

Psalms 61-72

Psalms 61-72, End of Book 2

Overview

The remaining Psalms in Book 2 (Figure 1, chart) are divided by a change in authorship, from David (61-71) to Solomon (72). Psalm 72 is a vision of the coming Messianic rule, restoring the defeat in Psalms 42-44.

Psalms 61-71 begin and end with laments, with a central section of praise to God (Figure 2, chart). The four Psalms in the center bear the double titles “song” and “psalm.” The first two sections alternate the sanctuary with adversaries—personal in 61-64, national in 65-68. The second lament section borrows heavily from the Songs of the Sufferer at the end of Book 1. Unlike 61-64, it asks for God’s judgment on adversaries (rather than simply predicting it, 62:3, 12; 63:9,10,11; 64:7, 8), and emphasizes the divine name יהוה (rare in Book 2 and only in the final Psalm of each of the first two sections). The overall sequence is: David cries to God, acknowledges his salvation, and then casts the burden of his adversaries on the Lord.

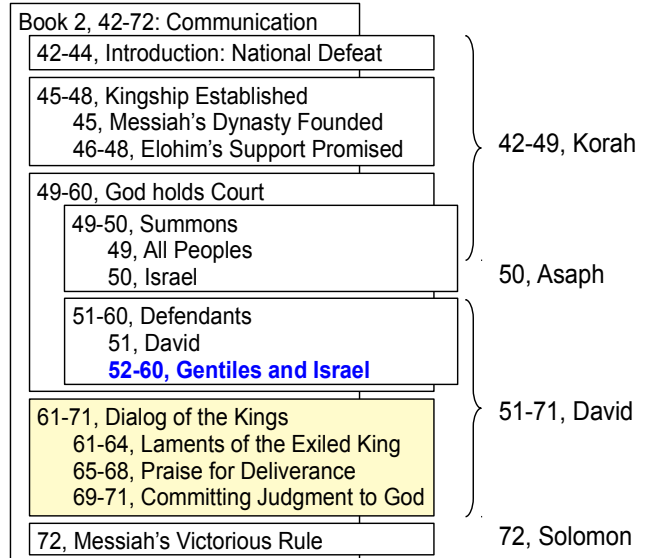


Figure 1: Analysis of Book 2

61-64, Laments of the Exiled King

Many of David’s laments date to the persecution under Saul. Psalms 52-60 is a good example, including the ambush at his house (59), Doeg (52), his attempt at refuge in Gath (56), the people of Zipf (54), the cave at En Gedi (57), and Nabal (53). The laments in 61-64 appear to come from the persecution under Absalom. David is in exile (61:2 “from the end of the earth”; 63:1), which could apply to either period, but here he is already the king (61:6; 63:11), and the his opposition consists of secret counsels (64:2), a prominent theme in Absalom’s rebellion (Hushai vs. Ahithophel), less characteristic of impulsive Saul. So the section emphasizes David’s frustration: he is not only the anointed king, but indeed the reigning king, and yet his life is in turmoil.

Psalms 61 and 63 echo the longing in 42-43 for a return to God’s house, while 62 and 64 focus on the wicked who have driven him away.

Ps 61, Prayer for the King’s Preservation

61:1 A Psalm of David.—No classification, simply authorship.

The *Selah* ending v. 4 divides the Psalm into two stanzas, each with three parts (Table 1, chart). First,

