any image of God.”⁵⁹ Only humans, not idols, can bear God’s image on earth. Furthermore, the “demythologized” status of the celestial lights in Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 emphasizes not only YHWH’s exclusive right to claim divine status, but also the exalted status of the human in the cosmology of these two texts; when compared with other ancient Near Eastern belief systems, Gen 1 and Ps 8 are exceptional in that no entities are closer to the supreme Deity (in rank or in relationship) than the human is. 3) “It is now generally agreed that the image of God reflected in human persons is after the manner of a king who establishes statues of himself to assert his sovereign rule where the king himself cannot be present . . . The image of God in the

⁵⁸ Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 31.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

human person is a mandate of power and responsibility.”⁶⁰ In this role, as Marsha Wilfong says, “humankind is, in fact, the lynchpin that holds creation together.”⁶¹

The human’s function as “lynchpin” brings us to the question of the relationship between humanity and the other creatures. Quoting Wilfong again, “humankind . . . enables God’s purpose for creation to be fulfilled, keeping chaos at bay by faithfully carrying out the task of dominion in God’s image.”⁶² In light of the authority that YHWH gives to the human “lynchpin,” Lynne White argues that Genesis 1 lies at the “historical roots of our ecological crisis.”⁶³ Genesis 1, says White, gives humans license to exploit nature for humanity’s benefit.⁶⁴ Some scholars have defended the biblical depiction of the human ruler against charges such as White’s by arguing that the ruling language of Genesis 1 (משל, כבש, and רדה) describes not militant subjugation, but rather beneficent administration.⁶⁵ How ought one to adjudicate between these two opposing viewpoints? On the one hand, Tate is correct to point out that “it is hard to escape elements of severity in the use of the verbs [משל, כבש, and רדה] in the OT.”⁶⁶ On the other hand, in the context of Genesis 1 and Psalm 8, the subjects of the human ruler seem to be the benefactors of that rule; the militant actions implied by the verbs משל, כבש, and רדה would be felt on-

⁶⁰ Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 32.

⁶¹ Wilfong, “Human Creation,” 46.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Lynne White, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis,” *Science* 155 (1967):1203-1207.

⁶⁴ According to White, “God planned all of this [creation] explicitly for man’s benefit and rule: no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man’s purposes . . . Especially in its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen” (“Historical Roots,” 1205).

⁶⁵ See Tate, “Psalm 8,” 356-358, for a brief survey of this argument.

⁶⁶ Tate, “Psalm 8,” 358.

ly by those who would seek to do harm to God's "good/טוֹב" creation. Moreover, White severely mischaracterizes the creation account when he alleges that "God planned all of [creation] explicitly for man's benefit."⁶⁷ To the contrary, the idealized description of creation in Psalm 8 depicts the human as ruling for the benefit of the created order in order to show the excellence of YHWH's name in the cosmos.

The works of Othmar Keel and Ute Neumann-Gorsolke reading Ps 8:7 in light of ancient Near Eastern iconography are insightful at this point.⁶⁸ The iconography most closely resembling Ps 8:7 is found on Neo-Assyrian seals depicting a (sometimes royal) human standing with his foot on a docile animal (caprid?) and protecting the animal against a predator.⁶⁹ Whether or not this iconography points to a Neo-Assyrian provenance for Psalm 8, these images illustrate well the nature of the relationship between the human ruler and the rest of creation; to the good creation, the human is a protector, but to the parts of creation that threaten the created order, the human is a militant threat. Is the human ruler then free to trample creation and exploit it? One must bear in mind that Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 speak of the world in idealized terms; as we shall see in what follows, in the less-than-ideal world, humans are often the threat to the created order, not its protectors. The rest of Scripture makes clear what is already implicit in Psalm 8: When humans exalt themselves rather than humbly praising YHWH as the babes and sucklings do, such humans become God's enemies (Ps 8:3). We turn, then, to consider Psalm 8 in light of two other passages of Scripture that deal with a less-than-ideal world.

⁶⁷ White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," 1205.

⁶⁸ Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (Timothy J. Hallett, trans.; New York, NY: Seabury Press, 1978), 58; Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen*, 112-121.

⁶⁹ Keel, *Symbolism*, 58, figures 60-61; Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen*, 112, figure 1.

Reading Psalm 8 in Light of Job 7 and Psalm 144

Job 7:17-18, and Ps 144:4 both explore the question “what is the human?” in ways that echo Ps 8:5. Both passages have the following elements in common with each other and with Psalm 8: 1) The speaker in the text is addressing YHWH. 2) The passage’s main clause poses the question “what is the human?” introduced by the interrogative *מה* (“what”). 3) The main clause is followed by a subordinate clause, introduced with the word *כי* (“that”), which speaks of the way in which YHWH attends to the human. 4) All three passages reflect upon the nature of the human-divine relationship.⁷⁰ According to the pattern already outlined above, the following will read Psalm 8 in light of these two passages in two stages. First, we will examine Job 7:15 and Ps 144:4 each in their respective contexts, paying attention to historical questions, and reading the discreet witness of each passage. Then, we will bring each passage in turn into dialogue with Psalm 8, examining the nature of the relationship between each passage with Psalm 8 and asking how an understanding of Job 7:17-18 (and, by extension, the book of Job) and Ps 144:4 together can inform a canonical reading of Psalm 8.

Job 7:17-18

Reading Job 7:17-18 “in itself.” Turning first to the question of the origins of the book of Job, as Pope concludes, “[t]he fact that the dates proposed by authorities, ancient

⁷⁰ George W. Coats treats the similar formula utilized by these three texts form critically (“Self-Abasement and Insult Formulas,” *JBL* 89 [1970]: 24-26). While Coats includes Job 15:14 in his discussion, This chapter does not focus upon Job 15:14, which is a less promising canon exegetical “entry point” for elucidating Psalm 8. Of the four commonalities shared by Ps 8:5, Job 7:17, and Ps 144:3, Job 15:14 only shares two; in Job 15:14, the speaker does not address YHWH, and Job 15:14 is not primarily concerned with the divine-human relationship, but with the possibility of the human being just. Furthermore, while Job 7:17 and Psalm 144:3 may very well be quoting Psalm 8:5, Job 15:14 is most likely an inner-Joban echo of Job 7:17 (so Michael Fishbane, “The Book of Job and Inner-Biblical Discourse,” in *The Voice from the Whirlwind* [ed. Leo G. Perdue and W. Clark Gilpin; Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1992], 93-95).

and modern, span more than a millennium, is eloquent testimony that the evidence is equivocal and inconclusive.”⁷¹ Furthermore, while much of 20th century scholarship tended to focus upon reconstructing the sources and development of the Book of Job,⁷² Recent scholarship has given more attention to reading the book as a unity in its final form and to the dialogic nature of the material preserved within that final form.⁷³ Once again, the canonical approach of this dissertation is in keeping with this recent trend in that it attends to the final form of the Book of Job.

Job 7:17-18 asks of YHWH: “What is humanity, that you make so much of it, and that you set your heart upon it, visit it every morning and test it every moment?” To understand this text in its literary context, I will examine Job’s question first in its broader contexts of Job 4-7 and of the entire book of Job, and then its more immediate context of Job’s speech in Job 6-7 and the final portion of that speech in Job 7:17-21.

The broader literary contexts (Job 4-7 and the book of Job). Job asks this question in the context of the latter part of Job’s second speech (Job 6-7) in the book, which he speaks in reply to the accusatory speech of Eliphaz (Job 4-5).⁷⁴ Under the inspiration

⁷¹ Marvin H. Pope, *Job* (AB C15; New York: Doubleday, 1965), xl. More recently, Douglas G. Lawrie has surveyed historical critical approaches to the book of Job. Lawrie concludes that historical critical investigations of the book of Job have failed to produce any consensus and have largely failed to curb the subjectivity of the practitioners of historical critical approaches (“How Critical is it to be Historically Critical? The Case of the Composition of the Book of Job,” *JNSL* 27[2001]:121-146).

⁷² For a survey of scholarship on the book of Job through 1993, see Carol Newsom, “Considering Job,” *CR* 1(1993):87-118.

⁷³ For a survey of scholarship on Job from 1993 to 2007, see Carol Newsom, “Re-Considering Job,” *CBR* 5(2007):155-182. Newsome notes a distinct shift during this time period from scholarship focused upon historical questions to scholarship focused upon literary and theological questions.

⁷⁴ For an assessment of the discourse between Eliphaz’s speech in Job 4-5 and Job’s speeches in Job 3 and Job 6-7, see William A. Beuken, “Job’s Imprecation as the Cradle of a New Religious Discourse: The Perplexing Impact of the Semantic Correspondences Between Job 3, Job 4-5, and Job 6-7” in *The Book of Job* (ed. William A. M. Beuken; Louvain: Leuven University Press/Peters, 1994), 41-78.

of a nighttime vision (Job 4:12-15), Eliphaz has concluded that Job's calamity (recounted in Job 1-3) is divine discipline, and that Job ought not "despise the discipline of the almighty" (Job 5:17). Job then defends himself by pleading his own innocence (Job 6-7). How, then, ought the reader to understand this interchange between Job and Eliphaz in light of the final form of the book of Job? On the one hand, as Parsons notes, the book of Job "seems to defy more than a superficial analysis;"⁷⁵ reading Job in its final form does not provide a simplistic hermeneutical solution either to understanding the book of Job or to the problematic philosophical question of theodicy. On the other hand, the final form of the book does seem to give the reader some guidance in how to adjudicate between the claims of Job and claims of his friends. The debate between Job and his friends centers around the interrelated questions of the source of Job's suffering and whether or not God reserves suffering for the wicked, and Job consistently requests an audience before God to settle these questions.⁷⁶ Thus, God's speeches at the end of the book (Job 38-41) occupy "a climactic position in the book" and play special hermeneutical importance for understanding the debate between Job and Eliphaz.⁷⁷

Yet, "[d]eciding how to characterize this divine appearance is a difficult matter that has occupied interpreters of the book since the beginning."⁷⁸ On the one hand, YHWH's climactic response to Job in chapters 38-41 have a chastening tenor, and Job responds as one chastened, saying "I am of small account" (Job 40:4) and "I despise my-

⁷⁵ Gregory W. Parsons, "The Structure and Purpose of the Book of Job," *BibSac* 138 (1981): 139.

⁷⁶ Job 9:32-35; 13:20-28; 14:13-17; 23:1-9; and 31:35-37. See Kathryn Schifferdecker, *Out of the Whirlwind: Creation Theology in the Book of Job* (HTS 61; Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 121-122.

⁷⁷ Schifferdecker, *Out of the Whirlwind*, 122.

⁷⁸ Gerald H. Wilson, *Job* (NIBC 10; Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 420.

self, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:6). On the other hand, as Wilson astutely observes, “[i]t should be clear from the outset that the fact [that] God . . . appears in response to Job’s plea for a meeting immediately puts the lie to any claims to the contrary that” Job’s “friends have made. God *does* appear in response to Job. His very appearance proves Elihu’s earlier claim false—that God will not respond to Job because he has already spoken his final word of judgment in Job’s suffering.”⁷⁹ Moreover, when God adjudicates between Job and his friends in Job 42:7-8, YHWH declares to Eliphaz, “you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has,” singling Eliphaz out while at the same time indicting Eliphaz’s companions. In the final analysis of the book, then, Job has won the exchange with Eliphaz, because God has declared Job to be in the right.

How, then, ought one to understand Job’s rather brazen question posed in 7:17-18 in light of the broader context of the book of Job and the speeches of YHWH at the end of the book?⁸⁰ If one were to read Job 7 as a stand alone poem, one might conceive of God as a petty tyrant, like the “bully” that David Hester describes:

Job’s God is . . . mean spirited, like a cosmic bully constantly picking on weaker kids, heckling, hitting, and making someone else’s life miserable, until, in the end, the victim finally disappears. Then the game is no fun any longer, since watching the victim suffer was part of its attraction.⁸¹

Yet such a view of the God of Job 7 fails to take into account the broader context of the Book of Job and the fact that YHWH has made his own voice heard in the book. In light

⁷⁹ Wilson, *Job*, 420. While Wilson speaks here specifically of Elihu’s claim that God will not respond to Job, his point is also valid for Eliphaz’s speech. For example, Eliphaz derides Job, saying “Call now; is there anyone who will answer you? To which of the holy ones will you turn?” (Job 5:1, ESV).

⁸⁰ David Robertson finds Job’s stance in Job 7:17-21 to be so bold that he believes “it is likely that most readers tend to go too far in their identification with” Job. He even describes Job’s questions as an “attack on God [that] is truly virulent” (*The Old Testament and the Literary Critic* [OTS; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1977], 40).

⁸¹ David C. Hester, *Job* (IBS; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 36.

of YHWH's harsh rebuke of Eliphaz (Job 42:7-8), the reader of the book of Job knows, even if Job does not, that Eliphaz's description of God, to which Job is responding, is not "right" (נכונה). Furthermore, the reader of the entire book of Job has insight into the ways of God that neither Job nor Eliphaz has, having been privy to the activity in the divine council in the opening scenes (Job 1), and having knowledge of the way in which YHWH will ultimately answer Job (Job 38-42). Therefore, while some consider plausible a reading of the passage that sees God as a cosmic bully, it is at least equally as plausible, in light of the context of the entire book, to read the passage as reflecting both Job's anguish and his limited knowledge of the elusive divine, so that the Joban God is inscrutable, but he is no bully.

In any case, Job's words express an honest and human anguish, and God imputes no sin to Job for asking "what is the human?" so boldly. Yet, God's majestic reply to Job in chapters 38-41 and Job's humbled response (Job 40:3-5; 42:1-6)⁸² together make the point that Job's brazen question does not baffle YHWH; rather, YHWH's response to Job's questions will silence and humble Job. At the risk of oversimplifying a very complex book, then, one can trace a narrative movement within the book wherein Job matures,⁸³ and the reader is invited to mature with him, all the while recognizing that honestly expressing one's anguish and bewilderment before God is a necessary part of that process. To quote Clines, as far as the question of suffering goes,

[t]he argument of the Book of Job is: By all means let Job the patient be your model so long as that is possible for you; but when equanimity fails, let the grief and anger of Job the impatient direct itself and yourself to-

⁸² "Job's response in ch. 42," writes William P. Brown, "presents a major crux for interpreting his transformed character" (*Character in Crisis: A Fresh Approach to the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996], 108).

⁸³ See Brown's chapter "The Reformation of Character: Job 32-42" (*Character in Crisis*, 83-119).

ward God, for only in encounter with him will be [*sic.*] the tension and suffering be resolved.⁸⁴

The Nearer Literary Contexts (Job 6-7 and Job 7:17-21). Job's response to Eli-phaz in Job 6-7 consists of two sections.⁸⁵ In the first section (Job 6), Job addresses his friends, first defending his right to lament (verses 1-13),⁸⁶ and then accusing his friends of treachery (verses 14-21).⁸⁷ In the second section (Job 7), Job addresses a lament to God, first bemoaning his woeful fate (verses 1-10),⁸⁸ and then bringing a complaint against God "in the style of [one] cross examining the plaintiff" (verses 11-21).⁸⁹ Job presents his question "what are mortals" towards the end of this lament.

Job's question introduces a final flourish of rhetoric in the climactic strophe of Job 6-7,⁹⁰ wherein Job makes his case to God that God ought to leave him alone. In verses 17-21, Job presents a plea that ironically contrasts with the pleas of the psalms of lament. First Job presents a "bitter parody of Psalm 8" that portrays God's attention as a curse, not a blessing (Job 7:17-18).⁹¹ As Pope says:

⁸⁴ Clines, *Job 1-20*, xxxix. Not all commentators would agree with Clines' summation. Newsome, for example, implies that Clines oversimplifies the message of Job ("Considering Job," 90-91).

⁸⁵ See John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 130. For a full treatment of the rhetorical development and structure of Job 6 and 7, see Pieter Van der Lugt, *Rhetorical Criticism and the Poetry of the Book of Job* (OS xxxii; New York: Brill, 1995), 80-101.

⁸⁶ Hartley, *Job*, 130-135.

⁸⁷ Hartley, *Job*, 136-141. For an alternative way for dividing Job 6, see Van der Lugt, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 80-85.

⁸⁸ Hartley, *Job*, 142-147.

⁸⁹ Hartley, *Job*, 147-153. Van der Lugt counts three strophes: verses 1-8, 9-16, and 17-21.

⁹⁰ For Job 7:17-21 as the climactic strophe of Job 6-7, see Van der Lugt, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 101.

⁹¹ Clines, *Job 1-20* (WBC 17; Dallas TX: Word, 1982), 192; cf. Paul E. Dion, "Formulaic Language in the Book of Job: International Background and Ironical Distortions" *SR* 16 (1987): 190-191.

What in happier circumstances would be regarded as providential care (cf. Pss viii, csliv 3) is here ironically presented as overbearing inquisitiveness and unrelenting surveillance. If what he has received is divine providence, Job would prefer to be spared such.⁹²

Then, Job “tak[es] the opposite attitude to that of the sufferers who speak in the Psalms” by asking that God “look away” from him where the psalms ask for God to “‘consider’ . . . or not’ hide [his] face’ . . . from them” (Job 7:19).⁹³ Then, again, Job ironically reconfigures the conventional language of the lament psalms by using the verb נָצַר (“to watch over”), which usually connotes God’s protection, to describe God instead as a “spy or scrutineer of humans” (Job 7:20).⁹⁴ Job’s ironic travesty of a lament then concludes with an aggrieved plea asking that God תַּעֲבִיר (literally “cross/pass over,” often “take away” [so NRSV, ESV], but possibly “overlook”) Job’s sin—if there could possibly be some unnoticed sin causing Job’s suffering (“[if] I have sinned”)⁹⁵—lest Job die (Job 7:20-21).⁹⁶ Having thus surveyed the discreet witness of Job 7:17-18, the next section considers Job 7:17-18 in its relationship with Psalm 8.

Job 7:17-18 in connection with Psalm 8

Job 7:17-18 and Psalm 8: Literary dependence. Turning, then, to the question of the historical relationship between Job 7:17-18 and Psalm 8:5, there is a strong scholarly

⁹²Pope, *Job*, 75.

⁹³ Clines, *Job 1-20*, 193.

⁹⁴ Clines, *Job 1-20*, 194.

⁹⁵ Norman C. Habel regards Job’s confession of sin here as “a mock plea for absolution” (*The Book of Job: A Commentary* [OTL; Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1985]).

⁹⁶ For a balanced and insightful treatment of the question of why Job speaks of his sin at this point, when he has thus far plead his innocence, see Clines, *Job 1-20*, 194-195.

consensus that recognizes Job 7:17-18 as an intentional parody of Psalm 8:5,⁹⁷ although this consensus has not gone unchallenged.⁹⁸ By placing Job 7:17-18 and Ps 8:5 side by side and underlining the points where they both use the same lexemes, the strong points of connection between the passages become visible.⁹⁹

Job 7:17-18	Psalm 8:5
<p>מִה־אֲנוֹשׁ כִּי תִגְדָּלֶנּוּ</p> <p><u>What is humankind that you magnify it,</u></p>	<p>מִה־אֲנוֹשׁ כִּי־תִזְכְּרֶנּוּ</p> <p><u>What is humankind that you are mindful of it,</u></p>
<p>וּכְבִּי־תִשִּׁית אֵלָיו לִבְדָּךְ:</p> <p><u>And that you are concerned about</u> (literally, “set your heart upon”) it,</p>	<p>וּבֶן־אָדָם כִּי תִפְקֹדֶנּוּ:</p> <p><u>And the child of humanity,</u> <u>That you care for (or “visit”) her/him?</u></p>
<p>וּתִפְקֹדֶנּוּ לְבָקָרִים לְרִגְעִים תִּבְחַנְנֶנּוּ:</p> <p><u>And you examine (or “visit”) him/her every</u> <u>morning and try him/her every moment?</u></p>	

Note that these semantic parallels reflect more than a mere use of common vocabulary, as the structure of each passage is identical; in each case, the speaker asks “what is man?” (מִה אֲנוֹשׁ, so RSV) and then continues to describe how YHWH deals with humankind in two parallel clauses introduced by כִּי followed by a second person imperfective verb form. In addition to these direct semantic parallels, Fishbane notes two more points of possible overlap. 1) Both Job 7:15 and Ps 8:7 use the verb שִׁית (תִּשִּׁית, “you set” [Job 7:15], and, שִׁתָּה “you have set,” [Ps 8:7]). 2) While Job 7:15 speaks of God making the

⁹⁷ So Pope, *Job*, 75, Clines, *Job 1-20*, 192, Wilson, *Job*, 72, Dion, “Formulaic Language,” 190-192, Fishbane, “The Book of Job and Inner-Biblical Discourse,” 87-89, and Hartley, *Job*, 151.

⁹⁸ Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, “Psalm 8.5 and Job 7:17-18: A Mistaken Scholarly Common-place?” in *The World of the Aramaeans I: Biblical Studies in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion* (JSOTSup 324; ed. P. M. Michèle Daviau, John W. Wevers and Michael Weigl; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Press, 2001), 205-215, and Coats, “Self-Abasement and Insult Formulas,” 14-26.

⁹⁹ See also Fishbane, “The Book of Job,” 87.

human great (תגדלנו, piel of גדל), Ps 8:6 says the opposite, that God has “made him/her less (ותחסרהו, piel of חסר) than divine.”¹⁰⁰ In light of the strong semantic and thematic connections, it is highly probable that one of these texts is alluding to the other.¹⁰¹

Furthermore, several factors argue for the probability that Job 7 is taking up the language of Psalm 8 in a satirical fashion. While, it is difficult to see why, in the midst of a hymnic celebration of the created order, Psalm 8 would borrow language from the book of Job, Job’s decision to allude to Psalm 8 makes sense in context; Job’s ironic reversal of the message of Psalm 8 is a most fitting introduction to the strophe (verses 17-21), and it fits in perfectly with the pattern of allusion that follows. In Job 7:17-18, Job subverts the message of Psalm 8 to make the point that, as far as Job is concerned, God’s attention is a plague. Then, as already noted above, in 7:19-21, Job subverts the language and pattern of the lament psalms by pleading for God to leave Job alone.¹⁰² Furthermore, the book of Job frequently uses irony to communicate its message, and allusions both to earlier parts of the book of Job and to other biblical texts frequently serve as the source of

¹⁰⁰ Fishbane, “The Book of Job and Inner-Biblical Discourse,” 87. Concerning this second parallel, חסר is not completely equivalent to an antonym for גדל. While the piel of גדל speaks of causing to grow, making great or powerful, and magnifying (see BDB 152), the piel of חסר only occurs in Ps 8:6 and Eccl 4:8, meaning “to cause to lack” or “to deprive oneself” (see BDB 341). Nevertheless, given the other semantic parallels, the use of the piel in both verb forms, and Job’s penchant for ironically subverting the language of the Psalms, it is not unreasonable to see Job’s use of גדל as a deliberate mockery of the psalmist’s use of חסר.

¹⁰¹ Van Leeuwen’s argument that “[s]uch shared lexemes are better explained as literary adaptations still standing close to a living, oral formula” is unconvincing (“Psalm 8.5 and Job 7.17-18,” 210). While it is true that the “what/who is A that B” formula occurs elsewhere in the ancient Near East, both inside of and outside of the Hebrew Bible (see Coats, “Self-Abasement and Insult Formulas,” 14-26), such a formula does not sufficiently explain the high level of semantic overlap between these two passages. Moreover, none of the other occurrences of the formula cited by Coats, with the possible exception of Ps 144:3, a) have the degree of semantic overlap that Job 7:17-18 has with Ps 8:5, or b) speak specifically of the question of God’s attention to humanity.

¹⁰² Clines, *Job 1-20*, 193-195.

the irony.¹⁰³ Thus, an ironic parody of Ps 8:5 fits naturally both in the broader context of Job 7 and within the entire program of the book of Job.

To summarize, then, in Job 7:17-18, Job has taken the words of the psalmist and turned them on their head. Whereas the psalmist describes YHWH as exalting the human to an almost divine status (Ps 8:6), Job complains that YHWH “make[s] so much of him” (Job 7:17, ESV). Whereas the psalmist uses the verb פקד to describe “divine visitation for the good of humans,” Job employs the same verb to speak of “divine acts of punishment” that seem to be “unwarranted harassment.”¹⁰⁴ For the one who seeks to read Psalm 8 in light of its canonical context, then, Job 7 presents a counter-point to Psalm 8 that the reader must take seriously. How, then, ought Job’s challenge to the psalmist inform a canonical reading of Psalm 8? Because a proper understanding of Job 7:17-18 is caught up with understanding the entire book of Job, the following will attend to reading Psalm 8 in light of Job 7:17-18 and the broader context of the book of Job.

Reading Psalm 8 in light of Job 7:17-18 and the book of Job. Reading Job 7 (or the entire book of Job, for that matter) reminds the reader of Psalm 8 that the world is not now as it ought to be. Bringing Psalm 8 and Job 7 into contact brings to the fore “the problem between man as a creation of God and man living life as it actually is.”¹⁰⁵ Faced with this problem, the reader of Psalm 8 is reminded by Job to avoid reading Psalm 8 in a

¹⁰³ Fishbane, “The Book of Job and Inner-biblical Discourse,” 86-98 and Dion “Formulaic Language,” 187-193. In a similar vein, see David Robertson, *The Old Testament and the Literary Critic*, 33-54. Robertson argues that irony is found even at the macro-level, where the unity of the book of Job preserves ironic diversity, such that “irony pervades the entire book and provides the decisive key to understanding its complicated theme” (34).

¹⁰⁴ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 165.

¹⁰⁵ Childs, “Psalm 8 in the Context of the Christian Canon,” *Interpretation* 23 (1969), 28.

simplistic, Eliphazesque, fashion. In the first place, Job’s ardent complaint emphasizes that the chaotic threat represented by the “enemy and avenger” (Ps 8:3) is very real. Read in isolation, Psalm 8 might seem to imply that any disorder in the cosmos is relatively minor, serving only as a plot device whereby YHWH demonstrates his glory by immediately disposing of any threat to his order. When one reads Psalm 8 in light of Job 7 and the entire book of Job, however, she remembers that chaos is often instantiated in the real world in horrific and devastating ways. Furthermore, the frankness of Job’s challenge coupled with YHWH’s affirmation that Job has “spoken properly about me” (so *Stone Edition Tanach*, אֱלֹהֵי נִכְוֹנָה, דְּבַר [תָּם], Job 42:8)¹⁰⁶ reminds the reader of Psalm 8 that an expression of grief and profound confusion is not inappropriate when faced with chaos and pain. Read in isolation, Psalm 8 might seem to indicate that the only proper response to threatening chaos is to humbly and unquestioningly “take the *name* of God on [one’s] lips” and, in so doing, obtain “a strength greater than that of God’s enemies.”¹⁰⁷ Thus, a simplistic reading of Psalm 8 might lead the reader to expect the enemies and chaos to be vanquished in short order, so long as the reader takes an unquestioning and praiseful stance. Yet, such a simplified understanding of the ways of God in the world is consonant with the views of Eliphaz and his friends, which view YHWH condemns.

The most shocking challenge, however, that Job 7 poses to Psalm 8 lies not in the mere fact that chaos poses a constant and real threat; this much is already evident in the Psalter’s lament songs. Job’s challenge to God goes one step further than the laments by

¹⁰⁶ One might argue that, even if one reads Job holistically, YHWH’s statement that Job’s friends, unlike Job “have not spoken properly about me” does not amount to a *carte blanche* approbation of everything that Job has said. Even so, it is significant that the book of Job does not portray YHWH as imputing sin to Job for his challenge.

¹⁰⁷ Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 107.

seeing God, instead of the “enemy and avenger” (Ps 8:3), as the source of Job’s pain. How does a canonical exegesis deal with such evident dissonance? In the first place, it is important to resist the temptation to overstate the nature of the dissonance, as a reading of Job 7 in the broader context of the book of Job already plays a mitigating role. As already noted above, Job’s challenge is as much a challenge to Eliphaz’s mistaken conception of YHWH as it is a challenge to YHWH himself, and the introduction (Job 1-2) makes clear that YHWH, while complicit in Job’s pain, is not the immediate cause of Job’s trouble. Indeed, the immediate cause of Job’s grief is “הַשָּׂטָן” (“the Satan” or “the adversary,” Job 1:12; 2:7-8), a figure not unlike the אֹיֵב of Ps 8:3.¹⁰⁸ Even so, though, Job’s challenge to YHWH in Job 7 brings to the fore the problem of theodicy in a shocking and visceral way, whereas the question of theodicy is latent, at best, in Psalm 8.¹⁰⁹ Even if YHWH’s role in Job’s demise is mediate at best, why does YHWH grant the requests of הַשָּׂטָן, in Job 1-2, and why does he allow the אֹיֵב וּמִתְנַקֵּם of Ps 8:3 to exist at all? Furthermore, the closest one gets to finding an answer to these questions is in the divine speeches (Job 38-41) which are so difficult to interpret that Newsome describes them as being full of “irreducible ambiguities.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Indeed, some interpreters, seizing upon the similarity in spelling between the word אֹיֵב/enemy and the name אֹיֵב/Job have argued that the entire role of the character Job in the book of Job is that of God’s enemy (see Wilson, *Job*, 18).

¹⁰⁹ To quote Samuel E. Balentine, “In the broken world of Job . . . innocent suffering calls every faith assertion into question” (“‘What are the Humans that You Make so Much of Them?’ Divine Disclosure from the Whirlwind: ‘Look at Behemoth,’” in *God in the Fray: A Tribute to Walter Brueggemann* [ed. Tod Linafelt and Timothy K. Beal; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, Fortress, 1998], 264).

¹¹⁰ Carole A. Newsom, “Job,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 4 (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 595.

How, then, does Job's complex exploration of theodicy inform a reading of Psalm 8? The fact that YHWH defends his justice in the divine speeches by speaking directly to his maintenance of the created order ought to produce humility in the reader of Psalm 8. YHWH begins his speeches by pointing to "his 'design' of the cosmos" to instill in Job a sense of the inscrutability of God's ways.¹¹¹ When reading Psalm 8 in light of Job 38-39, then, the reader is more aware that, despite the human's role as vice-gerent, ultimately YHWH, not humanity, has the prerogative to administer order. The divine speech concludes (Job 40:15-41:34) with YHWH making the point that YHWH alone, not Job, can control the Behemoth and Leviathan (לוייתן and בהמות). Insofar as these two beasts parallel the שרי בהמות and ארחת ימים of Ps 8:8, 9, Job 40-41 mitigates the seemingly pacific and symbiotic relationship between the human vice gerent and his creaturely subjects in Ps 8:8-9; the reader of Psalm 8 must bear in mind, then, that YHWH maintains the created order, and YHWH has the right to do so in inscrutable ways. The human rules only in the role of a servant of YHWH. Thus, as Jerome Creach writes, "Hubris . . . misleads many to believe that they are independent caregivers of creation. What has been given to human charge, though, is much less—only a sublease."¹¹² Furthermore, insofar as the לוייתן of Job 41 brings to mind mythical creatures of chaos,¹¹³ Job 41 reminds the reader of Psalm 8:7-9 that chaos is ever present, even within the creaturely realm that the human has been charged by YHWH to govern; there are other creatures that the human, in fact, cannot control, but YHWH can.

¹¹¹ Habel, *Job*, 530.

¹¹² Jerome F. D. Creach, *Psalms* (IBS; Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 1998), 75.

¹¹³ Pope, *Job*, 339. I do not intend to imply here that, as Pope seems to assume, Ugaritic mythology, rather than the OT canon, is the proper context for the interpretation of Job 41.

In short, the book of Job as a whole reminds the reader of Psalm 8 that God's ways are inscrutable. Therefore, the psalm's description of YHWH's program of maintaining the created order through the exultation of the relatively insignificant over and against the self-strong does not amount to an algebraic formula whereby one can predict what YHWH will do by supplying the correct variables. In this context, Job's challenge of YHWH's complicity in allowing chaos within his created order in Job 7 shows that it is legitimate for the human to express angst before God in light of God's inscrutability. As Walter Brueggemann writes, "God does not want to be an unchallenged structure, but one who can be frontally addressed."¹¹⁴

Yet, if our intention is to hear the voice of both passages in order to forge a canonically informed understanding of the theological themes of Psalm 8, one more question of vast import remains: What, then *is* the human? A beleaguered creature who is mere *הבלי* who would be better off without the deity's attention, as per Job? A relatively insignificant creature who has been endowed with imaginable honor, as per the psalmist? Or something else altogether? In response to this question, the reader must bear in mind that Job 7:17-18 reflects Job's human perspective, a perspective that is skewed by the influence of Eliphaz's bad theology, and the perspective of the implied author mitigates Job's description; Psalm 8, on the other hand, as a reflection upon the creation account, speaks to God's activity in the world, and, as such, reflects what God has done from God's perspective.¹¹⁵ Yet, this does not negate the tension that arises when considering

¹¹⁴ Walter Brueggemann, "A Shape for Old Testament Theology, II: Embrace of Pain," *CBQ* 47 (1985): 401.

¹¹⁵ Or, at the very least, from the perspective of the implied narrator of Genesis 1, which, as both canonical literature and the introduction to the canon, reflects the divine perspective.

Job's reflection upon the human within the chaotic world as it is in tandem with the psalmist's reflection upon the ordered world as it ought to be. Thus, it is possible to trace a trajectory from the world as it was at creation (Genesis 1) and ought now to be (Psalm 8) to the world as it is, often in chaos (Job 7). To further develop the trajectory and bring clarity to the question "what is the human?" we now turn to consider another passage. Having already considered Pss 8 and 144 in connection with the role of Psalm 8 in the shape of the Psalter in chapter three, we now take up Psalm 144 again.

Psalm 144:3-4

Reading Psalm 144:3-4 "in itself." The date of Psalm 144 is so uncertain that, in one single breath, Terrien posits that it could be either a pre-exilic "royal canticle composed for a king of the Davidic dynasty," or a Persian era eschatological meditation upon "the story of David from Bethlehem."¹¹⁶ The difficulty involved in assigning a date to the psalm is related to the apparent diversity of material within the psalm, with verses 1-11 expressing a prayer for the Davidic king, and verses 12-15 expressing a prayer for the nation.¹¹⁷ While it is not unreasonable to conclude that Ps 144:1-11 represents an early, pre-exilic royal psalm that has been augmented by the communal prayer in verses 12-15,¹¹⁸ this study focuses upon reading the final form as a unity. Therefore, it is

¹¹⁶ Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (ECC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 901.

¹¹⁷ Thus, Herman Gunkel concludes that Ps 144:1-11 and Ps 144:12-15 are two different poems (*Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*, James D. Nogalski, trans. [MLBS; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998], 99, 230, 246), and Franz Delitzsch takes the same view in the 19th century (*Commentary on the Psalms, Volume III* [Edinburgh, UK: T & T Clark, 1871], 379, 382-383). Others, however, such as Terrien (*Psalms*, 901) and Hans-Joachim Kraus (*Psalms 60-150*, Hilton C. Oswald, trans. [ACC; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993], 541) regard Psalm 144 as a unity.

¹¹⁸ Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 100-150* (WBC 21; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 290.

important to note that, in light of the use of late vocabulary in Ps 144:12-15 (e.g., רָא , “kind,” in verse 13 and the relative prefix -שֶׁ in verse 15),¹¹⁹ it is most likely that the psalm as we now have it derives from the post-exilic era. While our focus here is not upon the psalm’s precise historical origins, noting that the final form of this psalm has such a late provenance (for a royal Psalm) is important in one regard: the final form of Psalm 144 most likely reflects an eschatological meditation upon “the story of David from Bethlehem.”¹²⁰

Turning, then, to reading the psalm as a unity, Terrien’s strophic analysis demonstrates that, despite the possibility that Ps 144:1-11 has been augmented by Ps 144:12-15, “a remarkable symmetry characterizes the entire poem.”¹²¹ Thus, while Psalm 144 contains elements commonly found in various genres, including possible wisdom elements (Ps 144:3-4), royal elements (Ps 144:1-11), and thanksgiving elements (Ps 144:12-15),¹²² these diverse elements cohere together as a unified royal prayer. Together, the two major sections of the psalm address “the need for God to act (a royal lament, vv. 1-11) and the resultant blessings of his actions (a psalm of blessing, vv. 12-15).”¹²³

In the broader context of Psalm 144, verses 3-4 pose the question “מַה־אֲדָרָם / what is the human?” after the psalm’s opening praise (Ps 144:1-2) and before the psalm’s petition for YHWH to intervene on behalf of the Davidic king (Ps 144:5-11). The martial

¹¹⁹ See Allen, *Psalms 100-150*, 290.

¹²⁰ Terrien, *Psalms*, 901.

¹²¹ Terrien, *Psalms*, 898.

¹²² See Allen, *Psalms 100-150*, 289-291, Terrien, *Psalms*, 898.

¹²³ Van Gemenen, *Psalms*, 982. See also Kraus, who regards the petition of Ps 144:12-15 as “a resumption of the petition from vv. 7 ff.” (*Psalms 60-150*, 541).

and royal imagery of verses 1-2 and 5-11 suggest a king's prayer to "God before a decisive combat."¹²⁴ Embedded in the prayer for help of verses 5-11 is a promise of praise to YHWH for the anticipated deliverance (verses 9-10), and a prayer for divine blessing upon the entire nation rounds out the psalm (verses 12-15). How, then, does the brief meditation upon "the transitoriness of the human being"¹²⁵ in Ps 144:3-4 fit in with the internal development of the thought of the psalm?¹²⁶ While we will explore this question more fully below, a brief answer is in order at the outset: When Psalm 144 is read as a unity, Ps 144:3-4 serves to transition from the praise that precedes to the petition that follows in two ways: 1) These verses demonstrate that the royal petitioner is humble, not self-strong, and, therefore, worthy of the divine intervention that he is about to ask for; 2) These verses remind YHWH that YHWH does, indeed, "regard" the human and "think of" the child of humanity, in order to motivate YHWH to take the following petition seriously, despite the transient nature of the human (verse 4).¹²⁷ Thus, while Ps 144:3-4 does not present a view of the human's role in creation that is quite as optimistic as that of Psalm 8,¹²⁸ one should not conclude that Psalm 144 gives a completely negative answer to the question "what is the human?" After all, the psalm proclaims of YHWH that "you regard" (תדעוהו) and "think of" (תחשבהו) the human, and the psalmist hopes and

¹²⁴ Delitzsch, *Psalms III*, 378.

¹²⁵ Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 542.

¹²⁶ "The questions of the fragility of human life" in this context, writes Terrien, "seem at first to constitute a *non-sequitor*" (*Psalms*, 898).

¹²⁷ The royal speaker's realization of his frailty in verses 3-4 stands "[i]n significant contrast to v. 2," on the one hand, and introduces the petitions that follow, on the other (*Psalms 60-150*, 542).

¹²⁸ Creach, *Psalms*, 74.

expects YHWH to protect (verses 1-2), rescue (verses 10-11) and bless (verses 12-15) humans.

Psalm 144:3-4 and Psalm 8: Literary dependence. How, then, does Ps 144:3-4 relate to Psalm 8? While commentators do not tend to make much of the semantic overlap between Ps 144:3-4 and Ps 8:5,¹²⁹ Coats believes that “Ps 144:3 looks more like a conscious imitation of Ps 8:5 than does Job 7:17.”¹³⁰ Once again, placing Ps 144:3 and Ps 8:5 side by side and underlining the points where their vocabulary overlaps illustrates the strong connection between the two passages:¹³¹

Psalm 144:3	Psalm 8:5
יְהוָה מִה־אָדָם וַתִּדְעֶהּ׃	מִה־אֲנוֹשׁ כִּי־תִזְכְּרֶנּוּ׃
O LORD, <u>what is humanity</u> that you regard it,	<u>What is humankind</u> that <u>you</u> are mindful of it,
בֶּן־אֲנוֹשׁ וַתַּחֲשְׁבֶהּ׃	וּבֶן־אָדָם כִּי תִפְקֹדֶנּוּ׃
or the <u>child of humankind</u> that you think of <u>him</u> ?	<u>And the child of humanity,</u> <u>That you care for (or “visit”)</u> her/him?

At first glance, one might question whether Coats overestimates the connections between the two psalms; the כִּי element, common to both Ps 8:5 and Job 7:17, is missing in Ps 144:3, and Ps 144:3 and Ps 8:5 do not use the same verbs. Yet, Ps 144:3 contains six striking similarities with Ps 8:5: 1) Both psalms ask “what is the human” and “child of the human,” twice in two parallel lines. 2) Both psalms introduce the question with the interrogative מִה־. 3) Though Ps 144:3 reverses the order of אָדָם and אֲנוֹשׁ, both psalms

¹²⁹ Kraus (*Psalm 60-150*, 542), Terrien (*Psalms*, 899), and Van Gemeren (*Psalms*, 984) all restrict themselves to a brief “c.f. Ps 8:5.” In Thorne Wittstruck’s extensive bibliography on the book of Psalms, he does not include a single entry addressing the relationship between Pss 8 and 144 (*The Book of Psalms, an Annotated Bibliography* [2 vols.; New York, NY: Garland Publishing, 1994]).

¹³⁰ Coats, “Self Abasement and Insult Formulas,” 26.

¹³¹ See also Fishbane, “The Book of Job,” 87.

use the same three lexemes to describe the human (בן, אדם, and אנוש). 4) Both psalms modify the two parallel questions about humanity with two parallel dependent clauses describing YHWH's attention to humanity. 5) These dependent clauses contain second person singular imperfective verb forms, which 6) are augmented with a third person singular suffix.¹³²

Yet, one might argue that these points of overlap alone are not enough to establish an allusion between the two passages.¹³³ Nevertheless, there are other signs beyond these lexical and semantic parallels which may indicate that Psalm 144 is reworking material from Psalm 8. First of all, Psalm 144, as is widely recognized, reworks the material of Psalm 18 (which is, itself, very similar to David's song in II Samuel 22).¹³⁴ The psalmist's willingness to utilize material from at least one other psalm makes it more likely that the overlap between Ps 8:5 and Ps 144:3 is also the result of an intentional reworking of older material gleaned from Psalm 8. Furthermore, the strongest points of semantic overlap between Pss 144 and 18 are in verses 1-2 and 5-8. The psalmist, then, briefly departs from his meditation upon Psalm 18 precisely at the point where his language overlaps with the language of Psalm 8. Also, while questions of dating are particularly problematic and are not the focus of this dissertation, Psalm 144, in its final form, contains post-exilic vocabulary,¹³⁵ but Psalm 8 contains vocabulary that some scholars believe

¹³² See Coats, "Self Abasement and Insult Formulas," 26.

¹³³ Van Leeuwen argues that the similarities of vocabulary in Psalm 8, Job 7, and Psalm 144, arise from the common use of the same form, not from any form of literary dependence, "Psalm 8.5 and Job 7:17-18."

¹³⁴ See Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 541. The following verses contain varying degrees of semantic overlap: Ps 144:1//Ps 18:32, 35; Ps 144:2//Ps 18:3, 48; Ps 144:5//Ps 18:10; Ps 144:6//Ps 18:15; Ps 144:7//Ps 18:17, 45-46; Ps 144:10//Ps 18:51.

¹³⁵ Allen, *Psalms 100-150*, 290.

parallels Ugaritic usage.¹³⁶ Thus it could very well be that Psalm 8 is of greater antiquity than Psalm 144. If so, the odds that Psalm 144 is drawing upon Psalm 8 (or at least some pre-canonical form of Psalm 8) increase.¹³⁷

Finally, the broader context of Psalm 144 contains two other indicators that Ps 144:3-4 is a meditation upon Ps 8:5-9: 1) more subtle instances of semantic overlap between other parts of Psalm 144 and Psalm 8, and 2) a sense of “satisfaction,” wherein reading Ps 144:3-4 as an allusion to Ps 8:-9 makes good exegetical sense in light of the rest of Psalm 144.¹³⁸ I will highlight both the instances of overlap and the sense of satisfaction by briefly proffering a reading of Psalm 144 in light of Psalm 8. While not all readers will be equally convinced of an intentional allusion here, it is helpful to bear in mind that the ultimate goal of this dissertation is to read the text canonically; so, reading Psalm 144 in light of Psalm 8 is justified canonically, given the position of the two psalms in the Psalter, even if the author of Psalm 144 did not intend to allude to Psalm 8.

We begin, then, by investigating the way in which the psalmist has woven allusions to Psalm 18/II Samuel 22 around this allusion to Psalm 8. If the questions posed in Ps 144:3-4 do not allude to Ps 8:5, they “seem at first to constitute a *non-sequitor*,”¹³⁹ deviating from both the psalmist’s topic of prayer before battle and the psalmist’s medita-

¹³⁶ Wenceslaus M. Urassa, *Psalm 8 and its Christological Re-Interpretations in the New Testament Context: An Inter-Contextual Study in Biblical Hermeneutics* (EUS 23:577; New York: Peter Lang, 1998), 32.

¹³⁷ Richard Hays lists “availability” as one of his seven criteria for establishing an allusion in *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1989).

¹³⁸ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 31. “Satisfaction” is the seventh of Hays’ seven criteria for an allusion. While “satisfaction” as a stand-alone criterion is quite subjective and cannot establish an echo, taken in connection with the other six criteria, it can provide a helpful check for determining whether an allusion is real or imagined.

¹³⁹ Terrien, *Psalms*, 898.

tion upon Psalm 18. Yet, read as a reflection upon Psalm 8, verses 3-4 make sense in context in that they point the reader to consider YHWH's promise to intervene against the enemy and avenger (Ps 8:3) to maintain the created order. Furthermore, it makes sense that Psalm 144, when focusing upon the individual king, quotes from Psalm 18 (a royal psalm associated very strongly with David himself both through the historical superscription [Ps 18:1] and the close relationship between Psalm 18 and II Samuel 22), and then when focusing upon humanity in general, quotes from Psalm 8. Thus, when the allusions to Psalm 8 and Psalm 18 are brought together, they explore the relationship between corporate humanity and the Davidic monarch. On the one hand, Ps 144:3-4 reminds the reader that the king himself is a "mere mortal" who must humble himself before God. Yet, an allusion to Psalm 8 here, spoken thus by the ideal/eschatological Davidic king, does not indicate a democratizing triumph of king Adam over king David. The allusion to Psalm 8 in verses 3-4 follows directly upon the king's proclamation that YHWH "subdues peoples [or "my people"]¹⁴⁰ under me (תַּחְתִּי)" (Ps 144:2; cf. Ps 18:48//II Sam 22:48) echoing the declaration that God "has placed all things under (תַּחַת)" the human's feet (Ps 8:7). On the other hand, these verses, when read as an allusion to Psalm 8, point out that God's king is YHWH's tool for establishing order among humans in order to establish order in creation. If humans play a "lynchpin" role in relation to the rest of creation, the idealized king has a "lynchpin" role to play in relation to the rest of humanity.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Whether one reads עַמִּים (Dead Sea Scrolls, Jerome, Syriac, and Aquila), or עַמִּי (MT) is of little consequence here. See Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 287, note 2c.

¹⁴¹ Wilfong, "Human Creation," 46.

There are three other instances of semantic overlap between Pss 8 and 144 which are so subtle that they do not constitute a clear allusion, yet may inform how one reads Psalm 144 in light of Psalm 8 and, taken together, increase the probability that Psalm 144:3 is an echo of Psalm 8:5. First, in Ps 144:11 the king prays to be rescued from his enemies “whose mouths (פיהם) speak lies.” Read in light of Ps 8:3, this serves to heighten the contrast between the enemies of the Davidic king, who misuse their mouths, and the humble children and infants who stop the enemy through the proper use of their mouths. Read in light of Ps 8:3, then, Psalm 144 recalls an ideal Davidic figure and thus creates anticipation for a messianic royal figure that will simultaneously humbly identify with the babies and sucklings and militantly decimate YHWH’s enemies.

The final two instances of semantic overlap come in verses 13-14, where the psalmist prays for YHWH’s blessing upon Israel’s sheep (צאִינָנוּ) and cattle (אֱלֹרְפִינֹו), both of which appear in the list of animals in Ps 8:8. Thus, whether or not there is an intentional allusion here, we find two semantic connections between the *dénouement* of Psalm 8 and the *dénouement* of Psalm 144. When reading Psalm 144 in light of Psalm 8, the Davidic lynchpin of Psalm 144 parallels the corporate Adamic lynchpin of Psalm 8. Within the internal movement of Psalm 144, the Davidic monarch prays first for his own triumph over his enemies (verses 1-11), then for divine blessing within his kingdom (verses 12-15); a king whose rule is secure can then attend to domestic prosperity and order. This mirrors the movement of Psalm 8, which moves towards a contemplation of the installation of the divine vice-gerent, king אֲדָם (Ps 8:5-6) and then resolves in a description of the order of king Adam’s reign. Thus, while Psalm 144:12-15, read by itself, asks for God to bless the king’s human subjects (who are to benefit from the full grana-

ries and bountiful livestock), when one reads Psalm 144 in light of Psalm 8, the prayer that humans might be blessed becomes a prayer that the entire created order might flourish. In sum, then, when one reads Psalm 144 in light of Psalm 8, the Davidic king becomes God's instrument for ordering corporate humanity, so that corporate humanity might then become God's tool for ordering the rest of the created order.

Reading Psalm 8 in Light of Psalm 144. Since the preceding reading has already examined in depth the points of contact between Pss 8 and 144, this section will only briefly touch on one key question pertaining to the hermeneutical influence that Psalm 144 plays upon a canonical reading of Psalm 8: How does the answer that Psalm 144 presents for the question "what is the human?" stand in tension and in continuity with the way in which Psalm 8 approaches that same question, and how do these points of tension and continuity inform one's reading of Psalm 8? First of all, as we have already noted, Psalm 144 presents a less optimistic answer than that of Psalm 8, and, as a result, poses a subtle challenge to Psalm 8. The distinct emphases of Psalm 144 remind the reader of Psalm 8 that the human's place in the created order is less than ideal.¹⁴² Rather, not only does chaos threaten through the militant activity of Israel's enemies (Ps 144:7-8, 11), but also the human is faced with a fleeting frailty (Ps 144:3-4) and desperately needs to call out to YHWH for help (Ps 144:5-11). Furthermore, insofar as Psalm 144, a meditation upon the Davidic king written in the Persian Era and situated in the Psalter after Psalm 89, implicitly recalls the downfall of the Davidic line, the reader of Psalm 144 remembers that the Davidic monarch is also ephemeral.

¹⁴² Jerome F. D. Creach, *Psalms* [IBS; Louisville: Geneva, 1998], 74-75.

Yet, one must be careful not to overstate the contrast between the two passages.¹⁴³ In many ways, Ps 144:3-11 has a thrust that runs parallel to Ps 8:5-6. In Ps 144:5-11, the psalmist is hoping for a reversal not unlike the reversal of Ps 8:5. When the speaker of Psalm 144 acknowledges that humanity is “like a breath,” the king (or the psalmist on the king’s behalf) acknowledges his relative insignificance, placing himself in a position to experience the exaltation of YHWH over and against his enemies, a subversive reestablishment of order on the part of YHWH. In this way, when one reads Psalm 8 in light of Psalm 144, she is reminded that God responds to humble human prayers in order to “establish strength because of his foes” (Ps 8:3), even if the human must engage in the prolonged struggle of battle and the unseemly study of war (Ps 144:1) to see that strength established. Furthermore, as a meditation upon God’s activity on behalf of David, the positive thrust of Psalm 144 does not ultimately leave the reader in a state of despair, as does Psalm 89. Rather, it encourages the reader to hope that YHWH may yet act on behalf of the Davidic line to restore the “shoot from the stump of Jesse” (Isa 11:1, RSV).

In short, of the three passages that ask “what is the human,” Psalm 144 stands between the two poles of the idealized world of Psalm 8 and the tortured world of Job in Job 7. How, then, do these passages relate with the rest of the Tanakh, including the creation account of Gen 1:1-2:3? What does this all mean for a biblical concept of anthropology? And how, if at all, does this anthropology relate to the New Testament’s willingness to identify Jesus as the “Son of Man?” In order to tie together these various passages in an integrative way that gives a canonical exegesis of Psalm 8 in its Old Testa-

¹⁴³ Creach’s conclusion that Psalm 144 stands “in stark contrast to the more positive view of humanity in Psalm 8” is a bit of an overstatement (*Psalms*, 74).

ment context, this chapter will conclude by briefly reversing the interpretive influence and considering the rest of the Tanakh in light of Psalm 8.

*Reversing the Dialectic: Reading the Old Testament in Light of Psalm 8*¹⁴⁴

We return, now, to the very beginning to look, once again, at Genesis 1. As noted above, Psalm 8 and Genesis 1 occupy a similar space conceptually, insofar as Genesis 1 speaks of an ideal original human state at creation, and Psalm 8 presents the continuing maintenance of creation in a way that almost idealizes the role of the human. Yet, when one turns to read Genesis 1 in light of Psalm 8, several subtle shifts already qualify the ideal image of humanity in Genesis one. In addition to the mention of the (evidently human) enemies in verse three, Psalm 8 emphasizes the relative insignificance of humans in a way that Genesis 1 does not; Psalm 8 asks, in humbled awe, “what is the human,” and, in asking the question, Ps 8:5 sets אָדָם in a parallel relationship with the word אֱנוֹשׁ, which carries a strong connotation of frailty and often appears in the Psalter in contexts emphasizing human mortality and weakness.¹⁴⁵

The reminder of frailty in Psalm 8 is consonant with the literary context that follows the first creation account. A shift begins with Gen 2-3 (the “story of the fall” or “Eden narrative,” typically identified as “J” or “non-P” material), which contains a second account of creation (Gen 2:4-24) followed by the story of humanity’s disobe-

¹⁴⁴ The title of this section is a direct quote from Childs, “Psalm 8,” 31. Childs is speaking here of the dialectic between the Old Testament witness and the New Testament witness. Nevertheless, the canonical movement, wherein one part of the canon is read in light of another and vice versa, still applies here.

¹⁴⁵ It is likely that this word is related to the verb אָנַשׁ (“to be weak, sick”). See BDB, 60 and Claus Westermann, “אָדָם ’adam person,” in *The Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament, vol. 1* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 33.

dience and “fall.”¹⁴⁶ Together, Genesis 1 and 2 describe a “picture of the world” in its “sublime” created state,¹⁴⁷ while Genesis 3 envisions the disruption of this sublimity as man, woman, and serpent defy God and suffer the consequences of this defiance. Gen 1-3 constitute the first of several cycles that make up the primeval history recounted in Gen 1-11. In each cycle, humanity experiences grace (often accompanied by an act of creation), but then rebels, faces God’s judgment, and experiences grace again.¹⁴⁸ Genesis 1-2, read in isolation, only intimate the potential of chaos through the oblique use of the words *תהו ובהו* in Gen 1:2. In Gen 1-11, however, chaos, not creative order, comes to the fore.¹⁴⁹ Gowan summarizes the canonical thrust of Genesis 1-11 beautifully: “In brief, these chapters depict movement from a world none of us has ever known toward the” world that we now know.¹⁵⁰ “In the world we have *not* known,” writes Gowan, “everything is all right, in accord with the will of God. In the real world, some things are all right, but dissension, oppression, violence, and pain also abound.”¹⁵¹ Read in light of Psalm 8, then, Genesis 1-11 give an account of the origins of the tension felt in Psalm 8 between the exalted human who maintains order and the human enemy who constantly

¹⁴⁶ For a recent, thorough treatment of the Eden Narrative in light of ancient Near Eastern parallels, see Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative: A Literary and Religio-Historical Study of Genesis 2-3* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007).

¹⁴⁷ Moberly, *The Theology of the Book of Genesis*, 42. Moberly speaks here only of Genesis 1.

¹⁴⁸ See Mann, *The Book of the Torah*, 10-29.

¹⁴⁹ As Childs notes, the words *תהו ובהו* already introduce “the troubling presence of the chaos” (*Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986], 222-223). Nevertheless, the problem of living “life under threat” is not a prominent part of the narrative until Genesis 3.

¹⁵⁰ Donald E. Gowan, *From Eden to Babel: A Commentary on Genesis 1-11* (ITC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 3. See also Terence E. Fretheim, *Creation, Fall, and Flood: Studies in Genesis 1-11* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing, 1969).

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

undermines the order. As the biblical drama moves from what was to what is, “the picture of humanity” becomes “that of a fractured and flawed race. The corporate humanity crowned with glory and honor and ordained to dominion over other creatures [Ps 8:5-9] is distorted.”¹⁵²

Thus, if one reads the book of Genesis and the Torah “from the beginning,” Genesis 1 plays an important role in the context of the broader narrative; one might say that Genesis 1 and 2 together play a role within the book of Genesis and the Pentateuch similar to the role of the orientation psalms of the Psalter. Genesis 1 and 2 inaugurate history itself and remind readers that “the world was not always as it is now.”¹⁵³ They describe how the world ought to be, even if the rest of the narrative describes the chaotic world as it is. This description creates a longing in the reader for the lost world of Genesis 1, and every act of grace, of new creation, of deliverance, or of blessing in the following narrative is a gesture toward the recovery of the paradise that has been lost.

Among the two other entry points surveyed above, Job 7:17-18 has its feet most firmly planted in the realm on this side of Genesis 1-11, describing life as we know it in its most brutal state. If we are to trace a trajectory through the ways in which the Old Testament Scriptures address the question “what is the human?” Psalm 8 occupies a space that simultaneously overlaps with Genesis 1 and with Job 7. In contrast with Genesis 1, Psalm 8 does not speak of the world as it was in a lost, idealized, primeval state, but of God’s continuing maintenance of the created order. Yet, neither does Psalm 8 speak of things as they are now (certainly not when they are at their worst, as Job does); as an

¹⁵² Mays, “Self,” 34. Mays is speaking here of reading Psalm 8 in the context of the petitions of the Psalter.

¹⁵³ Walton, *Genesis*, 65.

orientation psalm it speaks of things as they *ought to be* now, and thus it resembles Genesis 1, not the book of Job. Thus, Psalm 8 carries forward the hope that the lost world of Genesis 1-2 might be restored in two significant ways: 1) In terms of canonical shape, whether the arrangement is Jewish, Orthodox, Catholic, or Protestant, Psalm 8 places a reflection upon the created order as it was intended to be late in the canon, even after the rise, fall, and exile of God's chosen people has been recounted. 2) More importantly, the psalm's ability to overlap simultaneously with the known world and with the ideal world at creation re-energizes the lost world of Genesis 1-2 in the mind of the reader.