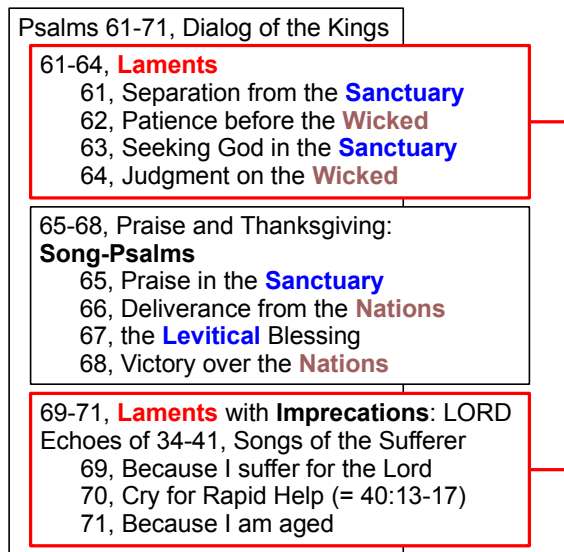


Figure 2: Organization of Psalms 61-71

Psalms 61-72

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|
| David speaks to God | Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. 2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. | 5 For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name. | |
| God protects David | 3 For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. | 6 Thou wilt prolong the king's life : and his years as many generations. | 7b O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him. |
| David worships for ever | 4 I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever : I will trust in the covert of thy wings . | 7a He shall abide before God for ever : | 8 So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever , that I may daily perform my vows . |

Table 1: Structure of Psalm 61

David speaks to God (a trusting cry for help in 1-2, recollection of vows that he has made based on his fear of God in v. 5). Then he recalls God’s past protection (3), which he expects to continue into the future (6, 7b). The final part of each stanza looks forward to David’s return from “the end of the earth” to God’s tabernacle (4) where he can worship God (7) for ever and offer the sacrifices he has promised (8). The second stanza doubles the second and third parts.

Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. 2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed:—David has been brought to the very end of himself. His heart is overwhelmed, enveloped, with darkness and sorrow, because of his son’s betrayal. God often brings us to such a position to show us our need for him.

lead me to the rock that is higher than I. 3 For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.—David recalls God’s past defense (“thou hast been ...”). The descriptions (rock, shelter, tower) remind us of Psalm 18, though the precise words are different.

Psa 18:2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

That Psalm was written at the beginning of David’s reign,

Psa 18:1 in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul:

Now, fleeing Absalom, he is exiled across Jordan, to “the end of the earth.” He cries out to God, taking encouragement from God’s past deliverance.

4 I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.—He longs to return, not to his home, but to God’s tabernacle, and to remain there under God’s sheltering care. Kidner notes the sequence of “increasingly personal terms”:

the aloof ruggedness of the high crag of verse 2 gives place to the purpose-built tower of verse 3, and this in turn to the hospitality of the frail tent (4) with its implication of safety among friends; and finally the affectionate, parental shelter symbolized by thy wings. This, against all appearances, is the best security of all.

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Here and in vv. 7-8, he emphasizes the eternal nature of the security that God offers. Whatever difficulty we face, before God it is temporary:

Psa 57:1 Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.

Rom 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

5 For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.—The second stanza begins once again with David’s speech to God—this time not crying out for deliverance, but recalling vows that he has made in the course of his supplication. A vow is a promise that if God does something, David will offer sacrifices in return.

6 Thou wilt prolong the king's life: and his years as many generations.—Recalling the promise of 2 Samuel 7, David is confident in the Lord’s future protection. His concern is not just for himself, but for the dynasty that God has promised him, culminating in the Messiah.

7 He shall abide before God for ever:—As in v. 4, David’s desire is not for Jerusalem as his capital, but access to the special presence of God at the sanctuary he has established there.

O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him.—Invoking the concluding pair of the Lord’s self-revelation in Ex 34:6, David once more seeks God’s protection.

8 So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.—And once more, the purpose is worship. To “perform a vow” is to offer the sacrifice that was promised when the vow was made, and that brings us back once more to the sanctuary.

To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun,—Jeduthun was one of the Levites appointed by David to lead worship in the temple. His family in particular was responsible for Psalms of thanksgiving and praise:

1Ch 25:1 Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals: ... 3 Of Jeduthun: the sons of Jeduthun; Gedaliah, and Zeri, and Jeshaiiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp, **to give thanks and to praise the LORD.**

The repeated emphasis of this Psalm on David’s desire to return from exile to worship in the temple makes it an appropriate call to praise for Jeduthun and his sons.

Ps 62: Trusting God Patiently

62:1 A Psalm מְזוֹמֵר of David.

The *Selah*s divide the Psalm into three stanzas (Figure 3, chart). The first two begin with a common refrain. The first deals with the wicked, while the second turns to the righteous. The third stanza exhorts both groups, then leads the hearer to contemplate the Lord, to whom all must answer.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Psalm 62, Preparing to Meet God | |
| 1-4, God judges the Wicked (AB) | 1-2, Refrain: David's trust in God |
| 3, Warning to the Wicked | |
| Selah | |
| 5-8, God protects the Righteous (AC) | 5-6, Refrain: David's trust in God |
| 7-8, Exhortation to the Righteous | |
| Selah | |
| 9-12, God's Resources (BCA) | 9, Warning to the Wicked |
| 10, Exhortation to the Righteous | |
| 11-12, God's Power and Mercy | |

Figure 3: Structure of Psalm 62

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Truly my soul waiteth upon [דומיה נפשי] my soul is silence] God: from him cometh my salvation. 2 He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.—As in Psalm 39, he is silent before God:¹

39:2 I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred.

3 My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue,

39:9 I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.

But there is a difference between his silence here and in 39. there he tried to be silent but burst out complaining. Here he achieves peace.

“Defence” is משגב Strong 4869, a high tower or fortification.

3 How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.—In contrast to the “defence” or high tower that God provides him, his enemies are a half-ruined stone wall that is about to fall down.

4 They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.—The offenses recall the time of Absalom:

- emphasis on consultation, cf. Ahithophel vs. Hushai; Saul was much more reactive.
- false affection: Absalom sought reconciliation with David, then fought him.

5 My soul, wait thou [דומי] be silent] only upon God; for my expectation תקוה is from him.—Note three changes from v. 1:

- from describing his soul as silent, to commanding it to be silent. Cf. 37:1 “fret not thyself”
- from waiting on God, to waiting **only** on God, excluding all other hopes
- from focus on salvation (the objective fact of deliverance) to expectation, hope (the subjective experience of it)

6 He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved.—Compared with v. 2, he drops the word “greatly” before “moved.” Now he is not moved at all.

7 In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. 8 Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.—The second stanza turns from the deception of men to God as a reliable refuge (מְחֻסָּה Strong 4268, hiding place).

The final stanza recaps the criticism of the wicked and encouragement to the righteous, before turning once again to God.

9 Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.—Men are only a breath, and can pose no true threat. This, with Psalm 39, is the root of the claim of Ecclesiastes that “all is vanity.”

10 Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.—The righteous must not be deceived into following the ways of the wicked.

¹ Delitzsch compares this and Psalm 39. Both prefer the particle אך “truly, surely, only” (only in 12 Psalms. Ps 39 2.5% of total words; Ps 62 4.2%; no other Psalm more than 1.7%), and emphasize the vanity of man (with 6:9, compare 39:11).

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11 God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power עַז belongeth unto God. 12 Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy חַסֵּד: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.—Men may be nothing more than empty breath, but God has two things: true power, and principles (covenant love) by which to regulate that power. Compare 23:4, “thy rod [for chastisement and defense] and thy staff [for guidance and support] they comfort me.”

Ps 63: Longing for God 24/7

63:1 A Psalm מְזוֹמֵר of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.—The reference to his kingship (v. 11) identifies this with the flight through the wilderness from Absalom, rather than his more extended time there hiding from Saul. It precedes Psalm 61, which was written from the other side of Jordan.

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Longing for the Lord | 1, early | 6-8, at night |
| Vision | 2, of God's glory | 9, of God's judgment |
| Promise of Praise | 3-5 | 11 |

Table 2: Structure of Psalm 63

The Psalm has two stanzas, each expressing longing for the Lord (and time reference) (1, 6-8); vision of God's glory vs. judgment on the wicked (2-3, 9-10); promise of praise (4-5, 11) (Table 2, chart). Whether early or late, David longs for the Lord, echoing the theme verse,

Psa 16:8 I have set the LORD **always** before me:

O God, thou art my God; early² will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;—The arid landscape through which he is fleeing is a picture of his spiritual thirst for God.