Following upon the bleak cycle of sin and rebellion in Gen 3-11, a new movement begins in YHWH's covenant with Abraham that is more hopeful and hints at the possibility that the lost world will be restored, and other similar covenants punctuate the Tanakh.¹⁵⁴ Because the purpose of this dissertation is to offer a canonical exegesis of Psalm 8, not to articulate a comprehensive Old Testament theology, I will limit my focus here to the one covenant that has already occupied our attention in this chapter and in chapter three: the Davidic covenant. Having considered a) the discussion concerning the tension between king Adam and king David in the shape of the Psalter and b) the reading of Psalm 144 in light of Psalm 8 above, how does an understanding of Psalm 8 influence the way in which the canonical reader encounters the Davidic covenant?

First of all, when reading the biblical story of the rise and fall of the Davidic Monarchy in the books of Kings and Chronicles in light of Psalm 8, the human (בן־אדם/אנוש) becomes a paradigm for the way in which YHWH desires to use the Davidic kings to maintain order in the cosmos (cf. Ps 2:7-9; II Sam 7:9-16). The Davidic kings are to

¹⁵⁴ Among the most prominent are the Abrahamic (Gen 12; 15), Mosaic (Exodus 19-20), Davidic (II Samuel 7), and New (Jeremiah 11) Covenants.

side with the humble infants of Ps 8:3, and then they will experience divine reversal on their behalf (cf. Ps 7:15-16). Read in this way, then, insofar as the description of the human in Psalm 8 evokes in the mind of the reader the first human in Genesis 2, the prelapsarian Adam becomes a figure for the ideal David. Yet, the reader of Psalm 8 knows that humans also have the potential to be enemies of YHWH (Ps 8:3). The reader of the Old Testament also knows that Adam (Genesis 3), David (II Samuel 11), and the Davidic line (2 Kings 25, Psalm 89) will all fail and even find themselves acting as enemies of YHWH at times. When read in light of a more pessimistic passage, such as Job 7, this pattern of failure could lead the reader to believe that the human is destined to side with the enemies of YHWH, and to ask with Eliphaz, “what are mortals that they can be clean . . . or that they can be righteous?” (Job 15:14, NRSV).

Yet, read in light of Psalm 8, this pattern of human failure does not lead to despair, but rather to hope. King YHWH ultimately maintains order, despite the threat of chaos and failure. The question becomes, then, how can YHWH maintain order when his appointed ruling agent consistently fails and often becomes an enemy? In this way, David becomes something of a figure for Adam, as the question of how YHWH will deal with the failure of the Davidic line becomes a microcosm of the question of how YHWH will deal with the failure of humanity in general. We have already seen that the shape of the Psalter addresses the former question in a two-fold way, by leaving hope that YHWH will once again reinstate David (Psalm 144) while at the same time shifting its emphasis toward king YHWH and away from human kings (Ps 146:3-5).

At this point, Paul Noble’s suggestion that canonical exegesis adopt a “new typology” may be helpful in terms of understanding the diversity of Old Testament litera-

ture.¹⁵⁵ Noble urges that readers of the canon look for narrative patterns occurring in one context and reappearing in another in order to understand one canonical narrative in light of another. Here, I submit that perhaps the broadest pattern possible runs across the Hebrew Bible, regardless of the ordering of the books: that of the conflicted and conflicting human. Again and again, humans such as Adam, Moses, and David follow the same pattern. Such individuals have the potential to be YHWH's agent for order, and, at times, even fulfill this ordering and ruling task. Yet, these same characters fail to live up to this potential, and they are banished from paradise (Gen 3:24), denied entry into the Promised Land (Deut 32:48-52), and stricken by the judgment of YHWH (II Sam 12, 24). The type of the conflicted and conflicting human is even visible at the corporate level in the story of the rise and fall of the Davidic line and in the Israelites' inability to keep the Mosaic covenant (Deut 31:14-29, Jer 31:32). Among these depictions of humans and their plight, the depictions of Adam and Eve, David, and the Davidic line all have special significance for Psalm 8 in light of its literary context (the Psalter, which meditates upon the Davidic line), superscription (לְדָוִד), and content (a meditation upon the human/בֶּן-אָדָם).

In summary, the location of Psalm 8 in the context of the Old Testament is best understood in light of the intersection of two trajectories in the broader story: 1) The reversal motif, as distinctly presented in Psalm 8, and 2) the ongoing plight of the humans and humanity, as developed throughout the Hebrew Bible. In the reversal motif of Psalm 8, God maintains the created order by taking relatively insignificant things and exalting them in surprising ways, especially by exalting the בֶּן-אָדָם/אָנוּשׁ to the status of vice-

¹⁵⁵ Paul R. Noble, *The Canonical Approach: A Critical Reconstruction of the Hermeneutics of Brevard S. Childs* (BIS 16; New York: E. J. Brill, 1995), 314-322.

gerent. In the context of the Tanakh, the reversal motif intersects the story of the conflicted and conflicting human, who, on the one hand, is YHWH's chosen agent of rule (Gen 1-2, Ps 8:3a, 5-9), but, on the other hand, has rebelled against God from the start (Gen 3), so that he finds himself on the side of YHWH's enemies (Ps 8:3b), often beset by trouble (Job 7:17-21), and acutely aware of his mortality (Ps 144:4).

In its Old Testament context, then, Psalm 8 serves as a perpetual reminder that God will, in the midst of disorder and human failure, reestablish cosmic order by exalting seemingly insignificant things, even if the human finds herself engulfed in chaos or at enmity with YHWH. This hope and expectation points the Christian reader of the Old Testament towards the New Testament. Indeed, the central affirmation of the Christian faith is that God has dealt with human failure in the person and work of Jesus, the Messiah, who sits on the throne and says "behold, I am making all things new" (Rev 21:5). Therefore, having heard the witness of Psalm 8 in the context of the Tanakh, we turn now to consider the poem in light of the New Testament witness.

CHAPTER FIVE

Psalm 8 and the New Testament

Having examined Psalm 8 and its central question “what is the human” in its Old Testament context, we are now in a position to consider Psalm 8 in connection with the witness of the New Testament. This chapter will examine four passages which cite or echo the language of Psalm 8: Matt 21:1-17, 1 Cor 15:20-28, Eph 1:15-22, and Heb 2:5-9. The chapter will proceed in a manner similar to that of the previous one. Each passage will be considered in turn, reading the passage “in itself,” first situating the verses under consideration within their literary context, and then exploring the way in which each passage interprets and applies Psalm 8. Then, I will bring the message of each passage to bear upon a canonical understanding of Psalm 8 by asking how one might interpret Psalm 8 in light of each passage. After considering each of these four passages in turn, the chapter will conclude by synthesizing the results of the survey.

One question will impose itself upon every section of this chapter: How do the New Testament authors use and interpret the Old Testament? Much literature has already attended to this question, often paying special attention to the way in which the New

Testament applies passages from the Old Testament to Jesus.¹ Because this question has a direct bearing upon how one reads each passage “in itself,” I will present my own view concerning the way in which each author is appropriating Psalm 8. Yet, the reader must bear in mind that the purpose of this dissertation is not to argue for a given view on the question of the New Testament’s use of the Old Testament, nor is the ultimate end to present a thorough and final answer to every historical and authorial question raised by the text. Rather, this dissertation intends to articulate a canonical exegesis of Psalm 8 by interpreting Psalm 8 in light of other passages of Scripture. It is my hope, therefore, that readers will find the following canonical reading insightful and persuasive even if they do not agree with me on every point concerning the way in which the New Testament authors have appropriated their Old Testament texts.

Matthew 21:14-17 and Psalm 8

Reading Matthew 21:14-17 "In Itself"

The broader context: The Gospel of Matthew. The Gospel of “Matthew is the New Testament book closest to Rabbinical Judaism,”² and works on the Gospel of Matthew almost unanimously agree that Matthew was written by a Jewish Christian (or, per-

¹ Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1989); James H. Charlesworth and Walter P. Weaver, editors, *The Old and the New Testaments: Their Relationship and the “Intertestamental” Literature* (FSC; Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993); Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, editors, *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals* (JSNTSup 148/SSEJC 5; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1997); Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken, editors, *The Psalms in the New Testament* (New York, NY: T & T Clark, 2004); Gregory K. Beale and Don A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007); Donald Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); and Martin Pickup, “New Testament Interpretation of the Old Testament: The Theological Rationale of Midrashic Exegesis,” *JETS* 51 (2008): 353-381.

² George D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel According to Matthew* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1946), 101.

haps, a Christian Jew) for a Jewish Christian audience some time in the latter half of the first century CE.³ Many distinctive aspects of the gospel of Matthew reflect the Jewishness of the book,⁴ and Matthew cites the Old Testament more than any of the other gospels.⁵ Matthew also develops Christology in a way that is similar to the Christology of the other gospels, yet reflects Matthew's own emphases and high Christology.⁶ Carrying forward themes from his sources, Mark and Q, Matthew utilizes a broad repertoire of images and stories to craft his own distinct portrait of Jesus reflecting the Jewish-Christian concerns of the book; Matthew paints a picture of Jesus as the Son of God, Lord, Son of David, Son of Man, a new Moses, Wisdom, a servant, and one who is with his people.⁷

³ Kilpatrick, *Origins*, 101-123; J. Andrew Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990); Anthony J. Salda-rini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994); David C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism* (Edinburgh, UK: T & T Clark, 1998); Stephenson H. Brooks, *Matthew's Community: The Evidence of His Special Sayings Material* (JSNTSup 16; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1987). For a survey of approaches to the Gospel of Matthew through the early 2000's, see Donald A. Hagner, "Matthew: Christian Judaism or Jewish Christianity?" in *The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 263-282.

⁴ See Hagner, "Matthew," 263-264.

⁵ John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary in the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans/Paternoster, 2005), 29-33; Robert H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in Saint Matthew's Gospel, with Special Reference to the Messianic Hope* (NTSup 18; Leiden: Brill, 1975); O. L. Cope, *Matthew: A Scribe Trained for the Kingdom of Heaven* (CBQMS 5; Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1976).

⁶ "[W]e encounter in Matthew," writes Hagner, "one of the highest Christologies of the NT" ("Matthew," 270).

⁷ I draw these Christological descriptors from Christopher M. Tuckett, *Christology and the New Testament: Jesus and His Earliest Followers* (Edinburgh, UK: University Press, 2001), 119-130. See also J. D. Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1977). For Jesus as a new Moses in the gospel of Matthew, see Dale C. Allison, *A New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993). For Matthew's depiction of Jesus as the Son of David, see Lidija Novakovic, *Messiah, the Healer of the Sick: A Study of Jesus as the Son of David in the Gospel of Matthew* (WUNT 2:170; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

As Bacon and many others have recognized, the body of Matthew's Gospel seems to have a five-fold structure⁸ like many Jewish works of antiquity.⁹ Matthew alternates between five narrative sections and five discourse sections. Each of the five discourse sections, with slight variation in wording, conclude with the same formula (Matt 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; and 26:1): "when Jesus had finished (these words)/ ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς (τοὺς λόγους τούτους)."¹⁰ Several alternatives to Bacon's five-fold construal of Matthew's structure have been proposed,¹¹ and, among these, Kingsbury's schema is insightful for our purposes.¹² Kingsbury sees the chronological development of Matthew's gospel as developing Matthew's Christology across three sections. The sections focus upon "(a) the genesis and significance of the person of Jesus (1:1-4:16), (b) the nature and effect of his proclamation (4:17-16:20), and (c) the reason and finality of his suffering, death, and resurrection (16:21-28:20)."¹³

Taken together, the two structural proposals of Bacon and Kingsbury can serve as heuristic aids through which to locate the pericope under consideration (21:1-17, espe-

⁸ Scholars usually identify Benjamin W. Bacon (*Studies in Matthew* [New York, NY: Holt, 1930]), as the originator of this hypothesis (so W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Matthew in Three Volumes* [ICC; Edinburgh, UK: T & T Clark, 1988] 1:59, and Kingsbury, *Matthew*, 2). Craig S. Keener, however, points out that the notion that Jesus's five discourse sections parallel the five books of the Pentateuch is as old as Papias (*Matthew* [IVPNTCS; Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1997], 30).

⁹ Allison lists the following works as evincing a five-fold structure: "the Pentateuch, the Psalter, the Megilloth, Jason of Cyrene's Maccabean history (c.f. 2 Macc. 2:23), *Jubilees*, *I Enoch*, [and] the early form of *Mishnah 'Abot*," though Allison also includes several Christian works: "Papias' *Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord* . . . Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses*, and Hippolytus' memoirs" (*The New Moses*, 296).

¹⁰ See Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, I: 58-72 for a relatively brief yet in depth and judicious treatment of the structure of Matthew. See also Bacon, *Studies*, 80-91.

¹¹ See Davies and Allison, *Matthew* I: 60-61.

¹² Kingsbury, *Matthew*, 25-37.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 36.

cially verses 12-17)¹⁴ in the broader context of the book. Matt 21:1-17 recounts the triumphal entry, and is located in the last part of the book in both the three- and five-fold schemas. In leading up to Matt 21:1-17, the narrative has been simultaneously developing its portrait of Christ and moving towards the climactic death and resurrection of Christ. Matt 21:1-17 represents an elevated point within the book's development, whether it is construed as part of narrative sequence preceding Jesus's passion (as per the five-fold schema) or as a key moment in a longer final episode of the book encompassing all of Jesus's last days (as per the three-fold schema). If the proposal, taken up by Davies and Allison, that Matt 21:1-17 intentionally parallels Matt 1-2 and Matt 28:16-20 is correct, the importance of our pericope in the role of the narrative and Christological development of Matthew increases.¹⁵ In Matthew 21 Jesus finally arrives in Jerusalem, the place that he has been progressively moving towards where the pivotal event of his crucifixion will take place (Matthew 27).¹⁶ Furthermore, our pericope and the material adjacent to it (Matt 20:29-21:22) refines the portrait of Jesus, recounting "[t]he miraculous deeds and prophetic acts of the messianic Son of David in and near Jerusalem and its temple."¹⁷

¹⁴ For Matt 21:1-17 as a unit, see Norbert Lohfink, "Der Messias König und seine Armen kommen zum Zion: Beobachtungen zu Mt 21,1-17," in *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium: Festschrift für Wilhelm Pesch* (SBS; Stuttgart: Kath. Bibelwerk, 1988), 179-200; Sandra Hübenthal, "'Wer ist dieser?' Mt 21,1-17 in intertextueller Lektüre," in *Der Bibelkanon in der Bibelauslegung: Methodenreflexionen und Beispiele gelesen* (ed. Egbert Ballhorn and Georg Steins; Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2007), 260-277.

¹⁵ See Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, III:3; Wenceslaus M. Urassa, *Psalm 8 and its Christological Re-Interpretations in the New Testament Context: An Inter-Contextual Study in Biblical Hermeneutics*. (EUS 23:577; New York: Peter Lang, 1998), 145.

¹⁶ Although John Nolland follows neither the five-fold schema nor the three-fold schema, his treatment of Matt 21:1-11 as concluding a section organized around Jesus' progression towards Jerusalem and Matt 21:12-17 as beginning a new section dedicated to Jesus's "provocative ministry in Jerusalem" is insightful in terms of demonstrating the function that Matt 21:1-17 plays within the development of the narrative (*The Gospel of Matthew*, 840-841) as a transition from Jesus's movement towards Jerusalem to Jesus's ministry in Jerusalem.

¹⁷ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, III:3.

The nearer context: Matt 21:1-17. Matt 21:1-17 contains several connected episodes. In the first and longest scene (Matt 21:1-11) Matthew recounts the triumphal entry, where the Matthean Jesus sends his disciples to procure two donkeys for him (Matt 21:1-6), then Jesus rides the donkeys into Jerusalem, where he is greeted by a jubilant and amazed crowd (Matt 21:7-11). Next, Matt 21:12-13 recounts Jesus's cleansing of the temple, followed by the verses containing the citation of Psalm 8, which are unique to the Gospel of Matthew and have no synoptic parallels (verses 14-16). These verses recount a conflict between Jesus and the priests centering around Jesus's healing of the blind and lame and his acclamation by children who are crying out "Hosanna to the Son of David" (Matt 21:14-16). Within the context of this conflict, the Matthean Jesus quotes Psalm 8:3 in his self defense (Matt 21:16). The pericope then concludes by recounting Jesus' departure from Jerusalem (Matt 21:17).¹⁸

Several of the various Matthean Christological descriptors mentioned above have special prominence in Matt 21:1-17. The most important of these is the title, "Son of David." This title is affirmed explicitly by Jesus' followers (verses 9 and 15), and implicitly both by Jesus, who enacts the Messianic prophecy of Zech 9:9 (verses 1-3, 6), and by the narrator who tells the reader that "this took place so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled (πληρωθῆ)" (verse 4). In a more subtle vein, Davies and Allison identify several indicators that Matthew's description of Jesus here evokes images of

¹⁸ For a brief discussion about the various ways that one might understand the judgment upon the temple establishment depicted in verses 12-17, see Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 495-501.

Moses, so that “21.1-17 reactivates the Moses typology apparent in 1.1-8.1”¹⁹ Urassa finds at least one other Christological motif worth considering, as he reads Jesus’s citation of Ps 8:3 in light of Matthew’s depiction of Jesus as the “son of Man” (compare Ps 8:5).²⁰ Yet, Matthew 21 never describes Jesus as the “son of Man,” and the Matthean Jesus does not cite Ps 8:5; therefore, the question of whether or not Matthew is developing his “son of Man” motif by depicting Jesus as applying Ps 8:3 to himself hinges upon the way in which the Gospel of Matthew (or, perhaps more precisely, the Matthean Jesus) interprets and applies Ps 8:3, which will be discussed below.

Concerning the structure of Matt 21:1-17, in light of the fact that Mark and Luke do not juxtapose the triumphal entry (Matt 21:1-9) with the cleansing of the temple (Matt 21:12-17),²¹ some see Matt 21:1-11 and Matt 21:12-17 as two distinct, independent sections.²² Yet, scholars increasingly recognize an artistic unity binding together all of Matt

¹⁹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, III:144. Davies and Allison note the following connections between the Moses of tradition and the Jesus of Matt 21:1-17: 1) Both are described as “meek.” 2) Moses’ riding upon two donkeys (Exod 4:19, LXX) underlies Zech 9:9, and Jesus’s riding upon two donkeys fulfills Zech 9:9. 3) The children singing at the Red Sea had been applied by tradition to Ps 8:3, just as the children singing about Jesus is applied by Jesus to Ps 8:3. 4) Moses, like Jesus, was both a prophet and king. 5) intriguing lexical similarities are to be found between Moses’s sending out of the children of Israel in Exod 12:28(LXX) and Jesus’ sending out of the disciples in Matt 21:6. 6) Intriguing lexical similarities are also to be found between Moses’s doing of wonders in Deut 34:12 (LXX) and Jesus’s doing of wonders in Matt 21:15.

²⁰ Urassa, *Psalms* 8, 139-153.

²¹ In between Mark’s account of the triumphal entry (Mark 11:1-10) and the cleansing of the temple (11:15-18), Mark interposes a note about Jesus entering and leaving Jerusalem (Mark 11:11; cf. Matt 21:10, 17) and the story of Jesus cursing the fig tree (Mark 11:12-14). Similarly, Luke inserts a description of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44) between the triumphal entry (19:28-40) and the temple cleansing (19:45-47).

²² Nolland, for example, reckons verses 1-11 and verses 12-17 as belonging to two distinct blocks of material in the Gospel of Matthew (*Matthew*, 830-849).

21:1-17.²³ Lohfink, for example, reads Matt 21:1-17 as a unified chiasm, built around five Old Testament citations, as follows:²⁴

- A 21,5: Erzähler (?): Reflexionszitat von Jes 62,11 und Sach 9,9
- B 21,9: Akklamation der Scharen nach Ps 118,25f, vgl. Mt 21,15
- C 21,13: Jesus: Begründung der Reinigung des Temples durch Jes 56,7 + Jer 7,11
- B' 21,15: Akklamation der Kinder nach Ps 118,25, vgl. Mt 21,9
- A' 21,16: Jesus: Antwort an seine Gegner: Ps 8,3

Similarly, Sandra Hübenthal, reads Matt 21:1-17 as a chiasmic unity, though she proposes a somewhat different structure for the passage.²⁵ She places verses 10 and 11 at the center, making the question “Who is this?/τίς ἐστὶν οὗτος?” the “Kernsatz” of the pericope.²⁶ According to Hübenthal, the *Zentrum* of the passage (verses 10-11) is flanked by two scenes, each built around two Old Testament citations, “Szene I,” the entry into the city, and “Szene II,” Jesus in the Temple.²⁷ While the proposals of Hübenthal and

²³ W. Weren lists five points of evidence for the unity of Matt 21:1-17: 1) Unlike the parallel passages in Mark and Luke, Matt 21:1-17 occurs on a single day, and Jesus does not leave Jerusalem until Matt 21:17. 2) The passage mentions several locations (Matt 21:1, 10, 12, and 17), which work together to trace a trajectory of movement towards, into, in, and then out of Jerusalem. 3) Several verbal repetitions permeate both halves of the text (verses 1-11 and 12-17). 4) The text, via these repetitions, implies that the shouts of “Hosanna” from the first half have continued without interruption into the second half (Matt 21:9, 15). 5) The pattern of a) people shouting “Hosanna,” b) a question arising from the shouts, and c) an answer being given to the question occurs twice, once in each half of the pericope (Matt 21:10-11, 15-16; “Jesus’ Entry into Jerusalem: Mt 21,1-17 in the Light of the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint,” in *The Scriptures in the Gospels* [ed. C. M. Tuckett; BETL 81; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997], 117-118).

²⁴ Lohfink, “Der Messias König,” 187. Lohfink’s outline in English, according to my translation with minor alterations, is as follows:

- A) 21:5: Narrator (?): Reflection upon the citation of Isa 62:11 and Zech 9:9.
- B) 21:9: Acclamation of the crowds (Ps 118.25 and following, see Mt 21.15)
- C) 21:13: Jesus, justification by the cleansing of the Temple (Isa 56:7 + Jer 7:11)
- B') 21:15: acclamation of the children (Ps 118.25, see Matt 21:9)
- A') 21.16: Jesus: Answer to his opponents: Ps 8:3.

The “(?)” after Erzähler/Narrator is original to Lohfink. See also Urassa, *Psalm 8*, 120.

²⁵ Sandra Hübenthal, “‘Wer ist dieser?’ Mt 21,1-17 in intertextueller Lektüre,” in *Der Bibelkanon in der Bibelauslegung: Methodenreflexionen und Beispielexegesen* (Ed. Egbert Ballhorn and Georg Steins; Stuttgart, Germany: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2007), 264-268.

²⁶ Hübenthal, “‘Wer ist dieser?’” 267.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Lohfink differ significantly,²⁸ both construals can yield insight into the role that the citation of Psalm 8 plays in Matt 21:1-17. On the one hand, when one looks to the pericope's content, narrative development, and proportions, verses 10-11 and the pivotal question "who is this?" form a natural center, as Hübenthal observes.²⁹ Read in this way, the crowd's wonderment at Jesus in verses 10-11 simultaneously 1) heightens the development of Matthews' increasingly refined Christology and 2) encourages the readers to ponder, with the crowd, who Jesus is as they read the text's description of his activity.³⁰

On the other hand, Lohfink and Urassa provide insight in that they see Jesus's citation of Ps 8:3 as occupying a special place in "the prophetic drama" of Matt 21:1-16.³¹ In the narrative leading up to Matt 21:16, Jesus self-consciously arrives in messianic fashion (verses 1-6), and the crowds and children receive him in a similarly messianic fa-

²⁸ *Contra* Lohfink, Hübenthal sees the pericope as structured around four citations, not five, (reckoning the mention of the children chanting "Hosanna" in Matt 21:15 not as a citation of Psalm 118, but rather as a reference to an earlier citation). This discrepancy results in a shift, wherein Hübenthal reckons the combined citation of Isa 56:7 and Jer 7:11 as standing in the second *tiel*, "Szene II," while Lohfink places them at the center. Hübenthal's center becomes verses 10 and 11, which, according to Lohfink, stand before the center (Hübenthal, "Wer ist dieser?" 265-267 and Lohfink, "Der Messias König").

²⁹ While both Urassa and Hübenthal urge that the Old Testament citations form the framework for the passage's structure, both produce an outline for the passage that is too tidy and mechanical. Furthermore, neither author makes it clear how one ought to determine which citations form the basis for the structure; in addition to the question of whether or not both quotations of Psalm 118 ought to figure into the structural outline, one might ask whether the allusion to II Sam 5:8 in Matt 21:14 has structural significance. When one considers instead the internal development of the passage, verses 10-11 lie roughly at the middle point of the passage and focus upon a central question which permeates the entire episode ("Who is this?"), and Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is the central point in the spatial movement of the narrative. Also, the observations that verses 10-11 are unique to Matthew and that only Matthew combines the two episodes in verses 1-9 and verses 12-16 argue for the centrality of verses 10-11; Matthew reworks two episodes into a single pericope, using verses 10-11 as a transitional hinge (see Davies and Allison, *Matthew* III:126-127).

³⁰ "Kernsatz bleibt dabei die Frage," writes Hübenthal, "die nicht nur an die mit Jesus in Jerusalem Einziehenden, sondern auch an die Rezipienten gerichtet ist und die Letztere mit ihrem eigene Schrift- und Glaubenswissen beantworten sollen: Wer ist dieser?" ("Wer ist dieser?" 277). Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, III: 127.

³¹ Adopting Hübenthal's proposal that verses 10-11 form the center of the chiasm does not mean that one cannot recognize the citation of Psalm 8 towards the end of the passage as having an important and climactic role in the development of the passage (see Urassa, *Psalm 8*, 121, Lohfink, "Der Messias König," 185-187. See also Hübenthal, "Wer ist dieser?" 275).

shion (verses 9-11, 15). While the precise relevance of the healing miracles for the messianic claims of Jesus seems ambiguous,³² here, as elsewhere, Jesus performs acts of healing in connection with the claim that he is the Son of David (verse 14).³³ A conflict accompanies the recognition of Jesus as the “Son of David,” as Jesus cleanses the temple in a challenge to the temple establishment (verses 12-14), and the chief priests and scribes are aghast at all that is happening (verse 15). When Jesus rebuts the priests and scribes by quoting Ps 8:3, the passage comes to its full development in terms of 1) the passage’s movement towards a heightening emphasis upon and affirmation of (by the children and narrator) Jesus’s messianic identity, and 2) the increasing conflict between Jesus and the priests. Here, the Matthean Jesus unambiguously affirms those who identify him as the “Son of David,” and he also leaves his opponents speechless.

The use of Psalm 8:3 in Matthew 21:16. Having surveyed Matt 21:16 in context, we may now turn to look more closely at the way in which Matthew (or the Jesus of Matthew) appropriates Ps 8:3.³⁴ The Matthean Jesus seems to assume that the psalm is somehow fulfilled by the children’s acclamation of him as the “Son of David” in this episode.³⁵ Furthermore, Matthew’s use of the Old Testament is often oriented towards de-

³² See Novakovic, *Messiah*, 91-95.

³³ The majority of the occurrences of the moniker “Son of David” in Matthew come in connection with healing stories (See Novakovic, *Messiah*, 2).

³⁴ This section continues the focus upon the level one meaning of Matthew 21:16, reading the text “in itself.” I will return below to consider level two meanings, reading Psalm 8 in the light of Matt 21:1-17 and the Gospel of Matthew. In preparation for such considerations, however, this section will explore the way in which the Gospel of Matthew takes up the psalm in the context of Jesus’s conflict in the temple.

³⁵ Maarten J. J. Menken, “The Psalms in Matthew’s Gospel,” in *The Psalms in the New Testament* (ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken; NTSL; New York, NY: T & T Clark, 2004), 70-72, Craig L. Blomberg, “Matthew,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. Gregory K. Beale and Donald A. Carson; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 70, and J. Samuel Subramanian, *The Synoptic Gospels and Psalms as Prophecy* (LNTS 351; New York, NY: T & T Clark, 2007), 107-109.

monstrating how Jesus fulfills the words of the text, a pattern which is explicit in the uniquely Matthean formula, “[ἐ]πληρώθη τὸ ῥηθὲν/what was spoken was fulfilled” (Matt 2:17; 13:35; 27:9; *sic. passim*), including one instance where Jesus is said to “fulfill” a psalm (Ps 78:2 in 13:35).³⁶ Also, the Matthean Jesus interprets a psalm messianically elsewhere (Matt 22:43-45), and Matthew’s willingness to interpret the psalms prophetically was not aberrational in comparison with other Second Temple Jewish sects.³⁷ Moreover, the thrust of the context of Matt 21:1-17 moves toward a heightened emphasis upon Jesus as the Son of David, especially as the crowds and the children recognize him as such, and this thrust seems to culminate with the citation of Ps 8:3 in verse 16.

Yet, the question remains: How, exactly does the Matthean Jesus see the words of Ps 8:3 as applying to the scene unfolding in Matthew 21? As already noted, Urassa interprets the appropriation of Jesus’s words here in light of Matthew’s claim elsewhere that Jesus is the “Son of Man” (Matt 24:30; 26:64; Ps 8:5).³⁸ Such a connection makes some sense, insofar as the other references to Psalm 8 in the New Testament apply things that the Lord does to the “Son of Man/Child of Humanity” in Ps 8:6-9, to Jesus (1 Cor 15:27; Eph 1:22; Heb 2:5-9).³⁹ So, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the author and audience of Matthew would have been aware of the Messianic interpretation of Psalm 8 reflected in 1 Cor 15:27 and Heb 2:5-9 and that they would have understood such a Messianic interpretation in light of the Messianic “Son of Man” figure. Yet, such an understanding can, at best, only partially account for the citation of the passage here. The Mat-

³⁶ See Menken, “Psalms in Matthew’s Gospel,” 81, and Subramanian, 91-123.

³⁷ The Qumran literature, for example applies a fulfillment hermeneutic to the book of Psalms and speak of David as a prophet. See Subramanian, *Synoptic Gospels*, 19-44.

³⁸ Urassa, *Psalm 8*, 149-151.

³⁹ See Menken, “Psalms in Matthew’s Gospel,” 80.

thean Jesus makes no mention of the “Son of Man” here, nor does he address the part of Psalm 8 that speaks directly of the “child of humanity” (verses 6-9). Also, as Lidija Novakovic has cautioned elsewhere, one must be careful to avoid the exegetical equivalent of an “illegitimate totality transfer” by reading into Matthew’s citations material from the passage’s broader context that Matthew may not be addressing.⁴⁰

Furthermore, one need not look beyond Ps 8:3 itself to find points of connection between the two passages; the events of Matt 21:1-17 (especially verses 14-17) parallel the scene described in Ps 8:3. The children proclaiming “Hosana” in Matt 21:14 parallel the *νηπίων καὶ θηλαζόντων* (babies and sucklings) of Ps 8:3 (LXX) through whose *στόματος* (mouth) God establishes *αἶνον* (praise). Furthermore, though not explicitly mentioned by Jesus, the “foes,” “enemy,” and “avenger” of Ps 8:3 have their counterpart in the chief priests and scribes of Matt 21:14-17;⁴¹ just as YHWH uses children to silence (MT: *לְהַשְׁבִּית*, LXX: *καταλῦσαι*) his foes in Psalm 8, so the chief priests and scribes have no answer to give to Jesus and are effectively silenced by the children of Matt 21:14.⁴² Thus, Subramanian aptly summarizes Matthew’s use of Psalm 8 in connection with the broader context of Matt 21:1-17 and its emphasis upon Jesus as the Son of David as follows: “By relating Ps 8.3a LXX to the messianic cry of children (cf. Mt 21.15), Matthew

⁴⁰ “Matthew’s Atomistic Use of Scripture: Messianic Interpretation of Isaiah 53.4 in Matthew 8.17” in *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels Vol. 2: The Gospel of Matthew* (LNTS 310; ed. Thomas R. Hatina; New York, NY: T & T Clark, 2008), 147-162. But see also Gundry, *Use of the Old Testament*, 205-208, who argues that “Dodd’s main thesis that New Testament quotations tend to be drawn from Old Testament contexts which are exploited as whole by various New Testament authors is remarkably confirmed” in the case of Matthew.

⁴¹ See Hübenthal, “Mt21,1-17,” 275. As Hübenthal notes, what is particularly interesting about Jesus’s citation of Ps 8:3 is “was er nicht zitiert.”

⁴² Subramanian, *The Synoptic Gospels*, 109. See also Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (WBC, 19; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 109-110.

seems to read Ps 8.3a LXX as a prophecy about the praise of children who disclose the messianic identity of Jesus as the Son of David.”⁴³

Davies and Allison argue for another messianic motif implied by Matthew’s use of the verse, noting that rabbinic tradition connected Ps 8:3 with the Song of the Sea (Exodus 15).⁴⁴ It is difficult to establish with certainty that the Rabbinic connection of Ps 8:3 with Exod 15:1 represents an understanding of Psalm 8 that underlies the words of the Matthean Jesus here. Nevertheless, Wisd. 10:21 uses language similar to that of Ps 8:3 to describe children singing the Song of the Sea, increasing the likelihood that Ps 8:3 had been hermeneutically connected with Exodus 15 prior to the time of the writing of the Gospel of Matthew.⁴⁵ Furthermore, Davies and Allison point out other possible subtle connections between the depiction of Moses elsewhere and the depiction of Jesus in Matt 21:1-17, increasing the probability that the citation of Ps 8:3 contributes to a larger agenda to subtly portray Jesus as a new Moses.⁴⁶ If Davies and Allison are correct, Matthew implies here that Jesus’s actions in Matt 21:1-17 parallel those of Moses at the Red Sea; just as the deliverance effected under Moses prompted children to sing in Exodus 15, the

⁴³ Subramanian, *The Synoptic Gospels*, 109.

⁴⁴ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, III: 141-142, 144. Davies and Allison point especially to the *Mekilta* on Exodus 15:1. They also note several texts as deriving the belief that children praised God at the Red Sea from the connection between Ps 8:3 and Exod 15:1 via their shared usage of the word רָצוּ (*Tosefta Sota* 6.4; *Jerusalem Talmud Sota* 5.4; *Babylonian Talmud Berakot* 56b; *Babylonian Talmud Sota* 30b; *Targum Yerusalmi* on Exodus 15:2; *Midrash Psalm* 8:5).

⁴⁵ This verse says that, after the crossing of the Red Sea, Wisdom “opened the mouth of the dumb, and made the tongues of babes speak clearly.” Davies and Allison, *Matthew* III: 142.

⁴⁶ Davies and Allison note the following other connections between the Moses tradition and the Jesus of Matt 21:1-17: 1) Moses and Jesus are both “meek” (Matt 21:5); 2) “Moses returned to Egypt with at least two asses (LXX Exod 4.19) which event came to be associated with Zech 9.9,” and Jesus rode two donkeys in fulfillment of Zech 9:9 (Matt 21:5); 3) Moses and Jesus are both called a prophet and a king; 4) Exod 12:28 describes the Israelites following the commands of the LORD through Moses, and Matt 21:6 describes Jesus’ disciples following his commands in very similar language; 5) Just as Deut 34:12 speaks of “the wonders that Moses did,” Matt 21:15 speaks of “the wonders that Jesus did” (*Matthew* III:144).

anticipated deliverance by the Son of David prompts children to sing in Matthew 21. Read in this way, the subtle “New Moses” motif does not undermine or supplant the identification of Jesus with the “Son of David” in the rest of the passage. Rather, the new Moses motif enriches the Son of David motif and, together, they enhance and develop Matthew’s christology.

Yet, at least one question remains. Ps 8:3 speaks of infants praising YHWH, but Jesus applies the verse to children crying out “Hosanna to the Son of David (τῶ υἱῶ Δαυὶδ).” Does this mean that Matthew depicts Jesus as understanding himself to be God? Or does he depict Jesus as, at the very least, likening his role in relation to the children crying out to the role of YHWH in relation to the praising infants and nursing babes in Psalm 8, as Weren and Menken believe?⁴⁷ Or, is Blomberg closer to the mark when he says that “[t]he children . . . almost certainly were praising Yahweh for what they believed he was doing in Jesus, not praising Jesus as God directly?”⁴⁸ Moreover, does the Jesus of Matthew 21 stand in for God, Moses, the “Son of Man,” or someone else?⁴⁹

While many interesting explanations to these questions have been proposed, I will suggest that neither Matthew nor the Matthean Jesus directly address such questions; when Jesus cites Ps 8:3a in Matt 21:16, he does not present a clear explanation of every word of the quotation for his audience. Rather, it is part of the rhetorical strategy of Matthew here to push the reader to ponder the question that Hübenthal identifies as the *Kern-*

⁴⁷ W. Weren, “Jesus’ Entry,” 138, Menken, “The Psalms in Matthew’s Gospel,” 72.

⁴⁸ Blomberg, “Matthew,” 70.

⁴⁹ For Jesus as God here, see Weren, “Jesus’ Entry,” 139. For Jesus as Moses here, see Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, III: 143-144. For Jesus as the “Son of Man” here, see Urassa, *Psalm 8*, 149-151.

satz: “Who is this?”⁵⁰ Therefore, in light of such ambiguities at the level one meaning of the text, the canonical interpreter ought not to force the text to give a refined and systematic answer to every Christological question that the reader might have. Rather, the reader ought to follow Augustine’s advice, and turn to the rest of Scripture for clarification on Christological questions.⁵¹ We turn now, therefore, to consider the implications of the interpretation of Ps 8:3 in Matt 21:1-17 for a canonical understanding of Psalm 8.

Reading Psalm 8 in Light of Matthew 21:1-17

The Christian canonical reader who returns to consider Psalm 8 after reading Matthew 21:14-17 in its broader context of the Gospel of Matthew must, above all else, reckon with Matthew’s portrayal of Jesus as the Messiah, Son of David, and Son of Man. I have already argued that the function of Psalm 8 in the context of the Old Testament can be described as representing the intersection of two trajectories in the broader story: 1) The reversal motif, as distinctly presented in Psalm 8, and 2) the status of the human in the broader context of the Old Testament canon. From the point of view of the Christian, both of these trajectories take a new turn in the person of Jesus, whom the Christian affirms as “the author and perfecter of our faith” (Heb 12:2, NIV). Jesus violates the type of the conflicted and conflicting human in radical ways, and, in so doing, becomes the ultimate instantiation of the reversal motif by which God restores order to the cosmos. As a result, two claims from Matt 21:1-17 and the Gospel of Matthew impinge upon our reading of Psalm 8: 1) Jesus is the Messiah, and 2) the scene described in Matt 21:14-17 is an enactment of the scene in Ps 8:3.

⁵⁰ Hübenthal, ““Wer ist dieser?””

⁵¹ *Doc. Chr.* Book III: 2. See also Brevard S. Childs, “Psalm 8 in the Context of the Christian Canon,” *Interpretation* 23 (1969), 23.

Concerning the first claim, we have already noted that, of Matthew's several Christological labels, the most prominent in Matt 21:1-17 is that of "Son of David."⁵² Thus, the Gospel of Matthew points the reader back to the Old Testament narrative of the rise, fall, and hoped for restoration of the Davidic line, which narrative I have described in chapter four as fitting into the type of the conflicted and conflicting human. Furthermore, the connection of the proclamation that Jesus is the "Son of David" with the festival recitation of the *hallel* hymn, Psalm 118, provides an entry point through which the canonical reader might move from a consideration of the portrayal of the Son of David in Matt 21:1-17 to a consideration of the portrayal of David in the Psalter and the role of Psalm 8 within that portrayal; while, as Wilson points out, the Septuagint Psalter underlying the chanting of the children is more Davidic than the MT Psalter,⁵³ the MT Psalter still meditates upon the rise, fall, and hoped for return of David. I have argued in chapter three and four that Psalm 8, in the Psalter as in the Old Testament, provides a moment of "orientation" for the reader, wherein the reader learns to hope that God will intervene on behalf of the insignificant to maintain order. This hope then encourages the reader to focus upon king YHWH, yet leaves the possibility open that king YHWH might act on behalf of the fallen Davidic line (Psalm 144). Thus, when one reads Psalm 8 in light of the claim that Jesus is the "Son of David," one begins to understand Jesus as fulfilling that hope. The orienting hope of Psalm 8, founded in the claim that YHWH exalts babies

⁵² In addition to the discussion of verses 1-17 above, see also C. Keener, who construes verses 1-11 as communicating several key points to the audience about the nature of Christ as the Davidic King (*A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 489-495).

⁵³ Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, (SBLDS 76; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 173-180.

over his enemies (Ps 8:3) and humans over the majestic lights (Ps 8:4-6), now comes to fruition in the restoration of the Davidic line through Jesus.

Furthermore, while Matthew may not necessarily be portraying Jesus as a “Son of Man” figure in chapter 21, the fact that Matthew describes Jesus as the “Son of Man” elsewhere might inform how one understands the words “בן־אדם/child of humanity” in Ps 8:5. On the one hand, the Christological usage of the phrase “the son of man” in Matthew has greater affinities with Dan 7:13 than Ps 8:5.⁵⁴ Therefore, a canonical reading of Psalm 8 in light of the Gospel of Matthew does not need to understand Ps 8:5 as a direct foretelling of an event in the life of Jesus. Yet, on the other hand, the way in which Matthew describes Jesus as “ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου” (Matt 8:20; 9:6 20:18) has implications for a canonical understanding of Psalm 8’s בן־אדם. As Urassa notes, “for Matthew . . . the ‘term’—‘Son of Man’ signifies . . . the messianic office given to Jesus by his Father to restore the creation back to its original condition, before the fall of the first Adam.”⁵⁵ When one reads Psalm 8 in light of such a depiction of Jesus, both the ideal world of Gen 1-2 and the ordered world of Psalm 8 seem tenable once again; the lost world may yet be found. Jesus, the Son of David and Son of Man, will fulfill the office of Davidic ruler, vanquish YHWH’s enemies (Ps 8:3), and thus enable humanity to finally fulfill its corporate role of vice-gerent (Ps 8:5-9). In short, Matthew’s claim that Jesus is the Messiah informs the way in which a canonical reader understands God’s maintenance of the created order described in Psalm 8.

⁵⁴ See Delbert Burkett, *The Son of Man Debate: A History and Evaluation* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 97-120 and James G. Crossley, *The Solution to the ‘Son of Man’ Problem* (LNTS 343; New York, NY: T & T Clark, 2007), 266-273.

⁵⁵Urassa, *Psalm 8*, 141.

How then does the claim that Matt 21:14-17 describes an enactment of the scene in Ps 8:3 inform a canonical reading of the psalm? In the first place, if Ps 8:5 need not become a prophetic utterance applicable only to Jesus the “Son of Man,” neither does Ps 8:3 need to become a prophetic oracle wherein the psalmist envisioned the events of the temple cleansing.⁵⁶ Rather, the scene of Ps 8:2 remains a paradigmatic expression of YHWH’s method of maintaining the created order, but takes on a fuller meaning in light of Matt 21:14-17. On the canonical level and in light of the reading of Psalm 8 that I have presented, Jesus’s words in Matt 21:16 lead the reader to understand the event of the coming of the Messiah as the moment in which the paradigm of Ps 8:3 is perfectly enacted. At that time, insignificant children silence the enemies of God by acknowledging that the Messiah has come.⁵⁷ Thus, when one reads Psalm 8 in light of the complex of characters that enact the scene of Ps 8:3 in Matt 21, one has a clearer understanding of what constitutes an agent of YHWH and what constitutes an enemy of YHWH; not only do the humble agents of YHWH “take the *name* of God on their lips,”⁵⁸ unlike the self-strong enemies, but they also acknowledge God’s Messiah. Quoting Craigie:

In his rebuke to the authorities, [Jesus] brought out the inherent contrast in the original psalm; the children take the *name* upon their lips (interpreting *Son of David*, from the perspective of the early church, as a messianic title), but the authorities are indignant and complain—in effect, they are the foes and the avengers of the psalm. But, as in the psalm, it is the children who have the truer perception, not the arrogant enemies.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ So Donald A. Carson, “Matthew,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 8 (ed. Frank E. Gaebelain; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 443.

⁵⁷ See C. Keener, *Matthew*, 316-317.

⁵⁸ Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 107. Emphasis Craigie’s.

⁵⁹ Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 109-110.

To summarize, then, one need not reduce Psalm 8 to a source for Christological proof-texts in order to understand Psalm 8 in its canonical context. Rather, when read in light of Matthew 21:1-17, the Christian interpreter sees that God's method of maintaining the created order is played out in the life of the Messiah. In order to flesh out the relationship between Psalm 8 and the canonical witness concerning Jesus the Messiah, the following sections will consider the rest of the New Testament passages that cite Psalm 8.

1 Corinthians 15:25-28 and Psalm 8

Reading 1 Corinthians 15:25-28 "In Itself"

The broader context: 1 Corinthians. It is fairly certain that Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians some time in the early to middle 50's CE in order to address controversies arising within the fledgling Corinthian church and to counter teaching promulgated by opponents of Paul.⁶⁰ While various proposals have been set forth concerning the precise identity of Paul's opponents at Corinth,⁶¹ current research tends to view them as variegated;⁶² in light of Paul's description of his opponents as divisive

⁶⁰ For discussions about questions of chronology, dating, etc., see Alan F. Johnson, *1 Corinthians* (IVPNTCS; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 20-22, Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: 1987), 4-15, and J. M. Gilchrist, "Paul and the Corinthians: The Sequence of the Letters and Visits," *JSNT* 34 (1988): 47-69.

⁶¹ For a summary of various approaches to identifying various Pauline opponents throughout the Pauline corpus, see Jerry L. Sumney "Studying Paul's Opponents: Advances and Challenges" in *Paul and His Opponents* (PS 2; ed. Stanley E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 7-58. For a survey of approaches to identifying the Corinthian opponents in particular, see Albert V. GarciaLazo, *The Corinthian Dissenters and the Stoics* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2007), 79-125. GarciaLazo himself argues for a primarily Stoic influence upon the Corinthian opponents.

⁶² See Ben Witherington (*Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995], 72-78, and David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 13-14. As Garland observes, "[o]ne theological misconception . . . is unlikely to explain the sundry problems Paul addresses in the letter It is far more likely that the influences on them were more amorphous."

schismatic (1 Cor 1:11-17; 3:4-8) and the various theological issues addressed by Paul in 1 and 2 Corinthians, it seems unlikely that Paul's opponents represent a unified, monolithic group. Rather, 1 Corinthians addresses a wide array of misinterpretations of the gospel arising from the ongoing influence of "culturally ingrained habits from [the Corinthians'] pagan past and . . . values instilled by a popularized secular ethics."⁶³

Insofar as "Christ crucified, Christ risen, [and] Christ coming again permeates the whole epistle (1:6; 10:3; 12:12; 15:23; 16:22),"⁶⁴ 1 Corinthians exhibits a unity of theme and purpose. Yet, Paul seems to focus his attention upon several diverse theological sub-topics throughout the epistle. Thus, it is possible to understand the structure of the epistle as cohering around the letter's several sub-topics, such that, to delineate the structure of the epistle is to survey the topics addressed within the epistle.⁶⁵ Read in this way, the structure of 1 Corinthians is as follows:⁶⁶

Greetings and Introduction (1:1-9).

- I. The Gospel and Wisdom (1:10-4:21); Paul urges the superiority of his gospel over other modes of knowledge that have rhetorical appeal, but no real spiritual power.
 - II. Matters in the Everyday Life of the Corinthian Church (5-10); Paul addresses ethical misunderstandings, sexual misconduct, and other moral and practical issues arising in the Corinthian church.
 - III. The Need for Orderly Worship and the Practice of Spiritual Gifts (11-14); Paul instructs the Corinthian church in proper community conduct.
 - IV. The Truth of the Resurrection of the Dead (15).
- Final Issues and Concluding Salutation (16).

⁶³ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 13.

⁶⁴ Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, 27.

⁶⁵ Marion L. Soards, *1 Corinthians* (NIBC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson/Paternoster, 1999), 6-7.

⁶⁶ Adapted from Soards, *1 Corinthians*, 8-9.

While other thoughtful renderings to the structure of the epistle have been proposed,⁶⁷ the above construal is helpful for the present purposes in that it a) presents a survey of the topics that Paul focuses on in different parts of his letter and b) shows where 1 Corinthians 15 fits in the broader context of the book, as the final section of the body of the book, wherein Paul argues for the reality of the resurrection of the dead.

The nearer context: 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Cor 15:20-28. While Paul's main point in 1 Corinthians 15 is fairly clear—to counter those who deny the future resurrection of the dead—it is less clear who, exactly, Paul intends to counter.⁶⁸ Since the Corinthian church was evidently divided by schismatic factions (1 Cor 1:11-17) and Paul states that “*some (τινες) of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead*” (1 Cor 15:12), it is unclear whether all the Corinthian Christians denied the future resurrection of the dead, or if those who denied it all did so for the same reasons.⁶⁹ Furthermore, one must be careful to avoid crafting a highly developed hypothetical belief system around the notion of a “realized eschatology” wherein the Corinthians understood themselves to have al-

⁶⁷ For example, Ben Witherington (*Conflict and Community in Corinth*) and Margaret M. Mitchell (*Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991]) understand 1 Corinthians to be structured in accord with formal rhetorical norms. Nevertheless, Witherington's and Mitchell's outlines still cohere somewhat with topical outlines such as the one proposed by Soards (*1 Corinthians*, 8-9).

⁶⁸ For surveys of attempts to identify the opponents that Paul intends to counter here, see Joost Holleman, *Resurrection and Parousia: A Traditio-Historical Study of Paul's Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15* (SNT 84; New York, NY: E. J. Brill, 1996), 35-37 and Garcialazo, *Corinthian Dissenters*, 79-125.

⁶⁹ So Richard B. Hays, *1 Corinthians* (Interpretation; Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1997), 254. Frederick F. Bruce also seems to believe that only some of the Corinthians were denying the resurrection (*1 and 2 Corinthians* [NCBC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980], 137, 144). Fee, however, contends that “even though [Paul] mentions “some of you” (v. 12), nothing in Paul's response suggests that the Corinthians are divided among themselves on this matter” (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 713).

ready experienced a resurrection.⁷⁰ While it is impossible to rule out the possibility that some Corinthians had subscribed to some form of a realized eschatology,⁷¹ Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 15 does not seem to counter belief in a "premature" resurrection.⁷² Rather, the primary motivation for rejecting the belief in a future resurrection seems to be an elevation of the spiritual over the physical in Greek thought, resulting in an aversion to the Jewish concept of a physical, bodily resurrection that Paul preached.⁷³

We turn, then, to the development of Paul's argument for a future bodily resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15. Paul's use of rhetoric is advanced and skillful and his argument here is nuanced and intricate.⁷⁴ Hays succinctly and lucidly outlines Paul's argument by dividing it into two main sections, as follows:

⁷⁰ For a survey of the debate over the "realized eschatology" view, see David W. Kuck, *Judgment and Community Conflict: Paul's Use of Apocalyptic Judgment Language in 1 Corinthians 3:5-4:5* (NTSup 66; New York, NY: E. J. Brill, 1992), 16-25, and Holleman, *Resurrection*, 36-37.

⁷¹ For cautious articulations of the possible influence of a "realized eschatology" on "some" Corinthians, see Witherington (*Conflict and Community*, 290-294) and Bruce (*1 and 2 Corinthians*, 137-157).

⁷² Hays, *1 Corinthians*, 252-253. See also Holleman, *Resurrection*, 35-37 and Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 678. Moreover, even if some form of a realized eschatology does inform the Corinthians' thinking on this point, Bruce is correct to emphasize that it is as yet a nascent and inchoate set of beliefs, rather than a full-blown and carefully articulated Gnosticism (*1 and 2 Corinthians*, 21).

⁷³ Gerhard Sellin, *Der Streit um die Auferstehung der Toten: Eine religionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Untersuchung von 1 Korinther 15* (FRLANT 138; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986); Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 678-679; Holleman, *Resurrection*, 36-40; Hays, *First Corinthians*, 252-253. See also *idem.*, "The Conversion of the Imagination: Scripture and Eschatology in 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 45 (1999), 391-412, where Hays demonstrates that the Corinthians' claim to already possess spiritual maturity (1 Cor 4:8), often seen as proof of an over-realized eschatology, is in line with Stoic and Cynic claims to possess wisdom and perfection, independent of any eschatological understanding. Various proposals have been set forth concerning the precise nature of the Greek thought underlying the teaching that Paul counters in 1 Corinthians 15 (see Garcilazo [*The Corinthian Dissenters*], for the Stoic view, or Sellin for the "alexandrinisch-jüdischen Religionsphilosophie" view [*Der Streit um die Auferstehung der Toten*, 205]). It is unnecessary for our purposes, however, to settle the debate concerning the precise nature of the Greek philosophical system providing the primary impetus for the Corinthian's aversion to the concept of a physical resurrection.

⁷⁴ For discussions of the way in which 1 Corinthians 15 follows classical rhetorical patterns, containing an *exordium*, *narratio*, *propositio*, *probatio/confirmatio*, and *peroratio*, see Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 292, and Duane F. Watson, "Paul's Rhetorical Strategy in 1 Corinthians 15," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht; JSNTSup 90; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 231-249.

The resurrection of the dead is constitutive of the gospel. (vv. 1-34)
 The *kerygma* proclaims the resurrection of Christ. (vv. 1-11)
 Denial of resurrection of the dead negates the gospel. (vv. 12-19)
Because Christ has been raised, all who belong to him will be raised (vv. 20-28)
 Otherwise, hope, suffering, and faithfulness are pointless. (vv. 29-34)
 Resurrection means transformation of the body. (vv. 35-58)
 What kind of body is the resurrection body? (vv. 35-49)
 Both the dead and the living will be transformed. (vv. 50-57)
 Therefore, our labor is not in vain. (v. 58)⁷⁵
 As Paul makes his case for the future, physical resurrection of the dead, several Old Testament passages play a key rhetorical role. In fact, this chapter contains a higher concentration of Old Testament citations than any other part of the epistle.⁷⁶

The citation of Psalm 8 comes towards the end of the first half of the chapter, where Paul makes the case that “because Christ has been raised, all who belong to him will be raised.”⁷⁷ Verses 21-22 exhibit an almost poetic parallelism and verses 24-28 form an artful chiasm. Thus, in 1 Cor 15:20-28, Paul develops his argument across two interconnected units, as follows:⁷⁸

First Thought Unit:

20. But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
21. (A) For as by a human (ἄνθρώπου) death came,
 (B) by a human (ἄνθρώπου) the resurrection of the dead has also come.
22. (A) For as in Adam all die,
 (B) so also in Christ shall all be made alive.
23. But each in its own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

⁷⁵ Reproduced verbatim from Hays, *First Corinthians*, 254. Emphasis added to show the verses which contain the quotation of Ps 8:7.

⁷⁶ 1 Corinthians 15 references six Old Testament texts (verse 25=Ps 110:1; verse 27=Ps 8:7; verse 32=Isaiah 22:13; verse 45=Gen 2:7; verse 54=Isa 25:8; and verse 55=Hos 13:14). No other chapter has more than two clear references to the Old Testament (John P. Heil, *The Rhetorical Role of Scripture in 1 Corinthians* [SBL 13; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005], 14-15).

⁷⁷ Hays, *First Corinthians*, 254.

⁷⁸ Adapted from Charles E. Hill, “Paul’s Understanding of Christ’s Kingdom in I Corinthians 15:20-28,” *Nov T* 30 (1988), 300 and Heil, *The Rhetorical Role*, 212-213.

Second Thought Unit:

24. Then the end comes,
(A) When he delivers the kingdom to God the Father
(B) after destroying every rule and every authority and power.
25. (C) For he must reign until he has put all the enemies under his feet
(// Ps 110:1)
26. (X) The last enemy to be annihilated is death.
27. (C1) For “he has set all things under his feet” (Ps 8:7).
(B1) But when it says that “all things are set under [him],” it is clear that he is excepted who put all things in subjection to him.
28. (A) When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who subjected all things under him, that God may be all in all.

The first thought unit argues that Christ’s work will result in a resurrection because Christ has undone the death-producing damage done through Adam.⁷⁹ The second section, which culminates in the central claim that death will be annihilated (verse 26=X), argues that Christ’s divinely ordained reign must result in a resurrection (=the annihilation of death). The two thought units are linked logically by an internal chronological development. The first unit (verses 20-23) progresses from the primeval entry of death into the world via Adam, through the work of Christ to reverse the effects of death, and on to Christ’s second coming. The second thought unit (verses 23-28) then describes “the end,” when God will vanquish death itself (verse 26) and be “all in all” (verse 28).⁸⁰

Towards the heart of the second section (verse 27), Paul marshals Ps 8:7a in support of his argument. While Paul adapts the LXX version of the verse to fit the context of his argument (changing the second person “you have set/ὑπέταξας” to the third person “he has set/ὑπέταξεν”) and to fit his preferred vocabulary (replacing the LXX’s preposition “ὑποκάτω,” which Paul never uses, with the synonym that Paul frequently uses

⁷⁹ See Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 706-707.

⁸⁰ See Soards, *1 Corinthians*, 331. While, as Soards correctly notes, “Paul is probably not concerned here with a strict chronological ordering,” 1 Cor 15:20-28 moves along a somewhat loosely developed internal chronological thrust from fall to final redemption.

“ὑπὸ”),⁸¹ the explanatory gloss that follows the quotation, “for when it says,” makes it clear that Paul is citing Ps 8:7 directly. Together with the parallel reference to Ps 110:1 in verse 25,⁸² the citation of Ps 8:7 plays a key role in the rhetorical development of this argument.⁸³ In addition to positioning the two references to the book of Psalms in verses 25 and 27 in parallel with one another, Paul links Ps 110:1 and Ps 8:7 through the use of *gezirah sheva*.⁸⁴ *Gezirah sheva* is a rabbinic interpretive device wherein one clarifies the meaning of a text or verse (in this case, Ps 110:1) by finding another text or verse (Ps 8:7) that shares vocabulary with the first verse (πάντας and ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ in verse 25 connect with πάντα and ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ in verse 27).⁸⁵ Thus, “[a]ll (πάντας) the enemies” in 15:25 progresses in 15:27a to absolutely “all things” (πάντα), which embraces not just the negative, the enemies, but also the positive—everything in the universe.”⁸⁶ These two citations make the point that God has planned all along to vanquish all of Christ’s enemies; God has told us in the Scriptures of his eternal plan to vanquish death through the exaltation of the Messiah (1 Cor 15:26=the crux of the chiasm).