2 To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.—Better, “So have I gazed upon thee in the sanctuary, to behold thy power and thy glory.” He compares his current focus on God and longing for him with his experience of God's presence in the tabernacle. He is preoccupied with God's power, glory, and one other attribute, his covenant love:

3 Because thy lovingkindness חַסֵּד is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. 4 Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. 5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:—His diligent meditation on the Lord leads to a response, described by three verbs:

- praise שָׁבַח Strong 7623 (v. 3), a very rare parallel to הָלַל with special emphasis on explaining the underlying reason for the praise.
- bless בָּרַךְ Strong 1288 (v. 4). When God blesses us, he gives us special power or ability. When we bless him, we recognize him as the source of such gifts.
- praise הָלַל Strong 1984 (v. 5), emphasizing the public proclamation of God's glory.

6 When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches,³ 7 Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. 8 My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.—At night as well as in the morning, he seeks the Lord. Psalms 3-7, from this same period, emphasize his nocturnal flight.

2 Delitzsch: “The verb שָׁחַר signifies earnest, importunate seeking and inquiring (e.g. lxxviii. 34), and in itself has nothing to do with שָׁחַר, the dawn; but since ver. 7 [6] looks back upon the night, it appears to be chosen with reference to the dawning morning, just as in Isa. xxvi.9 also, שָׁחַר stands by the side of אֲנָהּ בְּלִילָהּ .”

3 The parallelism encourages us to read v. 6 as subordinate to 7 rather than 5.

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9 But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. 10 They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes.—His vision has shifted from God’s power, glory, and love, to the destruction his adversaries will face. The jackals will consume them like carrion.

11 But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.—He promises to praise God for deliverance.

To the chief Musician

Ps 64: God’s Efficient Justice

64:1 A Psalm מזמור of David.

The Psalm follows the straightforward structure of a lament: Plea (1-2), Complaint (3-6), Confidence (7-8), and Praise (9-10).

Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy. 2 Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity:—The plea is for delivery from plotting adversaries. “Insurrection” רִגְשָׁה Strong 7285 is literally a mob or throng, but the parallel with “secret counsel” here and the use of the verb in Psalm 2 confirm the AV’s allusion to a deliberate plot:

Psa 2:1 Why do the heathen **rage**, and the people imagine a vain thing?

The picture of deliberate, plotting opposition fits the period of Absalom’s rebellion.

3 Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: 4 That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not. 5 They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them? 6 They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep.—The complaint reinforces this description. Note the verbs emphasizing the deliberate, planned nature of their opposition: “whet” (sharpen), “encourage themselves,” “commune,” “search out.” David compares their words with arrows, laying the foundation for his expression of confidence in God’s judgment:

7 But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. 8 So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.—God’s judgment is described in terms similar to the attack of the wicked, an expression of the *lex talionis*. Like them (v. 4), he attacks suddenly. God’s arrows are sharper than theirs; their evil speech will return upon themselves. But contrast the length of the paragraphs: After the long, detailed description of their opposition, how quickly the Lord dispatches them!

9 And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing. 10 The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.—God’s deliverance will lead to praise that returns to him.

The introduction of God’s proper name יהוה is the first in this group of Psalms (61-71), and we will not see it again until Psalm 68, where it appears three times (together with a single instance of the short form יה). But it is in each of 69, 70, and 71. Thus it guides the division of the section.

To the chief Musician

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65-68, God Delivers his King

As 61-64 reflect the exile, suffering, and longing for the temple in Psalms 42-44, Psalms 65-68 echo the proclamation of God’s rule from Zion in Psalms 46-48, and his power over the raging elements (cf. 46 in particular).

These four Psalms differ from the laments on either side in three ways.

First, they are not laments, but Psalms of praise.

Second, each one bears the double title “song” שִׁיר and “psalm” מִזְמוֹר. David wants to emphasize their joyfulness. Like the four in 61-64, they form an alternation, this time between

praise in the temple (65, 67) and military victory (66, 68).

Third, recalling the declaration of the Messianic king in 45-48 (Figure 4, chart), they show a concentrated use of the plural term for “peoples,” along with other references to Gentile nations. We’ll see evidence that the sons of Korah, who wrote 46-48, knew two of these Psalms.

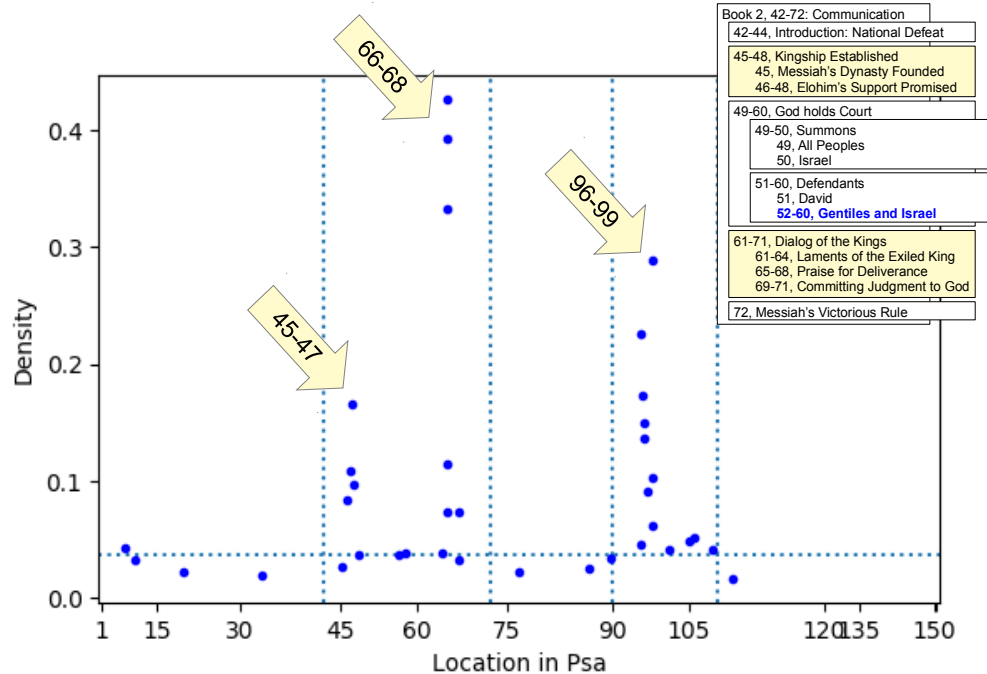


Figure 4: "Peoples" עַמִּים (Strong 5971) in Psalms

Ps 65

65:1 A Psalm מִזְמוֹר and Song שִׁיר of David.

The Psalm describes three kinds of blessings from God (Kidner):

- 1-4, God of Grace, forgiving sin and bringing us into his presence
- 5-8, God of Might, defending us from harm
- 9-13, God of Plenty, providing our physical needs

Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion⁴:—As in 65:1, “wait” is the noun “silence.” What does it mean for praise to be silent before God? See notes for discussion; the most likely explanation

4 This is the only place in the OT where צִיּוֹן is translated Sion rather than Zion. (Sion is the consistent NT term, based on LXX Σιών.) Sion appears one other place in the OT, at Deut 4:48, for שֵׁיֶאֱן, an alternative name for Mt. Hermon.

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(Delitzsch, Kidner) is that resignation before God, quietly trusting in him (as in 65:1, 5) is the deepest form of praise to God.

Hab 2:20 But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.

and unto thee shall the vow be performed.—The sacrifice that was promised in time of need, cf. 61:5, 8.

2 O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.—He welcomes the worship, not only of Israel, but of all his creatures.

3 Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.—Here is the heart of the paragraph: God's gracious dealing with our sins.

4 Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee,—Emphasizing the grace of God, David notes that coming to God is something that God initiates, with his choice and gracious invitation.

that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.—The objective of that choice, the benefit that is conferred, is ongoing fellowship with God.

From this first blessing of fellowship with God, David moves to the second, God's rule over the tumultuous affairs of earth.