As the pericope concludes (1 Cor 15:27-28), the citation and explanation of Ps 8:7 transitions towards Paul’s succinct summation of the *telos* of his argument, of salvation

⁸¹ See Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (SNTSMS 69; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 206, and Heil, *Rhetorical Role*, 208-210.

⁸² For 1 Cor 15:25 as a reference to Ps 110:1, see Heil, *Rhetorical Role*, 207-208 and Martin Hengel, “Psalm 110 und die Erhöhung des Auferstandenen zur Rechten Gottes,” in *Anfänge der Christologie* (Stuttgart: KVV Verlag, 1972), 51-55. See also Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 754-755.

⁸³ See Heil, *Rhetorical Role*, 221-229.

⁸⁴ Heil, *Rhetorical Role*, 210-211, Urassa, *Psalm 8*, 166-167.

⁸⁵ Heil, *Rhetorical Role*, 210. For the use of *gezirah shevah* in ancient and medieval Judaism, see Solomon Zeitlin, “Hillel and the Hermeneutic Rules,” *JQR* 54(1963), 167; and Michael Chernick, “Internal Restraints on *Gezerah Shawah*’s Application,” *JQR* 83 (1990), 253-282.

⁸⁶ Heil, *Rhetorical Role*, 210.

history, and of the Messianic dominion described in Pss 8:7 and 110:1: “that God may be all and in all.”⁸⁷ Thus, we may summarize 1 Cor 15:20-28 as follows. The overarching goal of the pericope is “to demonstrate that Christ’s resurrection, which both [Paul] and [his Corinthian audience] believe, has made the resurrection of the dead both necessary and inevitable.”⁸⁸ The first part of the pericope (verses 20-23) argues from Christ’s function as the second Adam, which can only be fulfilled if Christ’s resurrection ultimately yields a corporate resurrection. The second section (verses 24-28) argues from Christ’s function as God’s exalted king. This function, too, can only be properly fulfilled if the last enemy of death is vanquished (verse 26), making God “all in all” (verse 28). To quote William Dykstra, then, “the strength of Paul’s argument” does not “rest primarily on logic, but rather on his presentation of salvation history in connection with the person and the reign of Christ.”⁸⁹ Having examined the citation of Ps 8:7 in its context, we are now in a position to look more closely at the way in which Paul interprets Ps 8:7.

The use of Ps 8:7 in 1 Corinthians 15:27. To the modern reader, Paul’s employment of Psalm 110 to support and develop his teaching about the reign of Christ may seem straightforward and in need of little explanation; as a royal psalm speaking of the divine exaltation of the Davidic king, it does not require a fanciful imagination to see Psalm 110 as applying to Jesus the Christ, the Davidic messiah. Yet, the modern reader may wonder what gives Paul the interpretive license to base his teaching about the reign of Christ upon Psalm 8, a hymn of creation praise that speaks about corporate humanity.

⁸⁷ See H. H. Drake Williams, “The Psalms in 1 and 2 Corinthians,” in *The Psalms in the New Testament* (ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken; New York, NY: T & T Clark, 2004), 172.

⁸⁸ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 746.

⁸⁹ “1 Corinthians 15:20-28: A Central Part of Paul’s Argument Against Those Who Deny the Resurrection,” *CTJ* 4 (1969): 205.

To understand the way in which Paul is interpreting Ps 8:7, one must begin by investigating the way in which he employs *gezirah sheva* to introduce his quotation. Neither of the two points of verbal linkage connecting verses 25 and 27 (πάντας and ὑπὸ τοῦς πόδας αὐτοῦ) correspond directly to the LXX or MT version of Ps 110:1;⁹⁰ here, as elsewhere, Paul feels free to alter the wording of the text slightly in order to adapt its message to the situation that he is addressing.⁹¹ Since these adaptations are most likely intentional, and not the result of Paul's reliance upon a now lost *Volage*,⁹² one must ask why Paul adapted the text as he did. The addition of the modifier πάντας (all) to τοῦς ἐχθρούς (the enemies) serves to strengthen Paul's argument that the reign of Christ must be universal.⁹³ Yet, it is hard to see how Paul's decision to replace the words "[as a] footstool for your feet/ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου" from Ps 110:1 LXX with "under his feet/ὑπὸ τοῦς πόδας αὐτοῦ"⁹⁴ advances his argument, unless one considers the key role that the phrase ὑπὸ τοῦς πόδας αὐτοῦ plays in the ensuing citation of Psalm 8. Thus, Paul is probably intentionally rephrasing Ps 110:1 in such a way as to enable him to introduce Ps 8:7

⁹⁰ Where 1 Cor 15:25 reads "all the enemies" (πάντας τοῦς ἐχθρούς), Ps 110:1 simply has "your enemies" (LXX: τοῦς ἐχθρούς σου, MT: אֱיִבָיִךְ). Where 1 Cor 15:25 has "under his feet" (ὑπὸ τοῦς πόδας αὐτοῦ), Ps 110:1 has "a (foot)stool for your feet" (LXX: ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου, MT: הַרְמֵ לְרַגְלֶיךָ). Whether or not one can still refer to Paul's reference to Ps 110:1 as a "quotation" after having undergone such drastic alterations (as per Heil, *Rhetorical Role*, 207-208) is beside the point. The coherences and divergences between 1 Cor 15:25 and Ps 110:1 are such that, 1) on the one hand, Paul is clearly referencing Ps 110:1 in such a way as to marshal the royal psalm as support for his description of Christ's reign, yet 2) on the other hand, Paul is clearly putting the ideas of Ps 110:1 into his own words for his own purposes within the broader context of his argument.

⁹¹ See Stanley, *Paul and the Language*. For the ways in which Paul has adapted Ps 110:1 for his argument in 1 Cor 15:20-28, see Heil, *Rhetorical Role*, 207-208.

⁹² See Stanley, *Paul and the Language*, 12-16, 350-360.

⁹³ So Heil, *Rhetorical Role*, 215-218.

⁹⁴ Paul's decision to shift the pronoun from the second person (σου) to the third person (αὐτοῦ) is unremarkable. Paul shifts grammatical elements of both Ps 110:1 and Ps 8:7 to fit his own context. Given the way in which Paul is using the material, such a shift "is virtually required" (Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 206 [speaking of 1 Cor 15:27=Ps 8:7]; see also Heil, *Rhetorical Role*, 207-210).

into his argument and connect both passages via the use of *gezirah sheva*. If this is the case, then the rationale underlying the introduction of Ps 8:7 into the argument cannot be reduced to a mere word association, prompted by Paul's training in the method of *gezirah sheva*. Paul must have other reasons for bringing Ps 8:7 into his argument that go beyond the superficial verbal similarities shared between Ps 8:7 and Ps 110:1.⁹⁵

Furthermore, although Paul employs exegetical techniques reminiscent of those found in the sectarian literature of Qumran,⁹⁶ he is not engaging here in an atomistic eisegesis, interpreting words and phrases in isolation from their broader context. While the precise nature of Paul's hermeneutic continues to be debated, good evidence exists indicating that Paul's biblical citations consistently evince an awareness of the broader context of the verse under consideration.⁹⁷ At the end of his thorough study of Paul's use of Scripture in 1 Corinthians, Heil concludes that "the significance of each scriptural quote or reference [in 1 Corinthians] derives not only from a particular context within the scriptures but from the global context of all the scriptures."⁹⁸ Similarly, Williams notes that

⁹⁵ Thus, it is somewhat misleading to simply state, as Garland does, that "[t]he exegetical principle of *gezirah shavah* . . . leads Paul to Ps 8:6 (8:7 LXX)" (*1 Corinthians*, 713).

⁹⁶ See Steve Moyise, *The Old Testament in the New: An Introduction* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2001), 83.

⁹⁷ Hays (*Echoes; idem., The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005]), J. Ross Wagner (*Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul <In Concert> in the Letter to the Romans* [SNT 51; Boston, MA: Brill, 2002]), Brian J. Abasciano (*Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9:1-9: An Intertextual and Theological Exegesis* [LNTS 301; New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2005]), and Shiu-Lun Shum (*Paul's Use of Isaiah in Romans* [WUZNT 2:156; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002]) all conclude, after carefully examining part or all of Paul's Old Testament citations and allusions, that Paul's interpretation and application of the Scriptures demonstrates an awareness of the broader context of the text that Paul is citing. For diverse approaches to the question of the method of interpretation by New Testament writers and the question of the role of context in their hermeneutical method, see Gregory K. Beale, ed., *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), and Craig A. Evans, ed., *From Prophecy to Testament: The Function of the Old Testament in the New* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004).

⁹⁸ Heil, *Rhetorical Role*, 261.

“Paul seems to have paid strict attention to the types of psalms that he used” in 1 and 2 Corinthians, such that the genre of the entire psalm cited (and not just the content of the citation in isolation from the rest of the psalm) is appropriate to Paul’s broader rhetorical point.⁹⁹ Moreover, Williams concludes that “the context of the citations and allusions to these psalms [in 1 and 2 Corinthians] appears to influence or, at the very least, displays significant overlapping with Paul’s ideas.”¹⁰⁰

In the case of Paul’s citation of Ps 8:7 in 1 Cor 15:27, the broader context of Psalm 8 overlaps with the broader context of Paul’s argument in three significant ways:

- 1) As already noted, Paul discusses Christ’s function as the second Adam (1 Cor 15:20-23) immediately before discussing Christ’s function as God’s exalted ruler (1 Cor 15:24-28). Thus, just as Psalm 8 describes the way in which God maintains the created order through the reign of אָדָם (“humanity=a man=Adam”) in idealized terms, 1 Cor 15:20-23 describes how the ideal ante-type of Adam/’ Αδαμ, the human/ἀνθρώπου (verses 21-22), will maintain the created order in idealized terms; 1 Cor 15:20-23 and Psalm 8 both describe a perfect human ruler who does what Adam ought to have done, but failed to do.¹⁰¹
- 2) Both Psalm 8 and 1 Cor 15:20-28 delineate God’s ordering of the cosmos in organized detail. Just as Psalm 8 presents a “top down” description of Genesis 1’s created order, 1 Cor 15:20-28 describes how God will restore everything in its own order (ταγμάτος, verse

⁹⁹ Williams, “The Psalms in 1 and 2 Corinthians,” 179-180.

¹⁰⁰ Williams, “The Psalms in 1 and 2 Corinthians,” 180.

¹⁰¹ Thus, while Garland is technically correct that “Paul interprets this psalm as applying to the Messiah, not to Adam or human beings in general” (*1 Corinthians*, 713), one must not forget that the Messiah to whom Paul applies Psalm 8 is a) the Second Adam (1 Cor 15:20-22, and b) the federal representative of humanity (cf. Romans 5) through whom all of redeemed humanity will be raised (1 Cor 15:23).

23), invoking a militant image of marshalling organization.¹⁰² This description of restoration proceeds through a general chronological movement from “Adam” (verses 21, 22) to “the end” (verses 26-28). 3) Both Psalm 8 and 1 Cor 15:20-28 speak of a conflict between God and his “enemies” (צורר, אויב, and מתנקם, Ps 8:3 // ἀρχὴν, ἔξουσίαν, and δύναμιν, 1 Cor 15:24, and ἐχθρούς, 1 Cor 15:25-26). In brief, then, Psalm 8 fits naturally within the context of Paul’s argument in 1 Cor 15:20-28. Paul is describing Jesus here as a perfect ruler who will order creation by vanquishing his enemies; Psalm 8 describes just such a ruler. So, when Paul connects the second Adam with the ruling Christ in 1 Cor 15:20-28, Psalm 8 becomes a perfect *locus* for Paul to draw upon; for Paul, Ps 8:5-9 speaks both to Christ’s function as the ante-type of Adam (verses 20-23) and to Christ’s function as the perfect ruler whom God exalts (verses 24-28).

Even if identifying the human of Psalm 8 with the exalted Christ seems eisogetical to some modern interpreters, when viewed from within Paul’s milieu, it is a natural interpretive move.¹⁰³ That early Christian tradition saw Jesus as fulfilling the role of the בן-אדם/אנוש of Psalm 8 is evident from the use of Psalm 8 in Ephesians 1 and Hebrews 2.¹⁰⁴ The application of Psalm 8 to Jesus as a “last Adam” (1 Cor 15:51) may also have some affinities with “early Jewish apocalyptic portraits of ‘The Exalted Adam’ (4 Ezra

¹⁰² See Hays, *First Corinthians*, 264-265.

¹⁰³ For the New Testament’s interpretation of Psalm 8:5-7 as an example of midrashic exegesis, see Pickup, “Interpretation,” 363-366. While I hesitate to apply the term “midrash” to Paul’s hermeneutic, Pickup’s broader point stands: Paul’s interpretive technique grows quite naturally out of his Jewish environment and training.

¹⁰⁴ For the way in which the concerns and interpretive moves of Hebrews 1 and 2 parallel those of 1 Cor 15:20-28, see Wilber B. Wallis, “The Use of Psalm 8 and 110 in I Corinthians 15:25-27 and Hebrews 1 and 2,” *JETS* 15(1972): 25-29.

and Bar. 2).”¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, Francis J. Moloney argues that the *Regia Targum* on Psalm 8 preserves evidence of a pre-Christian Jewish messianic interpretation of the “Son of Man” in Psalm 8.¹⁰⁶ Whether or not one agrees that Paul’s description of Jesus as the ante-type of Adam (Rom 5:12-21, 1 Cor 15:21-22, 45-50) is consonant with contemporary non-Christian Jewish thought and Messianic expectation,¹⁰⁷ it is unarguably an important aspect of Paul’s christology.¹⁰⁸ Thus, if Paul reads Genesis 1-3 and sees therein a type of Christ, the “second Adam” (1 Cor 15:45) it is natural that Paul would read Psalm 8 and see therein a witness to Christ, the “second human/δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος” (1 Cor 15:47). Having addressed the way in which Paul has interpreted Psalm 8 and used Ps 8:6 in the context of his argument for a future, bodily resurrection, we may now turn to consider how 1 Corinthians 15:27 impacts upon a canonical reading of Psalm 8.

Reading Psalm 8 in Light of 1 Corinthians 15:27

Paul makes three interconnected claims that impact upon a canonical reading of Psalm 8: 1) Jesus is a “second Adam” who brings new life. 2) Jesus is God’s exalted ruler who will be fully exalted and will vanquish death in the eschaton. 3) As a result, the believer is to be assured that there will be a future, bodily resurrection. The following

¹⁰⁵ Urassa, *Psalm 8*, 187. See also *ibid.*, 85-112.

¹⁰⁶ “The Reinterpretation of Psalm 8 and the Son of Man Debate,” *NTS* 27 (1981): 656-672. For a thorough critique and firm rejection of Moloney’s thesis, however, see Maurice Casey, “The Use of the Term in the Aramaic Translations of the Hebrew Bible,” *JSNT* 54 (1994), 105-109.

¹⁰⁷ So Casey, “Use,” 105-109. For other points of connection between Paul’s Adam-Christology and non-Christian Jewish thinking, see Menahem Kister, “‘In Adam:’ I Cor 15:21-22; 12:27 in their Jewish Setting,” in *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honor of Florentino Garcia Martinez* (ed. Anthony Hilhorst, Emile Peuch, and Eibert Tigchelaar; Boston MA: Brill, 2007), 685-690; and *idem.*, “Romans 5:12-21 Against the Background of Torah Theology and Hebrew Usage,” *HTR* 100 (2007): 391-424; and Urassa, *Psalm 8*, 85-112.

¹⁰⁸ See Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 114-119, 271-272, 513-529.

will address each claim, in turn: 1) Jesus is a “second Adam.” This claim enables the reader of Psalm 8 to begin to see a resolution to two tensions that we have already noted latent in a reading of Psalm 8 “in itself” (especially in the presence of the enemies in verse 3) and intensely actualized in a reading of Psalm 8 in the context of the Old Testament: A) the tension between “the apparent insignificance of man in the creation and . . . the place of honor which has been given him,”¹⁰⁹ and B) the tension between the idealized human of Psalm 8 and the anguished reality of the human experience in the world (Job 7:17-21). I do not claim that the Old Testament itself does not already speak to a future wherein such tensions are resolved, as though the witness of Israel to God’s work in the world is the equivalent of a torso without a head.¹¹⁰ Rather, the Old Testament already intimates a resolution to these tensions (see Isa 9:1-7; 12; 25:8 [=1 Cor 15:54c]; Jer 31; Joel 3:17-21, etc.), and Paul and the Church interpret such Old Testament hope in light of the person and work of Christ.

Nevertheless, in Paul’s description of Jesus as the one who reverses the damage of Adam, the Christian canonical reader finds four pivotal insights for understanding Psalm 8: The Christian reader A) now has a clearer picture as to how the tensions of human existence can be resolved—in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, B) sees more clearly how he can read Psalm 8 as speaking to the resolution of such tensions without violating the discreet witness of Psalm 8, C) finds a way of reading the text that is in keeping with both Jewish and Christian theological exegesis,¹¹¹ and D) is now able to read Psalm 8 as simultaneously reflecting several stages of the salvation historical process whereby YHWH plans to maintain

¹⁰⁹ Brevard S. Childs, “Psalm 8 in the Context of the Christian Canon,” *Interpretation* 23 (1969), 28.

¹¹⁰ *Contra* Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (two volumes; J. A. Baker, trans.; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961).

¹¹¹ See Pickup, “Interpretation,” 366.

the created order. We have already seen that Psalm 8 can be understood to speak of YHWH's ideal maintenance of the created order in the "lost world" as well as his continuing maintenance of that order throughout all of history. In light of Paul's claim that Jesus is a new "Adam," Psalm 8 also speaks to the way in which God maintains the created order through Jesus's resurrection in the present life of those who are "in Christ" (2 Cor 5:17; Rom 8:10), and the way in which God will fully institute order at the eschaton by vanquishing the last enemy of death and placing all things under Christ's feet (Rom 8:18-25; 1 Cor 15:20-28).

2) Jesus is God's exalted ruler. Much of what was said concerning Jesus as a new Adam applies to Paul's depiction of Jesus as God's exalted ruler as well; the tensions in the status of humanity that emerge from reading Psalm 8 "in itself" and in the context of the Old Testament also apply both to the corporate human ruler and to the individual Davidic human monarch. When, with Paul, the Christian understands Jesus as the one whom God exalts to rule over other humans as well as every other created thing, this understanding clarifies how God has maintained, is maintaining, and will finally maintain the created order through a human vice-gerent. Moreover, Christ's role as exalted ruler enables corporate humanity to fulfill its role as ruler over the rest of the cosmos. The way in which 1 Cor 15:20-28 makes these claims informs a canonical reading of Psalm 8 in two significant ways.

First of all, the depiction of the exaltation of Christ in 1 Cor 15:24-28 differs subtly from the depiction of the exaltation of the human ruler in Ps 8:5-9 in one interesting way. The analysis of Psalm 8 in chapter two has already shown that, except for the mention of enemies in verse 3, the execution of the human's rule is described in Psalm 8 in predominantly pacific terms, with the emphasis upon the sub-human creatures as beneficiaries of humanity's rule, not as threats to that rule. By contrast, 1 Cor 15:20-28 describes Christ's exaltation

using marshal imagery, depicting Christ as a conqueror vanquishing every foe.¹¹² Thus, when one reads Psalm 8 in light of 1 Cor 15:24-29, she is reminded that, on the one hand, even the last enemy, death, will be vanquished in the eschaton (verse 26). Yet, on the other hand, the eschaton has not come, and God is still in the process of subjugating the threats to his order. Such militant imagery may make some uneasy, as they fear the abuse of 1 Corinthians 15 by those who would institute a new Christian holy war. Yet, Jesus does not vanquish the enemy of death through holy war, but through humility and death on the cross. Paul is not calling for militant combat, “for,” as one disputed Pauline epistle says, “our struggle is not against flesh and blood” (Eph 6:12, NIV). Nevertheless, when reading Psalm 8 in light of 1 Cor 15:20-28, one remembers that spiritual “enemies and avengers” (Ps 8:3) still exist, the greatest of which is death, and that humanity still struggles against such enemies until “the end” (1 Cor 15:24).

Secondly, the way in which Paul connects Ps 8:7 with the Davidic proclamation of Ps 110:1 is worth noting. Furthermore, while only 1 Cor 15:25-28 directly connects the two passages via *gezirah sheva*, all four of the New Testament authors present a citation of Psalm 8 in close proximity with a citation of Ps 110:1, possibly indicating a commonly held traditional association of the two texts.¹¹³ A canonical reader interpreting Psalm 8 in light of its interpretation by New Testament authors, therefore, would do well to examine Psalm 110 and read Psalm 8 in light of Psalm 110. Thus, I will briefly offer two observations here derived from reading Psalm 8 in light of both Psalm 110 and 1 Cor 15:24-28.

¹¹² See Hays, *First Corinthians*, 264-265.

¹¹³ So Wallis, “Psalms 8 and 110;” and William R. G. Loader, “Christ at the Right Hand: Psalm CX. 1 in the New Testament,” *NTS* 24(1978), 208-210. Psalm 110:1 is cited explicitly in Matt 22:44 and Heb 1:13, and is alluded to in Eph 1:20. For my part, however, I am less confident than Loader seems to be that it is possible to trace precisely trajectories of development shaping traditions of interpretation.

The somewhat spiritualized marshal imagery of 1 Cor 15:23-28 is tame in comparison with the brutal declaration of Ps 110:5-6 that the Davidic king will “shatter kings,” “fill [the nations] with corpses,” and “shatter chiefs over the wide earth.” Interpreting Psalm 8 in light of Ps 110 and 1 Cor 15, then, the canonical reader encounters a Davidic Messiah who engages his enemies (Ps 110:5-7) with furor, a second Adam who rules over his subjects with benevolence (Ps 8:7-9), and an exalted Christ who vanquishes spiritual enemies through the power of resurrection (1 Cor 15:20-28). It would be a mistake to allow any one of these images of Christ to override the other; rather, the appropriate response is humble trust in God and in Christ, who cannot be domesticated or distilled into convenient human categories.

Interestingly, Paul has chosen here to base his description of the exalted Christ upon Psalm 110, from the final book of the Psalter. If Wilson were correct that the shaping of the Psalter results in the muting of the Davidic hope,¹¹⁴ one would not expect to find Paul making such an exegetical move. Yet, rather than giving up on the Davidic hope as a failed hope, Paul seems to see Christ as the one who both fulfills the Davidic hope and brings into reality the “kingdom ‘not of this world’—the eternal kingdom in which YHWH alone is king.”¹¹⁵ In brief, when one reads Psalm 8, Psalm 110, and 1 Cor 15:20-28 in tandem, one begins to see the tension between king David, king Adam, and king YHWH resolved in the single person of Jesus the Messiah.¹¹⁶ The sections below treating the citations of Psalm 8 in Eph 1:15-23 and Heb 2:5-9 will explore the implications of reading Psalm 8 in

¹¹⁴ Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (SBLDS 76; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 214-228.

¹¹⁵ Gerald H. Wilson, “Shaping the Psalter: A Consideration of Editorial Linkage in the Book of Psalms,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (JSOTSup 159; ed. J. Clinton McCann; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 81.

¹¹⁶ See James L. Mays, *Psalms* (Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994), 67.

light of the identification of Jesus as the exalted ruler further; both of these passages use Psalm 8 to make claims similar to those made in 1 Cor 15:20-28.

3) There will be a future, bodily resurrection. This claim impacts upon a canonical reading of Psalm 8 by assuring the reader that the idealized human existence described in Psalm 8 will one day be a living, breathing, physical reality. Indeed, in that day, according to Paul, “πάντας τοὺς ἐχθροὺς/all enemies” will be vanquished (1 Cor 15:25), and the “enemy and avenger” will be fully and finally silenced (Ps 8:3). Meditating upon this claim is enough to motivate the reader to burst forth, with Paul, into doxology, saying “thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 15:57). Yet, such exultation must wait, as we have yet to consider the broader scope of the rest of the New Testament. We turn then, to examine Eph 1:22, where the phrase “he has put all things under his feet” (Ps 8:3) is once again applied to Jesus.

Ephesians 1:15-22 and Psalm 8

Reading Ephesians 1:15-22 "In Itself"

The broader context: The Epistle to the Ephesians. The question of the authorship of the book of Ephesians is a difficult one,¹¹⁷ with a majority of scholars seeing the

¹¹⁷ Andrew T. Lincoln delineates three major positions on the identity of the author of Ephesians: 1) Paul himself, 2) a secretary of Paul writing during Paul's lifetime on behalf of Paul, and 3) a later disciple of Paul carrying forward what he perceived to be the ideas of Paul (*Ephesians*, [WBC 42; Waco, TX: Word, 1990], lxii). In his brief, nuanced treatment, Charles H. Talbert delineates no less than six varieties of authorship in the ancient world that, either independently or combined one with another, might be said to characterize the authorship of Ephesians, depending upon the view that one takes: 1) an author has written “with his own hand,” 2) an author has “dictated the writing,” 3) “collaborators . . . functioned as coauthors,” 4) “someone [i.e., Paul] . . . authorized the writing,” 5) something is written “as if” by one individual but actually composed by a friend or disciple,” and 6) a writing that is an “outright forgery” (*Ephesians and Colossians* [PCNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007], 7-9).

Epistle as being written by a later follower of Paul,¹¹⁸ and a substantial minority viewing the book as written by Paul himself.¹¹⁹ The ultimate goal of the present study is to understand the text as it stands, not to reconstruct the history behind the text, the question of authorship will not be in the fore in the following discussion. The more pressing question for our purposes is whether or not the theology of the portion of Ephesians under consideration differs substantially from that of Paul in such a way as to affect our canonical reading of Psalm 8. Thus, the following will attend to the question of the nature of the continuity and discontinuity between Eph 1:15-22 and 1 Cor 15:20-28, without attempting to resolve the question of whether or not Eph 1:15-22 comes from the pen of Paul.

Whoever wrote Ephesians, the letter contains several distinctive elements.¹²⁰ The message of Ephesians is the least situational of the putatively Pauline epistles.¹²¹ While the letter may assume situational concerns that influence its theological emphases, Ephe-

¹¹⁸ Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 10-11; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an Die Epheser* (EKKzNT 10; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982); *idem.*, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, Helen Heron trans. (Edinburgh, UK: T & T Clark, 1991); Lincoln, *Ephesians*; *idem.* and A. J. M. Wedderburn, *The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters*, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

¹¹⁹ Markus Barth, *Ephesians*, 2 vols. (AB 34-34A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974); A. van Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians* (NTSSup 39; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974); Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: 2002); Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007). F. F. Bruce allows the possibility that a follower of Paul has written the letter, but argues that the book is thoroughly Pauline in its theology, describing Ephesians as “The Quintessence of Paulinism” *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 424-440.

¹²⁰ Lincoln and Wedderburn, *Theology*, 78-141; Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 9-11.

¹²¹ In the words of Lincoln and Wedderburn, Ephesians is “devoid of virtually all reference to particular circumstances which would enable the contemporary reader to reconstruct with any precision the setting of its addressees” (*Theology*, 78). Although, Clinton E. Arnold suggests that the epistle to the Ephesians addresses concerns arising from pagan magical practices in Ephesus (*Ephesians, Power and Magic: The Concept of Power in Ephesians in Light of its Historical Setting* [New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1989]).

sians does not directly identify those situational concerns,¹²² making it well suited to serve as a circular letter; the omission of the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ/in Ephesus in many early manuscripts likely indicate that the epistle did, in fact, serve as a circular letter.¹²³ Ephesians is striking in that it seems to draw on material from other Pauline literature, especially from its “companion letter,” Colossians, pointing to a late date for the composition of Ephesians.¹²⁴ Ephesians is also written in a lofty rhetorical style, emphasizing the present tense,¹²⁵ and containing what Lincoln and Wedderburn call “traditional liturgical forms,” especially in the first half of the book (chapters 1-3).¹²⁶

Theologically, while Ephesians revisits many themes found in other Pauline material, it does so in a distinctive way.¹²⁷ Ecclesiologically, the letter puts a distinctive emphasis upon the corporate and universal church, the need for unity within the Church,

¹²² In addition to Arnold’s view that Ephesians’s theological messages militate against syncretistic magical beliefs in Asia minor (*Ephesians*), Thorsten Moritz takes up and modifies Arnold’s view, arguing that Ephesians, unlike Colossians, simultaneously addresses Greek and Jewish believers (*A Profound Mystery: The Use of the Old Testament in Ephesians* [SNT 85; New York, NY: E. J. Brill, 1996], 216-220). While I find both contributions insightful and compelling, I have chosen to focus here upon the message of the text, rather than putative historical contexts behind the text.