5 By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea: 6 Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power: 7 Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the peoples. 8 They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.—The mountains and seas anticipate Psalm 46,

Psa 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. 2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; 3 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

Note the heavy emphasis on Gentiles. God rules over the affairs of men, and he alone is able to calm their warring and bring peace to a troubled world.

Finally, David praises God for his material blessing in the form of fruitful fields.

9 Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water:—"The river of God," literally "God's canal," is the rain, sent from heaven, in contrast with water from springs that has to be carried by hand. Recall Paul's words in Lystra-Derbe,

Act 14:17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

Men are reminded that their daily bread depends on the gracious gift of God.

thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it. 10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof:—"Ridges" and "furrows" reflect the

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preparation of the fields by the farmer (VanGemeran). Man must make preparation in order to enjoy God's bounty.

thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof. 11 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness. 12 They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. 13 The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.—If we would only hear, all of nature joins with us in praising God for his great bounty.

To the chief Musician

Ps 66

66:1 A Song שִׁיר or Psalm מזמור.—Notably, not ascribed to David, and most commentators assign it to Hezekiah's deliverance from Assyria or the return from Babylon, because of 8-12. But the linkage with Psalm 46 might suggest the time of Jehoshaphat, and his deliverance from the Syrians in 2 Chronicles 18, inspiring the sons of Korah in in 2 Chronicles 20 to write Psalms 46-48 (see notes on those Psalms).

The Psalm has two stanzas (1-12, 13-20). Each moves from promising praise to God, through a call to come see the basis for praise, and ending with the offering of praise (Figure 5, chart). The two stanzas are distinguished by grammatical number. The first is plural, and focused on the Gentiles: "all ye lands" (v. 1), "all the earth" (4), "the nations" (7), "ye peoples" [plural] (8). The second is singular, "I."

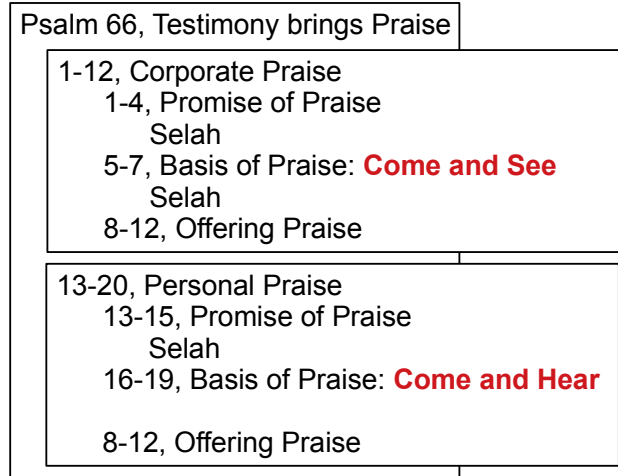


Figure 5: Structure of Psalm 66

This transition suggests an important lesson. It is easy to join in with the crowd in singing praise to the Lord, but the multitude that joyfully welcomed the Lord into Jerusalem in Matt 21:8-11, a few chapters later joined with the Jewish leaders in seeking his death (27:20). It is not enough to raise our voice with the congregation. We must also bear individual testimony to what the Lord has done for us.

Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:—In addition to the respectful silence of Psalm 65:1, God is pleased to receive th joyful acclaim of his creatures.

2 Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious. 3 Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee. 4 All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah.—The remarkable thing about the opening promise of praise is that all the Gentiles are praising God for his terrible works that lead his enemies to submit to him! When in human affairs are those conquered grateful to their conquerors for overwhelming them? But those whom God has submitted to himself, by whatever judgments are necessary to get their attention, forever thank him for overcoming their sin and drawing them to himself.

5 Come and see the works of God:—Quoted later by Psalm 46:8, where, as here, it refers to his dominance over all human military might (chart):

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Psa 46:8 Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. 9 He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.—“Doing” עלילה Strong 5949 is one of a family of words in the OT that describe wanton, irresponsible actions, that is, actions for which the performer is accountable to nobody. For example:

Psa 14:1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done **abominable works**, there is none that doeth good.

1Sa 2:3 Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogance come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him **actions** are weighed.

When people perform these deeds, they are wicked, for they are declaring their independence from God.⁵ But it is the very essence of God’s glory that he is independent and answers to nobody, and so these terms are commonly used to describe his glory.

6 He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.—As often in the OT, the crossings of the Red Sea and the Jordan are emblematic of God’s power to deliver his people, recalling his primordial victory over the deep in Genesis 1.

7 He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.—In view of his works, the enemies are exhorted to submit.

8 O bless our God, ye peoples, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: 9 Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.—Now he comes to the actual offering of praise, which again is from the peoples (plural), emphasizing that all nations participate. And again, this praise is for the victory that God has given to his people, which necessarily implies his judgment on those very nations.

10 For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. 11 Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. 12 Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.—The nation has been sorely tried. If we are correct in linking this Psalm, with 46-48, to the time of Jehoshaphat, this may be his recollection of his disastrous alliance with Ahab against Syria in 1 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 18, in which he almost lost his life.

Now the group praise turns to the individual.

13 I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows, 14 Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble. 15 I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.—This would fit very well with Jehoshaphat’s remarkable deliverance in the Syrian war. The writer recalls his personal troubles, and promises he made to God at that time, and now comes to the temple to pay his vows.

16 Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.—In v. 5, the invitation to “come and see” was general, envisioning “the children of men,” and concerned God’s mighty works in the world. Here, it is focused on his fellow-worshippers, “all ye that fear God,” and recognizes the Lord’s gracious deeds for the writer.

5 This is the case even in Ezek 14:22-23, where the word describes the basis for God’s judgment on the nation that comforts the observer in affirming God’s justice.

Psalms 61-72

17 I cried unto him with my mouth,—The same verb describes Jehoshaphat’s cry in 1 Ki 22:32; 2 Chr 18:31.

and he was extolled with my tongue.—He has not forgotten to join praise with his prayer. How often do we cry to God for help, but not acknowledge when he does great things for us.

18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: 19 But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.—He exhorts his hearers on the importance of not presuming on the Lord. As we learned in Psalms 15 and 24, we cannot hope to approach the Lord if we are in a spirit of rebellion against him. Compare the exhortation of Paul in 1 Cor 11:28,

1Co 11:27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

20 Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy נסר from me.—Corresponding to the corporate blessing on the Lord in vv. 8-12, he now thanks God for his personal care for him, according to his loyal love.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth

Ps 67

67:1 A Psalm or Song.

We noted that Psalms 65-68, and in particular 65 and 67, respond to David’s longing for the house of God in 61 and 63. To appreciate the relevance of Psalm 67 in this setting, we need to recognize how the poet echoes Aaronic blessing of Num 6:24f (Table 3, chart). This blessing is closely linked with tabernacle. The Lord gave this blessing to Aaron just before the historical description in ch. 7 of the gifts of the princes at the dedication of the tabernacle, and Aaron and the priests are said to bless the people after sacrifices are offered (Lev 9:22; 2 Chr 30:27).

| | |
|--|---|
| Num 6:22 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 23 Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel , saying unto them, | Ps 67:1 God be merciful נסר [Strong 2603] unto us, and ble s us; and cause his face to shine upon us |
| 24 The LORD ble s thee, and keep thee: | |
| 25 The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious נסר [Strong 2603] unto thee: | |
| 26 The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. | |
| 27 And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel ; and I will bless them. | |

Table 3: Psalm 67:1 and the Aaronic Blessing

But there is an important contrast between the two passages. The Aaronic blessing is specifically for “the children of Israel,” Num 6:23, 27. But every part of Psalm 67 emphasizes the universality of God’s blessing: v. 2 “all nations,” 7 “all the ends of the earth,” 4 “nations,” and the plural “peoples” five times, in vv. 3-5. This is the densest concentration of these references in the Psalter (Figure 4 for “peoples”; other terms are similarly distributed). David as the Messianic king is carrying out the program of Psalm 2 to bring all the earth under the God of Israel.

The Psalm is chiasitic (Table 4, VanGemeran). The outer members seek God’s blessing, while 3 and 5 ask that all peoples will bow before the Lord, and at the center is a request for God’s righteous world-wide rule.