¹²³ The NRSV (*contra* the RSV) may be correct to read the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ as original. Yet, the fact that so many early manuscripts omit these words probably reflects the circular function that the letter served even at an early time. For the text critical problems associated with Eph 1:1, see Roon, *Authenticity*, 72-85; Ernest Best, “Ephesians 1.1 Again” in *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett* (London, UK: SPCK, 1982), 273-279. See also Barth, *Ephesians* 1:58-59; William J. Larkin, *Ephesians: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (BHGNT; Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 2-3.

¹²⁴ The book of Ephesians also exhibits striking parallels to sections of the book of Romans at some points. For a discussion of the relationship between the book of Ephesians with Colossians and the rest of the Pauline corpus from the stand-point that Ephesians and Colossians are pseudo-Pauline, see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, xlvii-lviii, lxvi-lxvii. For a similar discussion urging Pauline authorship of Ephesians and Colossians, see Witherington, *Letters*, 12-19. Cf. Lincoln and Wedderburn, *Theology*, 87-89.

¹²⁵ See Witherington, *Letters*, 10-11, 14.

¹²⁶ Lincoln and Wedderburn describe Eph 1-3 as having a “liturgical flavour” (*Theology* 81, 87).

¹²⁷ In addition to the ecclesiological and eschatological emphases of Ephesians, the epistle’s distinctive concerns are evident in the way that it emphasizes other theological themes, such as predestination, the lordship of Christ over all things and over the church, the work of the holy spirit, the mystery of salvation, and spiritual warfare (Turner, “Ephesians,” 126-130). See also Barth, *Ephesians* 1:33-36.

and reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles (2:11-19; 4:1-16).¹²⁸ The book also has a notable emphasis upon eschatology, and some have argued that the book of Ephesians parts company with Pauline theology by presupposing an over-realized eschatology.¹²⁹ The question of the relationship between the eschatology of Ephesians and the eschatology of the undisputed Pauline literature deserves special attention here at the outset; the way in which one understands this relationship will have a bearing upon the way in which one interprets both 1 Corinthians 15 and Ephesians 1.

In the case of 1 and 2 Corinthians, as I have already noted above, the Greek elevation of the spirit over the body, rather than Gnostic eschatology, is the primary motivation for the Corinthians' rejection of Paul's teaching of the resurrection. Furthermore, Paul makes statements throughout the undisputed letters indicating that he understands the church to have already experienced a transformation through the work of Christ,¹³⁰ and he describes eschatological realities that are not yet in effect as though they were already realized (Rom 8:29-30).

¹²⁸ See Hoehner, *Ephesians* 102-105. Barth seems to see the need for the Gentile Church to live out its unity with the people of Israel as the purpose underlying the epistle (see Markus Barth, "Conversion and Conversation: Israel and the Church in Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians," *Int* 17[1963], 3-4).

¹²⁹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, lxxxix-xc.

¹³⁰ See 1 Cor 6:17-20 and 2 Cor 5:17. Paul even goes so far as to say that "the end of the ages (τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων) has come/arrived (κατήντηκεν)" (1 Cor 10:11; cf. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 465). He also speaks of the believer's identification with Jesus as both a present reality and a future hope (Rom 6:1-14; Gal 2:17-21; Gal 5:24), and "the victory over the cosmic powers is also seen as having already taken place in Phil. 2:10, 11; 3:21b and Col. 2:15" (Lincoln, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians," *JSNT* 14[1982], 42).

So also the book of Ephesians holds the Church's future hope and present blessing in tension.¹³¹ Talbert, admitting that "[t]he eschatology of Ephesians has been a difficult script to decipher," summarizes the tension with lucid brevity:

Does the parallel [between Christ and Christians] . . . indicate an overrealized eschatology on the part of Ephesians? No, it does not. Ephesians does have references that indicate an inaugurated eschatology (e.g., sealed with the Holy Spirit who is the first installment, 1:3-14; raised and seated in dependence on him in the heavenlies, 2:5-6; access in one Spirit to the Father, 2:18; 3:11). But Ephesians also has a strong unrealized eschatological perspective (e.g., references to age or ages to come, 1:21; 2:7; 3:21; a future hope, 1:14, 18; 4:4; an incomplete process, 2:22; 3:19; 4:13, 15-16; the last judgment, 5:5-6; 6:8-9).¹³²

Thus, it is best to describe the difference between the eschatology of Ephesians and the eschatology of undisputed Pauline literature as one of emphasis, rather than as betraying two irreconcilable theologies. In Ephesians, an emphasis upon the conquering, exalted Christ is fitting for the doxological and worshipful tenor of the epistle.¹³³

Concerning the book's structure and development, the body can be divided into two halves. The first half (1:3-3:22) is worshipful and doctrinal (an "Extended Thanksgiving"), while the second (4:1-6:20) is didactic and ethical (a "Paraenesis").¹³⁴ The first half reflects upon "the knowledge of Christ" and his church (Eph 1:17). The

¹³¹ Max Turner "Ephesians," in *Theological Interpretation of the New Testament: A Book-by-Book Survey* (ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Daniel J. Treier, and N. T. Wright; Grand Rapids, MI: SPCK/Baker Academic, 2008), 129-130; Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians* 73-75.

¹³² Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 73.

¹³³ Moreover, in 1 Corinthians, Paul is arguing for a future, corporate, bodily resurrection; there, a discussion of the "already" realized effects of Christ's resurrection would serve little to advance his argument. In Ephesians, however, the emphasis upon Christ's present victory may advance the book's purpose to provide a "prophylactic against the danger [in the Lycus valley churches] of syncretistic veneration of angelic powers" ("Ephesians," 125; following Arnold, *Ephesians*).

¹³⁴ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, xliii; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 64-69. See also Edna Johnson, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Ephesians* (SSAS; Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2008), whose careful study supports dividing the body of Ephesians into two main sections. It is also possible to trace the development of the body of the book using the categories of Hellenistic epistolary rhetoric, as follows: A) Exordium (1:3-23): eulogy and extended thanksgiving; B) Narratio (chapters two and three); C) Exhortatio (4:1-6:9) and peroratio (6:10-20). See Witherington, *Letters*, 20, and Lincoln, *Ephesians*, xliii-xliv.

second half emphasizes practice, exhorting the audience to live out the moral implications of that knowledge (chapters 4-6).¹³⁵ The quotation of Psalm 8 comes at the end of an extended prayer¹³⁶ that forms part of the first section of the doctrinal half of the epistle, in the context of a meditation upon the exalted status of the risen Lord (Eph 1:15-23).

The Nearer Context: Ephesians 1 and Ephesians 1:19-23. The first chapter introduces the doctrinal teaching of chapters 1-3 (=the opening exordium). Soaring with lofty rhetoric, it contains three interconnected sections, as follows:

Address (verses 1-2)
A Hymn of praise (*Berakah*/eulogy, verses 3-14)
A prayer of thanksgiving (15-23).¹³⁷

After opening the book with a blessing, Paul prays for his audience in 1:15-23. In verses 19-23 “Die Fürbitte weitet sich zu einem christologisch-ekklesiologischen Exkurs”¹³⁸ which is so worshipful and poetic that some have suggested that it might be based upon a hymn.¹³⁹ The specific subject of this “christologisch-ekklesiologischen Exkurs” is τὴν

¹³⁵ See Hoener, *Ephesians*, 66-69.

¹³⁶ Or, more precisely, the author’s summation of how he has been “remembering [the audience] in [his] prayers” (verse 18).

¹³⁷ Naymond H. Keathley, “To the Praise of His Glory: Ephesians 1,” *RevExp* 76(1976); cf. Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 55. While Keathley and Talbert describe verses 3-14 using the Hebrew term, *ברכה*/*berekah*, others, using Latin rhetorical language, describe this section as a “eulogy” (Lincoln, *Ephesians* xliii-xliv, Witherington, *Letters*, 20).

¹³⁸ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 70.

¹³⁹ Reinhard Deichgräber reconstructs the original hymn as follows: “ἐγείρας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν/καὶ καθίσας ἐν δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ (ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις)/καὶ πάντα ὑπέταξεν ὑπο τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ/καὶ αὐτὸν ἔδωκεν κεφαλὴν ὑπὲρ πάντα (τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ)” (*Gotteshymnus und Christushymnus in der frühen Christenheit* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1967], 165). See also Jack T. Sanders (“Hymnic Elements in Ephesians 1-3”). See Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 50-51 for a survey and critique of proposals concerning possible hymnic origins for the passage, including the proposals of Deichgräber, Sanders, and Gottfried Schille.

ἐνέργειαν τοῦ κράτους τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ/the working of the strength of his (God's) might (verse 19), seen in God's exaltation of Christ, the head of the Church (verses 20-23). This meditation forms "the climax of the prayer . . . the understanding of God's mystery of redemption"¹⁴⁰ revealed in God's mighty exaltation of the Christ.

Eph 1:19-23 parallels 1 Cor 15:24-28 in striking ways. Both passages hermeneutically connect Pss 110:1 and Ps 8:7 together to construct a theology of the risen Christ in similar ways. While some attribute the similarities to the use of a common tradition, Moritz questions whether the evidence for such a widespread tradition is as strong as is often assumed.¹⁴¹ In any event, the distinctive way in which 1 Corinthians 15 and Ephesians 2 connect Pss 110 and 8 and the other points of connection and resonance between the two passages cannot be adequately explained by an appeal to a common tradition.¹⁴² Since these parallels deserve special attention for the purposes of the present study, it will be helpful to examine the content and message of Eph 1:19-23 by focusing upon the similarities and differences between these verses and 1 Cor 15:24-28.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Urassa, *Psalm 8*, 221.

¹⁴¹ Lincoln ("OT in Ephesians," 40-42) and Wallis ("Psalms 8 and 110") both see the author as drawing upon traditional material, and William R. G. Loader attempts to reconstruct the evolution of the tradition of interpreting Ps 110:1 Christologically, ("Christ at the Right Hand: Psalm 110:1 in the New Testament," *NTS* 24[1978], 199-217). Moritz points out that the other early Christian material connecting the two texts do not connect them as clearly and intricately as do Corinthians and Ephesians, do not seem to directly underlie Corinthians or Ephesians, and do not exhibit strong enough affinities with Corinthians and Ephesians to warrant the reconstruction of a common tradition (*Profound Mystery*, 9-22). Moreover, in the New Testament, only Heb 1:13 and 2:8 cites Ps 110:1 and Ps 8:7 in close proximity to one another, and there the two citations "are separated by six verses" and "form only part of a whole string of Psalm citations," with no clear indicator that the two psalms are hermeneutically intertwined (*Profound Mystery*, 12).

¹⁴² Even if tradition came to associate Ps 110:1 and Ps 8:7 as a Christological textual nexus, the similarities between 1 Cor 15:24-28 and Eph 1:19-23 go beyond the mere Christological association of the two texts, as the following treatment will show. See also Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 9-22.

¹⁴³ As I shall argue below, a consideration of the parallels can shine light upon an understanding of Eph 1:22 "in itself" by elucidating the way in which Ephesians is utilizing Ps 8:7. Furthermore, an intertextual reading of Psalm 8, 1 Cor 15:24-28, and Eph 1:19-23 will go far in clarifying our canonical exploration of Psalm 8, wherein we are using citations of Psalm 8 as entry points into the New Testament.

The way in which Eph 1:21 draws upon Ps 110:1 has striking similarities with the use of Psalm 110 in 1 Cor 15:25 that seem to go beyond a traditional liturgical association of the two texts. Moritz delineates four aspects of the psalms' citation in Eph 1:21 that, he urges, illustrate its independence from other OT texts.¹⁴⁴ Yet, much of the language that Moritz uses to describe the “special features” of Eph 1:19-23 could also be used to describe 1 Cor 15:24-28.¹⁴⁵ In both passages, “the ‘enemies’ (cf Ps 110:1) are clearly interpreted as evil powers and principalities” (Eph 1:21 // 1 Cor 15:24).¹⁴⁶ Also, “as in 1 Cor 15.25, Ephesians displays an interest in the time span envisaged in the Psalm [*sic.*],” and in both passages “the sitting motif is related to a heavenly scene” (see 1 Cor 15:38-42, where Paul describes the future resurrection as “celestial/ἐπουράνια”).¹⁴⁷ Finally, both passages attend to “the subjection motif” wherein “Christ [is] over all things.”¹⁴⁸

In addition to the similarities in the way in which the two passages appropriate Ps 110:1, the passages contain some notable thematic and lexical similarities. In their broader contexts, both passages contemplate the effects of the way in which God has exalted Christ in the resurrection, both passages pray and plead for the audience to fully grasp these effects, and both passages emphasize the way in which these effects impact upon the broader, corporate church. Both passages use marshal imagery, and describe

¹⁴⁴ Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 10.

¹⁴⁵ To be fair, Moritz does see a strong relationship between the hermeneutic in 1 Cor 15:24-28 and the hermeneutic in Eph 1:19-23, and his case argues against a “pre-Pauline interpretative stratum” (*Profound Mystery*, 10). Yet, he characterizes Eph 1:20-23 as interpreting Pss 110 and 8 “independently” and argues for “considerably more exegetical activity” on the part of the author of Ephesians, whom he seems to assume is a disciple of a Pauline school (21).

¹⁴⁶ Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 10.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* See also Lincoln, “OT in Ephesians,” 41-42.

¹⁴⁸ Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 10.

Christ as the victor of a conflict against his enemies.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, both passages provide an orderly account of God’s exaltation of Christ, enumerating in a list the enemies (=unwilling subjects) that Christ has conquered and will conquer (Eph 1:21, 1 Cor 15:24-25)¹⁵⁰ and describing the implications of this exaltation for believers (=willing subjects, 1 Cor 15:22, 26, Eph 1:22-23). Other similarities exist in the way in which the two passages interpret and apply Psalm 8, including the prominence of the concept of totality and the key role of the word πάντα (“all”) in both passages (see below). Finally, however one translates the final phrase of Ephesians 1, “τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν πληρουμένου” (NRSV: “the fullness of him who fills all in all”), the inclusion of the phrase “[τὰ] πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν/all in all” in Eph 1:23 and 1 Cor 15:28 is striking.¹⁵¹

Yet the two passages differ in one significant way: While Paul is discussing Christ’s lordship in the broader context of a future resurrection that has not yet occurred in 1 Corinthians 15, Eph 1:19-23 emphasizes the current exalted reign of Christ.¹⁵² Nevertheless, one must be careful to avoid overstating the differences between the two passages at

¹⁴⁹ Concerning the marshal language of 1 Cor 15:20-28, see Hays, *First Corinthians*, 264-265. In the case of Eph 1:19-23, in addition to the militant implications involved in God subjecting all things to the Christ as per Pss 110:1 and Ps 8:7, the entire section is a meditation upon “τὸ ὑπερβάλλον μέγεθος τῆς δῶνάμεως αὐτοῦ . . . κατὰ τὴν ἐνεργεῖαν τοῦ κράτους τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ/the immeasurable greatness of his power . . . according to the working of the strength of his might.”

¹⁵⁰ See Lincoln, “OT in Ephesians,” 41-42.

¹⁵¹ Concerning the translation of πλήρωμα, some understand it to stand in apposition to “the body,” or the Church, while others argue that it refers to “the head” (verse 22), or Christ (see Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 301-304). Concerning the function of πληρουμένου in the sentence, it is typically construed as an active middle, with Christ=the head, as the subject, but the middle of πληρώω does not have an active sense anywhere else in the New Testament. Thus some construe πληρουμένου here as a passive, translating the phrase to mean “the church is being filled” (Ignace de La Potterie, “Christ, Plérôme de l’Église,” *Biblica* 58 [1977], 500-524). The exegete must also determine whether τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν is an adjective or substantive, and to what it refers (Roy Yates, “Re-examination of Ephesians 1:23,” *ExpT* 83 [1972], 147; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 294-301). While the present study does not seek to resolve the question, I follow the majority view here in understanding the entire phrase “the fullness of him who fills all in all” (so NRSV).

¹⁵² See Lincoln, “OT in Ephesians,” 42. Ephesians 1:19-23 describes Christ’s exaltation with a string of aorist verbs: ἐνήργησεν(verse 20), ὑπέταξεν, and ἔδωκεν (verse 22), indicating completed action.

this point.¹⁵³ What Talbert says of a related Pauline passage applies here: “Is there a difference in perspective between Rom 6 and Ephesians? Yes and no . . . [O]ne must attend to how the differing contexts result in differing arguments.”¹⁵⁴ The concerns of 1 Cor 15:20-28 (and Romans 6) lead Paul to emphasize “the ‘not yet;’” yet, as the following section will show, the concerns of Ephesians lead “Paul” to emphasize “the ‘now.’”¹⁵⁵ Yet Ephesians 1 also speaks to a future hope, so that the “not yet” is noted even there.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, there is a marked difference in emphasis between the two passages. What, then, ought one to make of the similarities and differences between Eph 1:19-23 and 1 Cor 15:24-28? Before fully addressing this question, we must first consider the way in which Ephesians 1 interprets Ps 8:7 and applies it to Christ.

The use of Ps 8:7 in Ephesians 1:22. As already noted, several commentators understand Eph 1:20-22 as incorporating a hymnic tradition commonly known in the church that interprets Pss 110 and 8 Christologically.¹⁵⁷ While such a scenario is not impossible, it does not fully account for the way in which Eph 1:22 interprets Ps 8:7. To begin with,

¹⁵³ I have already pointed out that the undisputed Pauline letters speak of the way in which the church already experiences the effects of the resurrection of Christ, and even 1 Cor 15:25 itself depicts Christ as already reigning. Furthermore, while Ephesians 1 affirms an as yet unexperienced eschatological hope for the Church (verses 10, 13-14, 18) one ought not interpret the author’s use of the past tense in Ephesians 1 in a simplistic literal sense; Paul has elsewhere used aorist verbs in connection with a discussion on predestination to describe future glorification as though it were already experienced (Rom 8:29-30), and predestination also figures prominently in Ephesians 1 (verses 5, 11). Thus, the author of Ephesians, whether Paul or a follower of Paul, could very well use the aorist here in a way analogous to Paul’s usage of the aorist elsewhere.

¹⁵⁴ Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 74.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Ephesians emphasizes the Holy Spirit as a seal of things to come (verses 13-14) and praying that the audience “may know what is the hope to which” they have been called (verse 18). See Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 264-265. Thus, the strong language used here to describe Christ’s exaltation as a present reality does not portray the story as over and Christ’s work as fully accomplished. Rather, it encourages readers about the state of affairs “not only in this age, but also in the one to come (ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι, verse 21).”

¹⁵⁷ Lincoln, “OT in Ephesians,” 41; *idem.*, *Ephesians*, 50-51; Wallis, “Psalms 8 and 110.”

Eph 1:19-23 and Psalm 8 resonate strongly with one another, as though the author of Ephesians has reflected hermeneutically upon Psalm 8 in a way that goes beyond a mere mechanical recitation of traditional material. The two texts share a similarity of tone: Psalm 8 is a poem of praise, and Eph 1:19-23 is a digression of praise that is very poetic, though it may not be a poem, properly so called. The two contexts share a similarity of theme: The subject of Psalm 8 is the “glory of the Lord,” and the theme of Eph 1:19-23 is “the strength of God’s might;” Ps 8 is praising God for his self-exaltation by means of the exaltation of things in the created order, and Ephesians 1:19-23 is praising God for his self-exaltation by means of the exaltation of Christ. It is not surprising, then, that Paul would draw upon Ps 8:7 to illustrate his point in Eph 1:22.

Looking closely at the two passages, there are some specific elements which point to a close thematic and lexical overlap between them. In the Septuagint version of Ps 8:2, God’s magnificence is “raised up (ἐπήρθη),” (implicitly by God via the use of the divine passive), while in Eph 1:20-21, it is Christ whom God has “raised (ἐγείρας)” from the dead.¹⁵⁸ In Ephesians 1, after raising Christ from the dead, God seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms (ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις) far above (ὑπεράνω) every ruler and authority, etc.” (Eph 1:20-21). Similarly, Ps 8:2 (LXX) declares that God’s “magnificence has been raised up (ἐπήρθη) above the heavens (ὑπεράνω τῶν οὐρανῶν).” Thus, in each passage, God raises something to an exalted position “far above (ὑπεράνω)” something else, placing it in or above the heavens (τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις / τῶν οὐρανῶν).

¹⁵⁸ While there is no lexical parallel here, there is a conceptual parallel in the use of these verbs. See the definitions of ἐγείρω and ἐπαίρω in BDAG (Fredrick William Danker, et. al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. [Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000], 271 and 357.

Furthermore, the description of the position which the exalted Christ occupies in Eph 1:21b-23 parallels Psalm 8 in key ways. Both passages use the word “all/every” frequently; Ephesians uses the word every/all six times (verse 21: πάσης ἀρχῆς . . . παντός ὀνόματος, verse 22: πάντα ὑπέταξεν . . . πάντα τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, and verse 23: τὰ πάντα ἐν παῶν πληρουμένου). As we have already seen, the psalmist also uses this word to describe what God has exalted at strategic points in Psalm 8: The inclusio repeats twice that the Lord’s name is “excellent in *all* the earth (πάση τῇ γῆ),” and verse 7, the center-point of the psalm, declares that God has exalted the son of humanity (υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου) by subjecting “all things” (πάντα) under his feet. Interestingly, when Paul Christologically interprets Ps 8:7 in 1 Cor 15:27, he includes a brief exegetical explanation of the word “all things/πάντα.”¹⁵⁹

Furthermore, Eph 1:21-23 describes Christ’s exaltation with a list of things that Christ is over; so, too, a list of things which the child of humanity has authority over (LXX: πρόβατα καὶ . . . τὰ διαπορευόμενα τρίβους θαλασσῶν) in Ps 8:8, 9 follows the declaration of the exaltation of the בְּיָדוֹ in Ps 8:7. Interestingly, the description of Christ’s exalted status begins in Eph 1:20 with Christ seated “in the heavenly places,” and progresses through the list of Christ’s subjects, both hostile and friendly: “the evil powers and the church.”¹⁶⁰ Within the internal development of this progression, the author turns to address “die Heilsstellung Christi für die Kirche (V 22b)” that comes after

¹⁵⁹ “But when it says, ‘all things are put in subjection,’ it is plain that he is excepted who put all things (πάντα) in subjection under him. When all things (πάντα) are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all” (1 Cor 15:27).

¹⁶⁰ Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 57. For helpful discussions of the terms Paul uses to describe the various heavenly powers in Ephesians 1, see Arnold, *Ephesians*, 52-56 and Roon, *Authenticity* 219-227.

“der Niederwerfung der Unheilmächte.”¹⁶¹ The phrase “he has subjected all things under his feet” seems to occupy the point of transition from the evil powers to the Church who has Christ over it as a head. Thus, when the book transitions from considering the spiritual powers and authorities to addressing Christ’s relationship with the Church, the author draws a line from Psalm 8 precisely where the psalmist has transitioned from a contemplation of heavenly things to the human’s relationship to earthly things.¹⁶² These observations strengthen Moritz’s case for “attributing considerably more exegetical activity to the author of Ephesians than has generally been assumed” and reinforce his claim that “Ephesians shows an awareness of the OT *Vorlage* which goes beyond the level of *Wirkungsgeschichte* and which extends to the level of the OT text itself.”¹⁶³

What, then, of the exegetical basis upon which the author of Ephesians grounds the connection between the human in Psalm 8 and the exalted Christ? To answer this question, we must return to the question of the implications of the parallels between Eph 1:19-23 and 1 Cor 15:24-28. Such strong similarities are not surprising in light of the tendency of the book of Ephesians to draw upon material not only from Colossians but also from the rest of the Pauline corpus.¹⁶⁴ Whether the author of Ephesians is Paul or an imitator of Paul, he or she seems to be intimately acquainted with the hermeneutical thought reflected in 1 Cor 15:24-28 and seems to have carried that thought forward in

¹⁶¹ Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an Die Epheser*, 71.

¹⁶² The body of Psalm 8 begins with a meditation upon the heavenly bodies, within which is embedded a conflict involving God’s enemies. It then addresses the role of humans (who are βραχύ τι παρ’ ἀγγέλους) saying that God “has subjected all things under his feet/πάντα ὑπέταξας ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ (Ps 8:5b),” and resolves into an orderly enumeration of creatures subjected to the human (Ps 8:8-9).

¹⁶³ *Profound Mystery*, 21.

¹⁶⁴ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, xlvi-lviii, lxvi-lxvii; Witherington, *Letters*, 12-19; Lincoln and Wedderburn, *Theology*, 87-89.

Eph 1:19-23.¹⁶⁵ Yet, along with carrying this exegesis of Psalm 8 forward, Eph 1:19-23 introduces a shift in emphasis from the eschatological “not yet” to the present reality of the “now.”

Several factors may be involved in motivating the author to use Pss 8 and 110 to meditate upon the exaltation of Christ as the church already encounters it “now.” Arnold makes a compelling case that the epistle is at pains to demonstrate that Christ is superior to the spiritual beings that new believers in Asia Minor would have feared.¹⁶⁶ Even if Arnold’s thesis were to be proven false or unlikely, the exultant quasi-hymnic nature of the passage, the desire to encourage the believers at Ephesus (verse 18), and the exhortation to the Ephesians to live as a unified body here on earth (4:1-16) all provide adequate explanations for why the emphasis here is upon the present reign of the exalted Christ, rather than the future hope of resurrection.

Thus, the hermeneutical underpinnings for the Christological appropriation of Ps 8:7 in Eph 1:22 most likely derive primarily from the broader thought of Pauline Christianity, especially as found in 1 Cor 15:26, rather than from a reliance upon tradition or from the discreet concerns of the book of Ephesians (though both of these considerations may come into play as secondary factors).¹⁶⁷ Paul has already developed the Adam-Christ typology in Romans 5 and, most importantly in 1 Corinthians 15, and it is taken up

¹⁶⁵ For a description of ancient authors writing “as if” they were someone else, closely mimicking the thought and ideas of another, see Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians* 7-9; cf. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, lviii. For the view that only Paul himself would feel free to reapply Pauline thoughts and ideas in new, seemingly divergent ways, see Barth, “Conversion,” 3; Witherington, *Letters*, 12-19.

¹⁶⁶ Arnold, *Ephesians, Power and Magic*; Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 74.

¹⁶⁷ While I agree with Moritz that “Ephesians relates Christ implicitly to the man of Ps 8 within a framework of Adam-Christ typology,” I disagree that one can detect such a move within the book of Ephesians itself. (Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 20-21). Other than a brief note indicating the possible connection between the Pauline Adam-Christ typology and the ἐν Χριστῷ formula as used in Ephesians (*ibid.*, 21 note 59), Moritz does little to demonstrate how the book of Ephesians itself contains an Adam-Christ typology.

and assumed here by the author of Ephesians 1.¹⁶⁸ So, on the one hand, all that has been said about the connection between Christ, the second Adam, and the “child of humanity” of Ps 8:7 in the discussion of 1 Cor 15:27 above applies to the use of Ps 8:7 here insofar as it forms the theological underpinning for the appropriation of Psalm 8 in Ephesians 1. On the other hand, Ephesians 1 now freely utilizes Psalm 8 as Christological in its own right for the interrelated purposes of praising God’s power (1:19), encouraging the church to hope (1:18) and not fear demonic forces, and challenging the church to live in unity (2:11-21; 4:1-11) under its head, Christ (1:10, 22). Having surveyed Eph 1:19-23 and the way in which the passage interprets Ps 8:7 and applies it to Christ, we are now in a position to read Psalm 8 anew in light of Eph 1:19-23.

Reading Psalm 8 in Light of Ephesians 1:19-23

Since the use of Psalm 8 in Ephesians overlaps so substantially with the parallel passage in 1 Corinthians, I will limit my comments here to consider some of the distinctive contributions of Ephesians 1. Most prominent among these contributions, as we have seen, is the emphasis upon the way in which the resurrection and exaltation of Christ is a spiritual reality that already has implications for the corporate Church in “this age” (ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι, verse 21). In light of these “already” claims, the Christian canonical interpreter of Psalm 8 may now understand the hope for the restoration of the lost world of Genesis 1, already generated within Psalm 8 itself, as coming to fruition here and now in the exaltation of Christ. Read in the light of Ephesians, “Ps 8 [is] a meeting point be-

¹⁶⁸ Lincoln is nearer the mark than Moritz when he says that the Pauline interpretation of Psalm 8 in light of his Adam Christology “has been continued” in Ephesians 1 (Lincoln, “OT in Ephesians,” 41).

tween protology and eschatology.”¹⁶⁹ Thus, the contemporary reader and the contemporary corporate Church may be encouraged to hope. Reading, singing, or liturgically reciting Psalm 8 is not, then, an exercise in the denial of reality; rather, it is a celebration of the reality that God does order his cosmos through the exaltation of humble things, and that he is ordering the cosmos in a profound, transformative, and eschatological way in the exaltation of Christ over all things even now.

Such a celebratory reading of Palm 8, however, ought not become a source of arrogance for the reader. Rather, the letter to the Ephesians reminds its audience that it is Christ who is the head and who rules, and that the Church is part of the “all things” that are under Christ’s feet (verse 21); read in this way, the reader ought not envision himself as the exalted human ruler placed over all things. In other words, when reading Psalm 8 in light of Ephesians 1, the believer sees himself in Ps 8:8-9, not in Ps 8:6-7. Furthermore, as a member of the body of Christ, the believer’s role in ordering creation is now to a) humbly submit to Christ, the head, and b) strive for unity and reconciliation within the body (Eph 4:17-32) and walk in love with all humans (Eph 5:1-20). Thus, the interpretation of Psalm 8 in the book of Ephesians helps to guard against a militant misinterpretation of Psalm 8. Someone may identify quickly and arrogantly with the royal בן־אדם of Ps 8:5 and assume forthwith that he or she has the right, or even the mandate, to exploit the rest of creation or even other humans; such a reader, however, does not read the text in a way that is in keeping with the teaching of the book of Ephesians.

Finally, Eph 1:19-23’s interpretation of Psalm 8 in the context of a meditation upon τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ κράτους τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ/the working of [God’s] great might

¹⁶⁹ Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 21.

(verse 19) in the resurrection of Christ can influence the way in which a canonical reader envisions that “majesty” of God’s name in all the earth as described in Ps 8:2, 10. God’s power in Ephesians 1 is mighty, militant, and subjugates enemies, to be sure. Yet God, not a human army, accomplishes this conquest through the resurrection and exaltation of the humble, crucified Christ, and through the vanquishing of death (read in connection with 1 Cor 15:26), rather than through military slaughter. Thus, in canonical perspective, the Christian reader begins to see just how far God will carry his counter-intuitive method of maintaining the creation order and making himself majestic through the exaltation of weak things. Neither domesticatable and passive nor conventionally militant, God’s majesty (Ps 8:2) and strength (Eph 1:19) subverts and eludes human conceptions. Perhaps a canonical exegesis of Psalm 8, then, is better served by focusing upon encountering and being transformed by God’s majesty than in cognitively and exhaustively explaining it. With this humbling reminder of human limitations in mind, then, we turn now to consider one more New Testament quotation of Psalm 8, Heb 2:5-8, before returning to articulate an integrative understanding of Psalm 8 in light of the New Testament.

Hebrews 2:5-9 and Psalm 8

Reading Hebrews 2:5-9 "In Itself"

The broader context: The Epistle to the Hebrews. Despite many attempts to identify the author of the book of Hebrews,¹⁷⁰ it is impossible to know who the author was,

¹⁷⁰ For a thorough survey of the history of reception and interpretation of the book of Hebrews, including the history of attempts at identifying the author, see Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 36; New York, NY: Doubleday, 2001), 1-54. In a popular book, Ruth Hoppin revives the hypothesis that Priscilla wrote Hebrews (*Priscilla’s Letter: Finding the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews* [Fort Bragg, CA: Lost Coast Press, 2000]). See also Koester, *Hebrews*, 45.

and scholars now focus upon “the profile” of the author, rather than his or her identity. The author of the book, whoever she (or he) may be, has produced a remarkable and unique piece of epistolary literature. While the vocabulary and literary style of the book are highly sophisticated,¹⁷¹ and the author uses literary devices to organize and arrange the material, such as bracketing sections with an *inclusio* and using hook-words to connect one section with another.¹⁷² Nevertheless, despite Überlacker’s attempts to trace the book’s structures according to Greco-Roman conventions,¹⁷³ large sections of the book do not fit neatly into the categories of classical rhetoric. Rather, its structure develops according to its own creative line of thought.¹⁷⁴ The hortatory nature of the letter leads many to speak of the book as a sermon, not a letter.¹⁷⁵ On the one hand, finding an origi-

¹⁷¹ Thomas H. Olbricht, “Hebrews as Amplification,” in *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 375-387; Timothy W. Seid, “Synkrisis in Hebrews 7: the Rhetorical Structure and Strategy,” in *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture: Essays from the 1996 Malibu Conference* (ed. S. E. Porter and D. L. Stamps; JSNTSup 180; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 322-347; and Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1989), 13-21. For a survey of the signs of the sophisticated literary techniques of the author of Hebrews (drawing from the works of Olbricht, Seid, and others such as Mitchell Cosby), see Guthrie, “Hebrews,” 419-422.

¹⁷² See Guthrie, *Structure*, 76-89, 94-104, for a detailed survey of the use of the *inclusio* and hook-words in Hebrews. See also *idem*, “Hebrews,” 419-422 for a brief survey of studies examining various other literary devices used in the book of Hebrews.

¹⁷³ Walter G. Überlacker (*Der Hebräerbrief als Appell; Untersuchungen zu Exordium, Narratio, und Postscriptum Hebr 1-2 und 13 22-25* [Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell Intl., 1989]).

¹⁷⁴ See Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis* (SNT 73; New York, NY: Brill, 1994); *idem*, “Hebrews,” 422-424; Cynthia Long Westfall, *A Discourse Analysis of the Letter to the Hebrews: The Relationship between Form and Meaning* (LNTS 297; New York, NY: T & T Clark, 2005), 4-7; and David A. deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 46.

¹⁷⁵ See Lawrence Wills, “The Form of the Sermon in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity,” *HTR* 77 (1984): 277-299; C. Clifton Black, “The Rhetorical Form of the Hellenistic Jewish and Early Christian Sermon: A Response to Lawrence Wills,” *HTR* 81 (1988):1-18; and George H. Guthrie, “Hebrews in its First-Century Contexts: Recent Research,” in *The Face of New Testament Studies*, 430; Edgar McKnight and Christopher Church, *Hebrews-James* (SHBC; Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2004), 10-14. Guthrie gives a brief survey of works that have shown Hebrews to be a homily, including the works of Wills and Black, as well as earlier works such as the detailed study by Hartwig Thyen.

nal audience for the epistle (or, perhaps better, homily) is fraught with difficulties, as the book itself does not identify any intended audience;¹⁷⁶ while the book seems to presuppose a specific audience facing some sort of persecution,¹⁷⁷ its doctrinal and ethical teachings have a universal quality about them. On the other hand, the book reflects the milieu of its provenance. As the title given to it by tradition suggests, the book of Hebrews also exhibits Jewish influences and founds its teaching firmly upon a Christological exegesis of various Old Testament passages (see Heb 1:1-2).¹⁷⁸ The book of Hebrews also has some similarities with the Dead Sea Scrolls, Paul, First Peter, and other Jewish and Christian writings.¹⁷⁹ It is reasonable, therefore, to situate the book of Hebrews within the context of the thought worlds of early Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ For an extended discussion about the intended audience of the book, arguing that the audience consisted of Roman Christian house churches, see Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, liii-lx. While various life settings for the epistle have been proposed, many would agree with William L. Lane that Hebrews is “a sermon in search of a life setting” (“Hebrews: A Sermon in Search of a Life Setting,” *SwJT* 28[1985], 13-18).

¹⁷⁷ See, for example, Koester, *Hebrews*, 64-79.

¹⁷⁸ Moyise, *Old Testament*, 98-108; Ronald E. Clements, “The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews,” *SwJT* 28 (1985): 36-45; Martin Kerrer, “The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Septuagint,” in *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 335-353; Beate Kowalski, “Die Rezeption alttestamentlicher Theologie im Hebräerbrief” in *Ausharren in der Verheissung: Studien zum Hebräerbrief* (SB 204; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2005), 35-62; and David Peterson, “God and Scripture in Hebrews,” in *The Trustworthiness of God: Perspectives on the Nature of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 118-138.

¹⁷⁹ See Guthrie, “Hebrews,” 419-443. For Qumran, see Yigael Yadin, “מגילות ים המלח,” in *Essays on the Dead Sea Scrolls, in Memory of E. L. Sukenik* (ed. Chaim Rabin; Jerusalem: Hekhal Ha-Sefer, 1961), 191-208; Maxine L. Grossman, “Priesthood as Authority: Interpretive Competition in First-Century Judaism and Christianity,” in *Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity* (Boston, MA: Leiden Brill, 2003), 117-131. For Paul, see Koester, *Hebrews*, 54-55; Witherington, “The Influence of Galatians on Hebrews,” *NTS* 37 (1991), 146-152. For I Peter, see Koester, *Hebrews*, 57-58; Guthrie, “Hebrews,” 439-440.

¹⁸⁰ See Barnabas Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews* (New York, NY: Cambridge, 1991), 21-25; William Lane, *Hebrews 1-8* (WBC 47a; Dallas, TX: Word, 1991), cxlvii-cl; and Guthrie, “Hebrews” 427.

The way that Hebrews extensively draws upon and interprets the Hebrew Scriptures is of special interest for understanding the book, and the Old Testament virtually permeates the homily.¹⁸¹ The author exhibits a supreme ability to combine “the best of Jewish and Hellenistic thought” in her hermeneutical argument, and she also presupposes an almost equal degree of versatile sophistication on the part of her audience.¹⁸² It is unnecessary for our purposes to take an emphatic position on the question of which context—Greek or Jewish—ought to be described as the primary soil from which the orator’s hermeneutical thought springs,¹⁸³ and it suffices to emphasize that the author’s interpretive approach exhibits affinities with a broad array of Greek, Jewish, and Christian interpreters. Among the diverse hermeneutical methods and motifs employed by the author of Hebrews, one motif dominates substantial portions of the book, including the section within which Psalm 8 is cited (Heb 1:5-2:18): the motif of Jesus’s superiority in comparison with figures respected within Judaism.¹⁸⁴ It is also important to note that the book of Psalms figures prominently in the hermeneutical thought of the book of Hebrews.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ See Clements, “Old Testament in Hebrews,” 36-45, and Dale F. Leschert, *Hermeneutical Foundations of Hebrews: A Study in the Validity of the Epistle’s Interpretation of Some Core Citations from the Psalms* (NABPRDiss 10; Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1994).

¹⁸² Clements, “Old Testament in Hebrews,” 37. Clements is here describing the rationale used by those who argue for an Alexandrian audience, without himself taking a position on the question.

¹⁸³ Seid, for example, argues that Greek conventions should be considered first, “and only when it [the Greek background] provides no satisfying points of similarity should one investigate other literary influences (“Synkrisis,” 323-324. Cf. Überlacker, *Der Hebräerbrief* and Olbricht, “Hebrews as Amplification.” For points of contact between Hebrews and Palestinian Judaism, see Koester, *Hebrews*, 61-63).

¹⁸⁴ Olbricht, “Hebrews as Amplification,” 375-387; Lane *Hebrews 1-8*, cxxviii-cxxxv.

¹⁸⁵ See Leschert, *Hermeneutical Foundations*, Simon Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Amsterdam: Wed. G. van Soest, 1961), and Harold W. Attridge, “The Psalms in Hebrews,” in *The Psalms in the New Testament*, 197-212.

Various structural schemas for Hebrews have been proposed, focusing upon Greco-Roman hortatory patterns,¹⁸⁶ discourse analysis,¹⁸⁷ the comparisons between Jesus and other exalted beings that run through the book,¹⁸⁸ or a combination of factors.¹⁸⁹ Yet, Hebrews, more than many other biblical books, is structured in a way that resists schematization; outlines consisting of “a flat list” of section headings fail to “register the cumulative effect of sections tumbling one upon the other.”¹⁹⁰ Nevertheless, by placing Stanley’s outline (which considers the book’s “literary genre, rhetorical character, and content”) alongside the outline of Hughes (who organizes his outline around the theme “The Supremacy of Christ”), side by side, we can adumbrate the structure of the book:¹⁹¹

Stanley:	Hughes:
Prologue (1:1-4)	I. Christ superior to the prophets (1:1-3)
I. The Sovereign Son as Superior Mediator (1:5-7:28).	II. Christ superior to the angels (1:4-2:18)
II. The Superior Ministry of the New Covenant Mediator (8:1-10:39).	III. Christ superior to Moses (3:1-4:13)
III. New Covenant Requirements for the People of God (11:1-13:19)	IV. Christ superior to Aaron (4:14-10:18)
Benediction and Epistolary Closing (13:20-25).	V. Christ superior as the new and living way (10:19-12:29)
	VI. Concluding exhortations, requests, and greetings (13:1-25).

¹⁸⁶ Überlacker, *Der Hebräerbrief*.

¹⁸⁷ Westfall, *Discourse Analysis*; Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, lxxx-lxxxiv.

¹⁸⁸ Olbricht, “Hebrews as Amplification.”

¹⁸⁹ Steve Stanley constructs an outline of the book based upon the books “literary genre, rhetorical character, and content” (“The Structure of Hebrews from Three Perspectives,” *TB* 45 [1994], 245-271). For a survey of attempts to determine a structural schema underlying the book, see Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, lxxx-xcviii. For a sustained examination of the structure of the book of Hebrews, see Albert Vanhoye, *The Structure and Message of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1989).

¹⁹⁰ Fred B. Craddock, “The Letter to the Hebrews,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (12 vols.; Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994-2004), 12:16.

¹⁹¹ Adapted from Stanley (“Structure,” 270-271) and Philip E. Hughes (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977], 3-4). In a way similar to Hughes, but more nuanced, Olbricht outlines the book as containing five exhortations embedded within four main sections demonstrating the superiority of Christ (“Hebrews as Amplification,” 377).

Through the skillful employment of rhetorical techniques, the author/orator challenges his listeners to remain faithful in the face of persecution and temptation. The dramatic momentum of the book's argument builds as the author shows that Jesus is far superior to angels (1:5-2:18), Moses (3:1-4:16), and even the high priests and Melchizedek (10:1-18). The heightening rhetoric builds to a crescendo, as the orator challenges the members of his audience and encourages them to "hold fast" (11:1-12:29).

The Nearer Context: Hebrews 1:5-2:18 and Hebrews 2:5-9. After introducing both the book of Hebrews and the comparison between Jesus and the angels in 1:1-4, the author undertakes an extended comparison of Jesus with the angels in 1:5-2:18. The citation of Psalm 8 in Heb 2:6-8 comes towards the middle of this first comparison of the book, and the Septuagint's translation of the term אֱלֹהִים as ἀγγέλους in Ps 8:6 seems, at least in part, to lead the orator to cite the psalm in this context.¹⁹² The comparison moves from arguing that Jesus is superior to the angels (1:5-14) to discussing how and why Jesus became temporarily lower than the angels (2:5-18). Thus, Heb 1:5-2:18 consists of two major sections connected by a hortatory exhortation to the audience, as follows:

- A. 1:5-14, The Son Superior to Angels
- B. 2:1-4, Therefore, Listen Carefully
- C. 2:5-18, The Son Lower than Angels
 - 2:5-9, He Became as We Are
 - 2:10-18, A Faithful and Merciful High Priest¹⁹³

¹⁹² Attridge, "The Psalms in Hebrews," 204. The author of Hebrews seems to use a Greek text substantially the same as that of the Septuagint in his Scripture citations throughout. See Radu Gheorghita, *The Role of the Septuagint in Hebrews: An Investigation of its Influence with Special Consideration to the Use of Hab 2:3-4 in Heb 10:37-38* (WUNT 2/160; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 44-46.

¹⁹³ Reproduced verbatim from Craddock, "Hebrews," 18.

The first section (1:5-14) contains a catena of Scripture citations joined together, with little explanation, in order to demonstrate the superiority of Christ and the relative inferiority of the angels.¹⁹⁴ After a brief interlude impressing upon the audience the importance of the message (2:1-4),¹⁹⁵ the author resumes the comparison between Jesus and the angels by introducing a citation of Ps 8:5-7.

In contrast with the rapid fire list of terse citations in chapter one, the citation of Psalm 8 in Heb 2:5-8 is followed by a more extensive exegesis wherein the text's application to Christ is explained.¹⁹⁶ As noted above, Moritz calls into question the assumption shared by some scholars that the concluding citation of the catena in chapter one (Heb 1:3=Ps 110:1) is connected to the citation of Ps 8:5-7 in Heb 2:6-8 and that this connection derives from a common traditional heritage shared by the authors of 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and Hebrews.¹⁹⁷ Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the citation of Psalm 8 in Heb 2:5-8 gestures back towards the briefly interrupted argument of Heb 1:5-14 by a) resuming the conversation of the things "of which we are speaking" (Heb 2:5),

¹⁹⁴ See Attridge, "Psalms in Hebrews," 199-203, Moyise, *The Old Testament in the New*, 98-100. For a careful reading of the catena that is attentive to the problematic question of how Heb 1:5-14 relates with the broader argument of Hebrews, see Kenneth L. Schenck, "A Celebration of the Enthroned Son: The Catena of Hebrews 1," *JBL* 120 (2001), 469-485.

¹⁹⁵ As Lane comments, "from the fact that Christ is greater than the angels [1:5-14] it follows logically that the revelation delivered through the Son must be regarded with the utmost seriousness [2:1-4]" (*Hebrews 1-8*, 37; see also Westfall, who groups 1:1-2:4 together as a unity that declares "Let's Pay Attention to the Message of God's Ultimate Messenger" [*Discourse Analysis*, 89]).

¹⁹⁶ "While exegesis in the catena of ch. 1 was implicit," writes Attridge, "it is here explicit, and the verses immediately following the citation of the psalm constitute a brief midrash on the text" ("Psalms in Hebrews," 204).

¹⁹⁷ Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 12.

and b) reiterating that God will subject things under the “feet” of Christ (Heb 1:13=Ps 110:1 and Heb 2:8=Ps 8:7).¹⁹⁸

Rhetorical devices such as *inclusio* are used to set off Heb 2:5-18 as a pericope¹⁹⁹ and Heb 2:5-9 and 10-18 as sub-pericopes.²⁰⁰ The first half of the first sub-pericope (verses 5-8a), contains the citation of the psalm. This section begins as a continuation of the consideration of the exaltation of Christ in “the world to come” (verse 5) already contemplated in chapter one’s catena. This is followed by a vague introductory formula (“διεμαρτύρατο δέ ποὺ τις/someone has testified somewhere,” verse 6) that reflects “the strong emphasis throughout Hebrews on the oracular character of Scripture. Precisely because it is God who speaks in the OT, the identity of the person through whom he

¹⁹⁸ See George H. Guthrie, “Hebrews,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 946.

¹⁹⁹ Verses 5 and 16 contain similar phrases introducing the following discussions of privileges that the angels do not have, but Jesus does have (“ὄυ γὰρ ἀγγέλοις ὑπετάξεν/now it was not to angels that he subjected” [verse 5], and “ὄυ γὰρ δῆπου ἀγγέλων ἐπιλαμβάνεται/for surely it is not angels that he helps” [verse 16]). See Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 44.

²⁰⁰ Guthrie notes four correspondences between verses 10 and verses 17-18 that serve to bracket verses 10-18 as a unit by repetition, setting it apart from verses 5-9: 1) the use of the synonyms “Ἐπρεπεύειν/it was fitting” (verse 10) and “ὤφειλεν/he had to” (verse 17); 2) the discussion of the development of the son in both verses 10 and verse 17; 3) Jesus’s help given to the “children” (verse 10) or “siblings” (verse 17); and 4) the discussion of the suffering of Jesus in verses 10 and 18. Verses 5-9 show an internal thematic balance and coherence in that verse 5 introduces the citation of Psalm 8 verses 6-8a quote the psalm, and verses 8b-9 explicate the psalm, with forms of the key word ὑποτάσσω/to subject running throughout verses 6-9 (once in verse 5 and three times in verse 8). Furthermore, as Marie E. Isaacs observes, Heb 2:7-9 inextricably interconnects the citation with the explication that follows in verses 8a-9 through the construction of a quasi-chiastic reiteration of the latter part of the psalm’s citation, as follows: “a) Man’s temporary subordination (v. 7a)
b) His enthronement (v. 7b)
c) His sovereignty (v. 8a)
c1 His sovereignty (v.8b)
a1 His temporary subordination (vv. 8c-9a)
b1 His enthronement (v. 9b)” (*Reading Hebrews and James: A Literary and Theological Commentary* [Macon GA: Smythe and Helwys, 2002], 39).

uttered his word is relatively unimportant.”²⁰¹ Then comes the quotation of Ps 8:5-7 (Heb 2:6-8a).²⁰²

The second half of the sub-pericope (verses 8b-9) turns the audience’s attention to the “present” (verse 8b), when “we do not yet see everything in subjection to him” (the child of humanity, Heb 1:6=Ps 8:6). The second sub-pericope (verses 10-18) then goes on to fully explain why the Christ is not yet in the exalted state: he must be made perfect through suffering²⁰³ so that he might be “a merciful and faithful high priest” (verse 17).²⁰⁴ The transition of focus from “the world to come” (1:5-14; 2:5-8a) to “the present” (2:8b-18) is already anticipated within the citation of Ps 8:6 (Heb 2:6-8a). While the Hebrew version of Ps 8:6, in saying that God has made humans “a little less than divine,” describes the exalted place of the child of humanity, “[o]ur homilist instead drives a wedge between the two parallel affirmations ‘you have made him a little less than the angels’ ‘with glory and honor you have crowned him.’ Instead, he reads these affirmations as two temporally discrete stages in the history of the Son.”²⁰⁵ Thus, the author/orator interprets Ps 8:5-7—with the Septuagint translation of the psalm as the starting point²⁰⁶—as relating the present state of affairs with the future exaltation of Jesus.

²⁰¹ Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 46.

²⁰² The quotation follows the LXX version of Psalm 8, except that it omits the words “you have set him over the work of your hands.”

²⁰³ Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews*, 225.

²⁰⁴ Craddock, “Hebrews,” 18.

²⁰⁵ Attridge, “The Psalms in Hebrews,” 205.

²⁰⁶ Gheorghita, *Role of the Septuagint*, 44-46.

Guthrie describes Heb 2:5-9 as a hinge transitioning from a focus upon “heaven” to a focus upon “earth.”²⁰⁷ Guthrie’s construal is interesting in that he sees the progression of Heb 1-2 from heavenly to earthly as anticipating a parallel, reverse progression in Heb 5:1-10:18 from earthly to heavenly; the two sections work together to encourage the hearer to endure earthly suffering just as Jesus has endured suffering, as shown in figure 2. Read in this way, the citation of Psalm 8 has special importance for the book of Hebrews in that it a) serves as an interpretive hinge that explains the relationship between Jesus’ earthly humiliation and his heavenly exalted status above the heavens, b) lays the groundwork for the preacher/author’s later explanation of Jesus’s high priestly function, and c) provides motivation for the audience to endure, just as Christ has endured.

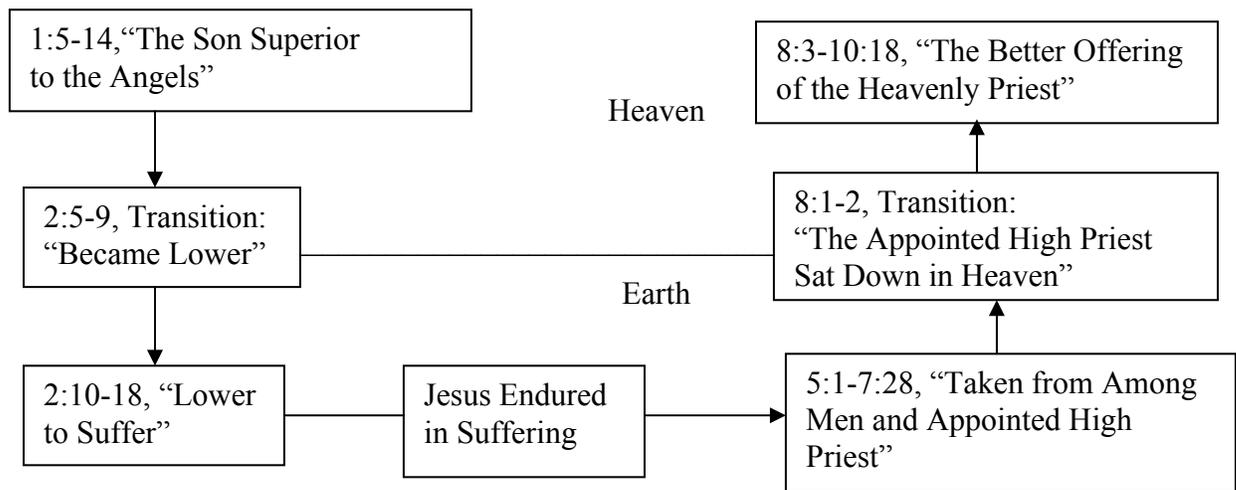


Figure 2. Internal movement within Hebrews 1:5-10:18.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ Guthrie, *Structure*, 140-142.

²⁰⁸ Condensed from Guthrie’s more extensive flow chart (*Structure*, 142).

Having surveyed the way that the citation of Ps 8:5-7 functions both in the nearer context of Heb 1-2 and in the broader context of the book of Hebrews, we may now turn to examine more closely the way in which the author Hebrews interprets and applies Psalm 8.

The use of Psalm 8:5-7 in Hebrews 2:5-9. In order to properly understand the way in which the author of Hebrews interprets Psalm 8 in this context, one must address two interrelated questions: 1) Does the author understand the words ἄνθρωπος and υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου in Ps 8:5 (Heb 2:6) to speak of corporate humanity (so NRSV, TNIV), an individual human (see RSV, NIV, NAB), or both? 2) On what logical and exegetical grounds, then, does the author relate the words of Ps 8:5-7 to the humbled and exalted messiah? The two questions are inseparably connected, so that the way in which a reader answers one question will determine the way in which she or he answers the other question.

If one takes the terms ἄνθρωπος and υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου to speak of the human race corporately, then verses 5-8 speak of the idealized rule of humanity that does not exist now (Νῦν δε οὐπω ὁρῶμεν/ “at present, we do not yet see . . . ,” verse 8b) but will exist in the eschaton (“τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν/the world to come,” verse 5).²⁰⁹ A shift then occurs in verse nine (“τὸν δὲ . . . βλέπομεν Ἰησοῦν/but we see . . . Jesus”), where the orator “emphasize[s] that Jesus in a representative sense fulfilled the vocation intended for humankind.”²¹⁰ If, however, the terms ἄνθρωπος and υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου speak of an individual, then the orator is interpreting Psalm 8 atomistically, identifying the term

²⁰⁹ See Craig L. Blomberg, “Better Things in this Case: The Superiority of Today’s New International Version in Hebrews,” *BT* 55 (2004), 310-318; Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 46-47.

²¹⁰ Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 47.

υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου (Ps 8:5) with the messianic term ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου found elsewhere in the New Testament and early Christianity²¹¹ and turning Ps 8:5 into a Christological “proof-text.”²¹² According to this view, the “him” of verse 8b (“οὐπω ὀρώμεν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ὑποτεταγμένα/we do not yet see everything in subjection to him”) is already speaking of Jesus, the “son of man.”²¹³ A mere consideration of the term υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου is not enough to settle the issue. On the one hand the term ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is used Christologically widely in the New Testament and in early Christianity, and the author of Hebrews has already described the Messiah as a υἱὸς.²¹⁴ On the other hand, Psalm 8’s υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου is anarthrous, and the author of Hebrews does not describe Christ with the phrase υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου elsewhere.²¹⁵

Guthrie and Quinn have recently applied discourse analysis in an attempt to answer the question of the meaning of ἄνθρωπος/υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου in Heb 2:5-9.²¹⁶ They urge that, when read in light of “broader discourse concerns,” it is clear that the author of Hebrews understands ἄνθρωπος/υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου Christologically, not anthropologically.²¹⁷ Three of the points that they make are quite strong, and significantly undermine the possibility of a thoroughgoing anthropological interpretation of ἄνθρωπος/υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου: 1) The introductory formula (2:5) in speaking of the eschatological “world to come” links

²¹¹ So George H. Guthrie and Russell D. Quinn, “A Discourse Analysis of the Use of Psalm 8:4-6 in Hebrews 2:5-9,” *JETS* 49 (2006), 243; Childs, “Psalm 8,” 25.

²¹² Childs, “Psalm 8,” 24-26.

²¹³ So Attridge, “Psalms in Hebrews,” 204.

²¹⁴ Guthrie and Quinn, “Discourse Analysis,” 243-244.

²¹⁵ Koester, *Hebrews*, 215-216.

²¹⁶ Guthrie and Quinn, “Use of Psalm 8:4-6.”

²¹⁷ Guthrie and Quinn, “Use of Psalm 8:4-6,” 246.

the quotation of Psalm 8 with the discussion of the exalted son in Heb 1:5-14.²¹⁸ 2) the author's "rabbinic technique employed" to interpret the passage a) shows that the author interprets the psalm to speak of "the logical progression from [Christ's] incarnation to exaltation," and b) attends to the apparent contradiction occasioned by the depiction of Jesus' exaltation as already accomplished, yet lying in the future; such a contradiction does not exist unless the words ἄνθρωπος and υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου are interpreted messianically.²¹⁹ 3) Psalm 8 functions as a hinge within the broader context whereby the argument of Hebrews transitions from a consideration of the exalted son in the heavenly realm (Heb 1:4-15 // Ps 8:6b-7=Heb 2:7b-8a) to a consideration of the incarnate, humble son in the earthly realm (Heb 2:10-18 // Ps 8:6a=Heb2:7a).²²⁰

Yet, an overly thoroughgoing Christological understanding of Hebrews's use of Ps 8:5-7 overlooks some evidence in the immediate context that the author also understands ἄνθρωπος/υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου as, in some sense, anthropological. First of all, when the person of Jesus is mentioned in verse 9, he is contrasted with the "him" of verse 8b. This contrast is not determinative, however, because the contrast is between an evidently future ἀὐτῷ whom "we do not yet see," and the present state of Jesus. Yet, the likelihood that this contrast between "him" (verse 8) and "Jesus" (verse 9) is more than merely temporal increases when one considers the way that verses 9-18 develop the relationship be-

²¹⁸ Guthrie and Quinn, "Use of Psalm 8:4-6," 239-241.

²¹⁹ Guthrie and Quinn, "Use of Psalm 8:4-6," 241-243. I do not agree with Guthrie and Quinn, however, that this apparent contradiction lies almost exclusively with the apparent juxtaposition of Ps 110:1 with Ps 8:5-7. Rather, the apparent contradiction arises when a) one juxtaposes the entire chain of references demonstrating Christ's superiority to angels in 1:5-14 with Ps 8:6's claim that the human child is "for a little while lower than the angels" and b) one reads Ps 8:6a in connection with the exaltation of the human child that follows in Ps 8:6b-7, without understanding that there is temporal progression involved (thus motivating the author of Hebrews to clarify the temporal progression in verses 8b-9).

²²⁰ Guthrie and Quinn, "Use of Psalm 8:4-6," 245. See also Guthrie, *Structure*, 142.

tween Jesus and other humans.²²¹ At the outset of the second sub-pericope in verse 10, which is arguably an extension of the exegesis of Ps 8:5-7, the orator describes other humans as “πολλὸς υἱοῦς/many children” whom Jesus will lead into “δόξαν/glory” in the eschaton, thus echoing the declaration of Ps 8:5-6 that God will crown the “ἄνθρωπου” with “δόξη” in the eschaton (according to the orator’s interpretation).

Verses 11-18 then go on to describe the earthly suffering and service of Christ in connection with its effects upon a corporate group of humans with whom Jesus closely identifies; “the sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one (ἐξ ἑνὸς, verse 11),” and Jesus “had to be made like his siblings” (verse 17). Furthermore, because of Christ’s identification with the “children” (verse 14), “the seed of Abraham” receive divine help that angels do not get (verse 16). This last declaration is especially noteworthy because it forms part of the inclusio that, via repetition, brackets verses 5-18 (“οὐ γὰρ ἀγγέλοις ὑπετάξεν/now it was not to angels that he subjected” [verse 5], and “οὐ γὰρ δῆπου ἀγγέλων ἐπιλαμβάνεται/for surely it is not angels that he helps” [verse 16]).²²² Thus, even if the reader/auditor initially understands the contrast of verse 5 to implicitly speak of the exalted Christ, by the time the orator has completed the transition from the exalted Christ (chapter 1) to the earthly Christ (2:10-18), the audience will have come to understand that a corporate group of humans, too, can be “amplified” over and against angels.²²³

²²¹ Described as “many children” (verse 10), “those who are sanctified” (verse 11), “siblings” (verses 11 and 17), “the children” (verses 13-14), “the seed of Abraham” (verse 16), “people” (verse 17), and “those who are being tempted” (verse 18).

²²² Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 44; Guthrie, *Structure*, 77-78.

²²³ For the ancient rhetorical technique of amplification in Hebrews, wherein Jesus is compared favorably to other respected beings, see Olbricht, “Hebrews as Amplification.”

Thus, if one overemphasizes either the messianic or the universal anthropological dimension of the terms ἄνθρωπος and υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου, the resulting interpretation runs against the meaning of the text in its context. The passage as a whole and in context makes more sense when read as an explication of a double meaning involved in the text's description of the ἄνθρωπος/υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου. Even if the original audience (or, for that matter, the contemporary audience) would not have been aware of the double meaning when the citation was introduced, the point of the orator's explication of the passage is to elucidate the double meaning; Heb 2:8b-18 explains how Christ, the individual, fulfills what was described of the ἄνθρωπος/υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου in Psalm 8 and, in so doing, identifies with corporate humanity so that they, too, might fulfill the idealized reign described in Ps 8:5-7.²²⁴ Thus, the citation of Psalm 8 in Heb 2:6-8 serves an additional transitional function unobserved by Guthrie: In the process of moving from the heavenly exaltation of Christ to the earthly ministry of Christ, the argument also moves from focusing exclusively upon Christ and his glory (Hebrews 1) to focusing on Christ, redeemed corporate humanity, and their shared glory (Hebrews 2).

This accounts for much of the exegetical logic underlying the orator's application of the passage to Christ. Other factors undoubtedly played a role in the way that the orator and his implied audience would have understood the relationship between Christ and Ps 8:5-7. These factors are subsidiary, however, to the main argument of the passage that drives the exegesis in context, namely, that Christ's humiliation and exaltation gives glory to corporate humanity. The connection between the citation of Ps 110:1 in Heb 1:13 and the citation of Ps 8:5-7 in Heb 2:6-8 may indeed reflect a common exegetical

²²⁴ R. T. France expresses a similar view, wherein he sees the author of Hebrews using Ps 8:5-7 to speak simultaneously of corporate humanity and of the ideal "son of Man" ("The Writer of Hebrews as Biblical Expositor," *TynBul* 47 [1996], 262).

tradition, reflected in 1 Corinthians 15 and Ephesians 1. Yet, six verses are interposed between the two citations, including a hortatory digression. Furthermore, when the author/preacher resumes her Christological meditation by explicating Psalm 8, she does not resume discussing Ps 110:1, but rather pivots away from the enthroned one of Ps 110:1 to speak of the earthly, humble Christ.²²⁵ Also, while Heb 1:13-2:9 certainly exhibits some parallels between the citation of the two texts in 1 Corinthians and Ephesians, the exegetical conclusions of the author of Hebrews are distinct and original. Thus, the hermeneutical moves in Heb 8:5-18 cannot simply be reduced to an appropriation of a tradition.

Similarly, the early Christological moniker ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου may have informed the author's decision to apply Psalm 8 to Christ and made her audience more inclined to think of the passage Christologically. Yet, the Christological designation of Jesus as "the Son of Man" may also have generated some confusion for early Christians in terms of understanding Psalm 8; the term is anarthrous in the psalm, and the "υἱός" in Psalm 8 may have seemed to them to refer to corporate "children/υἱοί" (cf. Heb 2:10). The potential for confusion resulting from such differences between Ps 8:5 and the "Son of Man" Christology may underlie the orator's decision to break with the pattern of rapid-fire citations with little explication (1:5-14; 2:12-13) to give an extended explication of Psalm 8. Even if the author and audience identify the words υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου with the Christological Son of Man, this identification does not dominate the exegesis of the verses following the citation; when Hebrews goes on to explicate Ps 8:5-7, it does not

²²⁵ Guthrie and Quinn ("Use of Psalm 8:4-6") make much of the connection between Ps 110:1 and Psalm 8:5-7 in these verses. They seem to think that, in fact, much of the exegetical rationale motivating the author's interpretation of Psalm 8 derives from a hermeneutical connection with Psalm 110. They overstate the case, however, in that much of what they see as being a direct meditation on Psalm 8 in connection with Ps 110:1 can more accurately be described as a meditation upon Psalm 8 in connection with the entire catena of citations in Heb 2:5-12.

focus upon the phrase “υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου” or explicitly connect the passage with any Christian or Jewish Messianic discussions of a messianic “Son of Man.” Rather, it discusses Jesus’s temporary humiliation and future exaltation in connection with his identification with other humans, so that they can corporately become glorified “children” (Heb 2:10).

Reading Psalm 8 in Light of Hebrews 2:5-18

Of the four passages examined in this chapter, Hebrews 2 gives the most extended and detailed citation and exegesis of Psalm 8, especially if one considers the second sub-pericope (Heb 2:10-18) as carrying forward and clarifying the exegesis of Ps 8:5-7. I will limit myself here to exploring three aspects of the discussion of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2 that constitute the distinctive hermeneutical contribution of Heb 2:5-18: 1) the identification of Christ with believers and the resulting identification of the υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου both with Jesus and with redeemed corporate humanity; 2) the discussion of Ps 8:5-7 as a witness both to the “νῦν/present” (cf. Ephesians 1) and to “the world to come” (cf. 1 Corinthians 15); 3) the use of Ps 8:5-7 as a transitional hinge from the heavenly exalted Christ to the earthly, humble Christ.

1) The identification of Christ with believers and the resulting identification of the υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου (Ps 8:5) both with Jesus and with redeemed corporate humanity. While the author of Hebrews does not develop an Adam-Christ typology, Christ’s identification with redeemed humanity in Heb 2:5-18 parallels the identification of Christ with Adam explicated in 1 Corinthians 15. Thus, Hebrews 2 reinforces the Adam-Christ identification discussed above, and much of what was said concerning the impact of such an identification could be reproduced here. The focus of Hebrews 2, however, is not upon the

way in which Christ succeeds as a federal head where Adam, Christ's ante-type, has failed. Rather, the focus is upon the direct, intimate relationship between Christ and his "siblings" (verses 12 and 17); he has a common source (ἐξ ἐνός, verse 11) and common blood (verse 14) with them, so that he can identify with them "as a merciful and faithful high priest" (verse 17). While Christ's forensic and representative function as the "high priest (verse 17) and "founder of salvation" (verse 10) who "tastes death for everyone" (verse 9), figures prominently, the reality of the union between Christ and other humans gets more attention. This close identification between Jesus and his "siblings" can inform one's reading of Psalm 8 in two ways. First of all, it encourages the reader to look to and identify with Jesus, the "founder of salvation" (verse 10; cf. 12:2) as the one through whom God will order the cosmos. Thus, the ordering of the cosmos and the restoration of the "lost world of Genesis 1" comes not from human effort or polity, but through identification with Christ the high priest. Moreover, as the "Lord" who "laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning" (1:10), and the perfect human who identifies with his siblings, Christ represents king David, king YHWH, and king Adam, simultaneously. Secondly, the close identification between Jesus and his "siblings" can inform one's reading of Psalm 8 by reminding the reader that her glorified status (Ps 8:6; Heb 2:10) is not an individual right, but a corporate blessing; the reader can receive glory through identification with Christ, and, by extension, identification with the rest of Christ's siblings.

2) *Hebrews's use of Ps 8:5-7 as a witness both to the "present" and to "the world to come."* The interpretation of the term βραχύ (Ps 8:6) in Heb 2:7, 9 derives from the Septuagint and not from the Hebrew form of the psalm;²²⁶ this move enables the author

²²⁶ Gheorghita, *Role of the Septuagint*, 44-46.

of Hebrews to read Psalm 8 as a witness both to the present incarnation of Christ and to the future exaltation of Christ. On first blush, one might be tempted to insist that the canonical approach ought to reconfigure its understanding of the Hebrew Psalm 8 to conform strictly to the exegesis presented in Heb 2:9. According to such a view, since Heb 2:5-9 belongs within the hermeneutical circle both as Scripture and as exegetical tradition (insofar as it represents the oldest known extended quotation and exegesis of Psalm 8), then a translation of Psalm 8 ought to conform to Heb 2:5-9 by interpreting and understanding **בְּעֵת** in a strictly temporal sense, meaning “for a little while,” in Ps 8:6, even if such a translation seems to run against the context of Psalm 8. All that has been said up until this point about Psalm 8 would have to give way to Heb 2:5-9, and Psalm 8 would become a prophetic, programmatic prediction of the incarnation and exaltation of Christ.

Such an interpretation is not warranted, however, either by the hermeneutic of Hebrews or by a canonical approach. The vague introductory formula, as we have already noted, indicates that the author of Hebrews is concerned with a divine meaning, and is not treating the passage as a static prophetic oracle. Furthermore, insofar as the orator of Hebrews finds a double meaning in the *ἄνθρωπος/υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου* of Ps 8:5, the orator’s interpretation leaves room for both a Christological interpretation and an anthropological interpretation. Furthermore, as I have argued throughout, a canonical exegesis ought to seek to understand each text on its own and then to bring the two texts into dialogue rather than to flatten out the text.

How, then, does the orator’s reading of Psalm 8 as speaking both to Christ’s present humiliation and to his future exaltation inform a canonical understanding of Psalm 8? First of all, Heb 2:5-9 provides a median position between Ephesians 1, which

emphasizes the “already,” and 1 Corinthians 15, which emphasizes the “not yet.” Thus, Psalm 8 becomes, in its canonical context, a witness to the way that God, through Christ, is in the process of ordering the cosmos now (Ephesians 1; Heb 2:9), an ordering which may be partial now (Heb 2:8) but will eventually be complete in the eschaton (1 Cor 15; cf. Heb 2:14; Rev 21-22). Furthermore, read in connection with the encouragement to endure in the suffering of the “now” as Christ has suffered (Heb 2:18; 12:3-17), the readers of Psalm 8 are encouraged to endure and resist enemies now (Ps 8:3) as they experience God’s ordering (Ps 8:5-10) of the cosmos and anticipate a time when that ordering will be complete.

3) *The use of Ps 8:5-7 as a transitional hinge from the heavenly exalted Christ to the earthly, humble Christ.* The use of Psalm 8 as a hinge from the heavenly (Heb 1:5-14) to the earthly realm (Heb 2:10-18)²²⁷ parallels the internal movement of the MT version of Psalm 8; the psalm transitions from the heavenly realm (Ps 8:2-4) to the earthly realm (Ps 8:8-10), with the human serving as a hinge (Ps 8:4-7). Thus, when one reads Psalm 8 in light of the shift in Hebrews 2, he is reminded that the top-down ordering of the cosmos in Psalm 8 is brought about through humble anticipation of divine reversal. The descent of Christ from heaven to earth in his incarnation and humiliation brings glory to the saints (Ps 8:7; Heb 2:10); so, too, the ordering of the cosmos from the heavens down to the earth in Psalm 8 comes when humans humbly identify with Christ in his suffering and await a divine reversal that will destroy all enemies (Ps 8:4; Heb 2:14; 1 Cor 15:26). How, then, does this hope fit in with the broader witness of the New Testament and the Christian canon? Having surveyed all four of the New Testament passages that

²²⁷ Guthrie, *Structure*, 140-142.

cite Psalm 8, we are now in a position to present a synthetic exegesis of Psalm 8 in the context of the New Testament.

Psalm 8 in Dialogue with the New Testament

In the previous chapter, I described Psalm 8's place in the context of the Old Testament as representing the intersection of two main trajectories: the reversal motif of Psalm 8 and the plight of humanity that develops across the Old Testament. While both of these trajectories continue into the New Testament, they are taken up and expanded within a third trajectory: that of the redeeming Christ. In Christ we find the ultimate example of the reversal motif, wherein Jesus humbles himself in his incarnation, suffering, and death, and then experiences a divine reversal in his resurrection and exaltation. In Christ, the plight of the conflicting and conflicted human is addressed; Jesus suffers for, identifies with, and intercedes for corporate humanity, ensuring that death will one day be vanquished and that the plight of humanity will be finally and fully addressed. Thus, while our focus has been upon Matthew 21, 1 Corinthians 15, Ephesians 1, and Hebrews 2, all four of these passages, read in connection with Psalm 8, point beyond themselves to the rest of the New Testament.

The application of Psalm 8 to the living Christ in Matthew 21 reminds the reader that Jesus and his disciples were a tool for God's ordering of the cosmos even during the earthly ministry of Christ. When the canonically minded reader encounters the gospel accounts of Jesus healing the blind and lame (Matt 21:14) and challenging the powerful (Matt 21:12-13) or of children recognizing the Messiah (Matt 21:15), he sees this as an instance of God using the insignificant and humble to order creation; such a reader is then motivated to emulate both Christ and the humble children. Similarly, Ephesians 1 and

Hebrews 2 provide entry points to the parts of the New Testament canon that speak of the present experience of the Church. Read in connection with Psalm 8, the work that God does in and through the Church is yet another instance of the ordering of the cosmos described in Psalm 8. This is especially true in that the Church is united with Christ, who alone has perfectly fulfilled the role of the human ruler envisioned by Psalm 8, and who then enables redeemed humanity to fulfill that role also. Finally, Hebrews 2 and 1 Corinthians 15 serve as entry points to the eschatological hope that the New Testament testifies to, when Christ will have vanquished every enemy, including death (1 Cor 15:26), and God will be all in all (1 Cor 15:28, cf. Eph 1:23). Thus, when the third trajectory of the redeeming Christ intersects with the other two trajectories (of the reversal motif and the human's plight), they all drive together towards an event described in another New Testament passage: the restoration of creation in Rev 21-22.

So, the divine ordering of creation described in Psalm 8 gestures towards the entire sweep of biblical history from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. In describing God's program for maintaining the created order, Psalm 8 provides a lens through which to view the establishment of the created order (Genesis 1), the human plight that results from enemies threatening the order (Ps 8:3; Job 7; Gen3-11; Psalm 144; etc.), the redemptive work of Christ to restore the created order (Matthew 21; Ephesians 1; Hebrews 2; etc.), and the future hope that creation will one day be in full order (1 Corinthians 15; Rev 21-22). Thus, the hope instilled in Psalm 8 points to the one who says "Behold, I am making all things new" (Rev 21:5) and motivates the Christian reader to pray "Amen! Come Lord Jesus!" (Rev 22:20).

CHAPTER SIX

Summary and Conclusion

Chapter one focused upon articulating the approach that the study was to take by examining, defending, and refining the canon exegetical approach initially articulated by Brevard Childs and taken up by many others.¹ Three main emphases underlying the approach emerged: 1) A movement connecting description with theological reflection; 2) A desire to relate the text's ancient function with its function in the contemporary Church; 3) A commitment to the canon as the context for interpretation. The chapter then urged, *contra* Barr,² that the canonical approach presents a theologically satisfying basis for ecclesiastical exegesis, the faith claims of which are consonant with the historical data. Turning to Mark Brett³ as a representative of a pluralist adoption of the canonical approach, Brett's insistence that the canonical approach must not marginalize all other approaches was affirmed. Yet I argued that the canonical approach must continue to maintain the text's status as normative within the approach itself.

The study acknowledged areas of the canonical approach that one must attend to at both the theoretical and practical levels if the approach is to succeed. To address these issues, I brought the canonical approach into dialogue with Augustine's *De doctrina*

¹ For some of Childs's more prominent works, see note 1 of chapter one. For some examples of others carrying forward the canonical approach, see Michael O'Neal, *Interpreting Habakkuk as Scripture* (SiBL 9; New York: Peter Lang, 2007), *Theological Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Brevard S. Childs* (ed. Christopher Seitz and Kathryn Green-McCreight; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), and other works mentioned in note 2 of chapter one.

² James Barr, *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983).

³ Mark G. Brett, *Biblical Criticism in Crisis? The Impact of the Canonical Approach on Old Testament Studies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Christiana,⁴ urging the adoption of three theological affirmations to guide the approach: 1) That exegesis aims at an encounter with God; 2) That the exegete stands within a hermeneutical circle including Church teaching and Scripture; 3) That the Scriptures themselves set the interpretive boundaries. The chapter concluded by surveying Psalm 8 to demonstrate that Psalm 8 is uniquely well suited to serve as a text case for a canonical approach, and that the canonical approach is especially well suited for addressing questions concerning the implementation of Psalm 8; an attempt to read Psalm 8 as Scripture must grapple with proposed pre-canonical forms of the text, the way in which other Old Testament passages relate with the psalm, and the relationship between the psalm and its interpretation by New Testament authors.

Chapter two then began the study proper by offering an exegesis of Psalm 8 in its discreet context. After addressing various background issues from the standpoint of a canonical approach, the chapter traced the internal development of the psalm, as follows:

Inclusio: “how[*גִּדְהָ*] excellent your name in all [*כָּל*] the earth” (verse 2a)

A. Reversals One and Two (verses 2b-4):

 Insignificant heavenly bodies (verses 2b, 4)

 Imbedded paradigmatic reversal: babes and infants/enemy and avenger (verse 3)

 Majestic heavenly bodies (verse 4)

B. Reversal Three (verses 5-9):

 Insignificant human: “what [*גִּדְהָ*] is the human?” (verse 5)

 Majestic human: “you have placed all things [*כָּל*] under his feet” (verses 6-7)

Denouement:

 Animals from creation day six (verse 8)

 Animals from creation day five (verse 9)

Inclusio: “how[*גִּדְהָ*] excellent your name in all [*כָּל*] the earth” (verse 10)⁵

⁴ Saint Augustine, *Teaching Christianity: De Doctrina Christiana. The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, Part I, vol. 11* (Edmund Hill, O.P., trans.; Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2000).

⁵ For the strategic positioning of the words *כָּל* and *גִּדְהָ* see Øystein Lund, “From the Mouths of Babes and Infants You have Established Strength,” *SJOT* 11 [1997], 96-97.

Read in this way, the psalm presents a contemplation of the excellence of the name YHWH in creation (verses 1, 10), with the human's role in the created order occupying the central point of this contemplation (verse 5). The body of the psalm develops through three intertwined reversals, wherein the psalmist contemplates how God has taken something that is relatively insignificant (the heavenly bodies [verses 2b, 4], babes and infants [verse 3], and humanity [verses 5-9]) and exalts them over and against seemingly superior things. Thus, I summarized the distinct theological message of Psalm 8 as a declaration that YHWH glorifies his name by maintaining the created order through the exaltation of inferior things, which is especially evident in YHWH's exaltation of humanity.

Chapter three then began the process of bringing Psalm 8 into dialogue with the rest of the canon by examining Psalm 8 in light of its immediate literary context, that is, the book of Psalms. The study traced the Psalter's development. The Psalter opens with the orienting introductory Psalms 1 and 2 that, taken together, emphasize Torah observance (Psalm 1), the LORD's anointed king (Psalm 2), the way of piety, and the vindication of the righteous and judgment of the wicked. The body opens with two sets of lament songs surrounding Psalm 8 (Pss 3-7, 9-14), and the rest of Book I oscillates between lament and praise. The rest of the Psalter was surveyed, which gradually moves from an emphasis upon the Davidic king and upon lament songs (especially in Books I-III) to an emphasis upon king YHWH and upon hymns of praise (especially in Books IV-V). Despite these shifts in emphasis, themes from Books I-III are to be found in Books IV-V, and vice versa.

Within this context, I argued that Psalm 8 exerts a special influence upon the way in which one reads the rest of the Psalter as the first hymn of the Psalter. As the Psalter

oscillates between lament and praise, the reader's constant expectation in light of Psalm 8 is that YHWH will intervene into a disordered world by means of insignificant and humble humans, and the silencing of the enemies in Ps 8:3 encourages the reader that the other enemies of the Psalter will ultimately be silenced. Furthermore, the royal human of Psalm 8 intersects with the Psalter's dual emphasis upon the Davidic king (Books I-III) and upon king YHWH (Books IV-V) to create a tension, the resolution of which the Psalter itself does not make clear. Nevertheless, Psalm 8 reminds the reader to identify with the weak and humble, the "babies and sucklings;" such humility will allow king YHWH to establish strength from the readers' "mouths," and, in so doing, to somehow exalt both corporate humanity and YHWH's anointed king.

Chapter four then moved on to consider Psalm 8 in the light of the rest of the Old Testament witness, selecting passages with notable verbal and thematic affinities with parts of Psalm 8 for entry points (Genesis 1, Job 7, and Psalm 144). While I argued that these affinities were due in each case to some sort of historical influence between Psalm 8 and each text, the question of literary relationship was secondary and the desire to interpret Psalm 8 in light of the Old Testament witness was in the fore. These texts were selected because they were specially well suited points of entry through which to bring Psalm 8 into dialogue with the rest of the Old Testament; insofar as these texts revisit the themes and language of Psalm 8 in new contexts, they open up the possibility for creating an inner-biblical dialogue exploring the topics of Psalm 8, and each of these texts can serve as a bridge connecting Psalm 8 with other parts of the canon.

Using these texts as entry points, the chapter described the place of Psalm 8 as one that overlaps substantially with the ideal vision of the created order in Genesis 1, yet

is distinct from Genesis 1 in that its focus is not on an ideal primeval state, but on YHWH's continuing activity in maintaining the created order. Job 7 stands in stark contrast with Psalm 8 in that Job sees God's constant attention to humanity as a nuisance, not as a blessing; Job 7 speaks of the world as it is at its worst, in disorder, while Psalm 8 speaks of the world as it ought to be at its best, in perfect order. Psalm 144, which prays for divine intervention on behalf of David and the nation, promising praise for the rescue that YHWH is sure to bring, stands somewhere between Job 7 and Psalm 8. Like Job 7, Psalm 144 honestly acknowledges present chaos, but, like Psalm 8, Psalm 144 confidently expects the LORD to intervene, restore order to the king, and silence the enemies.

Chapter four attempted to read all four of these texts together and situate them within the broader collection of the Old Testament corpus. In order to provide a coherent construct within which to synthesize the vast scope of material, the place of Psalm 8 in the Old Testament was summarized as representing the intersection of two trajectories: 1) the trajectory of the reversal motif, wherein YHWH maintains the created order through the exaltation of the weak and humble, especially in the case of humanity, and 2) the trajectory of the motif of the conflicted and conflicting human, wherein humans are depicted as beset by trials, failing to live righteously, and often even occupying the role of YHWH's enemies (Ps 8:3). One can read the Old Testament in light of these two trajectories; whether one looks to the account of the creation, fall and decline of humanity (Gen 1-11), the rise, decline, and fall of the Davidic monarchy (1 Samuel-2 Kings), or the trials and tortures of Job, one finds, on the one hand, the evidence of YHWH using seemingly weak things to establish the created order, and, on the other hand, humans who are beset by trouble, sin, and personal and corporate failure of some form or another.

Chapter five went on to consider the New Testament, using four texts that cite Psalm 8 as entry points: Matt 21:1-17, 1 Cor 15:20-28, Eph 1:15-22, and Heb 2:5-9. This chapter paid special attention to the way in which each passage interpreted and applied Psalm 8 in its new context, and then briefly articulated how one might understand Psalm 8 in light of this new interpretation. Regarding Matthew 21, on the one hand, the rationale underlying Jesus's application of Psalm 8 to the children shouting "Hosanna" (verses 9, 15-16) is not extensively spelled out; Matthew's point, it was argued, is not to provide a detailed Christological exegesis of Psalm 8, but to bring the reader into an encounter with Christ. The reader is meant to ask and ponder, "who is this" Jesus? On the other hand, though, the citation of Psalm 8 in Matt 21:16 1) reinforces the various Messianic claims made throughout the passage (especially that Jesus is the Son of David and a new Moses), and 2) seems to imply that, if the children of Matt 21:15 are the babies of Ps 8:3, then the religious leaders of Matt 21:12-15 are the enemies of Ps 8:3. Thus, Matt 21:1-17 encourages the canonically minded reader to see the life of Christ and his humble followers as an especially important enactment of the reversal motif summarized in Psalm 8.

1 Cor 15:20-28 and Eph 1:15-22 have much in common, yet also exhibit markedly different emphases. 1 Cor 15:20-28 applies the declaration that God has "placed all things under his feet" (1 Cor 15:27; Ps 8:7) to Christ for the purpose of convincing his audience that even death must ultimately be vanquished (1 Cor 15:26), so that all humanity will experience a future resurrection. The rationale underlying this hermeneutical move seems to be the identification of Christ as a representative second Adam (1 Cor 15:21-22, 45), so that Jesus has succeeded where Adam and humanity have failed (by si-

lencing God's enemies, Ps 8:3, and reigning as a just vice-gerent, Ps 8:5-9). Although Eph 1:19-22 does not make this hermeneutical rationale explicit, the passage bears marked similarities to 1 Cor 15:25-27, and seems to presuppose and build upon the exegesis of 1 Corinthians 15. Eph 1:15-22 differs markedly from 1 Cor 15:20-27, however, in that the former emphasizes the present exalted state of the Christ over his church, but the latter emphasizes Christ's future, complete exaltation at the eschatological resurrection. Thus, when one reads Psalm 8 in light of these two passages, several hermeneutical implications emerge. One begins to see how the tension between the conflicted human and the reversal motif resolves in the person of Christ, who succeeds in fulfilling the role of king Adam where other humans have failed. Ephesians 1 reminds the reader that the reversal motif is already being actualized in Christ's exaltation, while 1 Corinthians 15 reminds the reader that the final complete reversal which will maintain the created order will be realized in a future corporate resurrection.

Heb 2:5-9, quotes Ps 8:5-7 and is very similar to 1 Cor 15:20-27 and Eph 1:15-22. It was argued that the author of Hebrews interprets Psalm 8 as speaking simultaneously of a redeemed version of corporate humanity and of Christ himself. Heb 2:10-18 explains the rationale for this dual interpretation: Christ, in his incarnation and humiliation identifies with his fellow humans so that they too might come to glory (verse 9). Thus, Hebrews applies the words of Psalm 8 to Christ, presupposing a federal role for Christ similar to that articulated by Paul (Romans 5). Yet, through the close identification between Christ and his siblings, the author of Hebrews is also able to see how God can use corporate humanity to maintain order in creation, just as Psalm 8 describes. Thus, bringing Psalm 8 into dialogue with the New Testament's message generates a third herme-

neutical trajectory: That of the redeeming Christ. This third trajectory intersects with the other two hermeneutical trajectories in that it makes the redemption of the conflicted human possible, enabling God to establish order in creation through the exaltation of weak humans.

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