Psalms 61-72

God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah.—Here is the reference to Numbers 6.

2 That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.—God’s purpose is to bring salvation to all.

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Prayer for Blessing | 1-2 God be merciful to us and bless us | 6-7 God shall bless us |
| Prayer for Outreach | 3 Let all the peoples praise thee | 5 Let all the peoples praise thee |
| Prayer for God’s Rule | 4 thou shalt judge ... govern ... | |

Table 4: Structure of Psalm 67

“Us” in v. 1 refers to the speakers, those gathered in the tabernacle or temple. We can imagine the setting: the sacrifice has been offered, the priests have proclaimed the blessing, and this Psalm is the congregational response. The people are to say, “Yes, may God indeed be merciful to us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us, but we understand that this bounty is not to be kept to ourselves. The purpose of his blessing to us is that he may become known to all nations.” This is a good example for us: when we are most conscious of God’s blessings to us, we should be renewed in our efforts to let others know of God’s salvation.

3 Let the peoples praise thee, O God; let all the peoples praise thee.—In keeping with this commitment, the congregation prays that all peoples might come to worship the God who has blessed them.

4 O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the peoples righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.—At the center of the chiasm the people pray for God’s righteous rule over all the earth. The confusion and chaos of current political systems should make us all long for the coming reign of the Lord Jesus.

Any time there is political change, one can expect opposition. That’s what Psalm 2 predicted (chart):

Psa 2:2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed,

When the Lord returns from heaven, how is he greeted by those on the earth?

Rev 19:19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

The prayer in v. 4 is that God would subdue their opposition and lead them to recognize the great blessing that comes through the rule of God’s son. Compare 66:1-2, 8, which also describe the nations as praising God for his victory over them.

5 Let the peoples praise thee, O God; let all the peoples praise thee.—An exact repetition of the petition in v. 3.

6 Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. 7 God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.—That coming age will be marked by physical prosperity and bounty to all the inhabitants of the earth, drawing them to fear the Lord.

To the chief Musician

Psalms 61-72

Ps 68

David longed to establish Jerusalem as the Lord's capital over the earth (Psalm 132). The city remained Jebusite after the conquest, and when David conquered it, it became the royal city, independent of any one tribe, yet common to them all (like the District of Columbia in our country). He wanted to celebrate his victories by building a temple (2 Samuel 7), but God would not let him, so he laid up wealth to enable Solomon to construct the temple. In this Psalm, he summarizes Israelite history from the Exodus to the longed-for sanctuary housing the worship of Jew and Gentile together. The occasion of the Psalm is most likely the bringing of the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem in 2 Samuel 6, establishing Jerusalem as the site for the new temple.

When David had subdued all his enemies, he suggested to Nathan that he build a temple (2 Sam 7:1-2). God told him that he should not, because his son would build the house. David understood that promise to apply to Solomon. He made extensive preparations, described in 1 Chronicles 28, including plans and material resources. But God had a greater son in mind than Solomon, and a greater house than Solomon's temple. The vision in this Psalm extends far beyond David's wars and Solomon's temple, to our Savior's victory over the wicked one, and the house that he is building for God's glory. Paul seems to have this overall sweep in mind when he quotes Ps 68:18 in Eph 4:8.⁶ We will consider his citation after we survey the Psalm.

The Psalm is the most obscure in the Psalter. It contains more than fifteen words and expressions that appear nowhere else in biblical literature, and the Massoretes marked thirty-two forms as unique in the Bible (Tate). We'll try to get the big picture, based on the insight that the main theme is a king who crowns his conquests by building a temple to God's glory.

68:1 A Psalm or Song of David.

The Psalm (Figure 6, chart) begins and ends with very similar hymns of praise. In between, it describes the Exodus and wilderness wanderings (5-10), the conquest of the land culminating in God's choice of Jerusalem (11-23), and the worship that will take place in the new temple (24-35). The central section is distinguished by its lack of direct address to God, marked frequently in the first section (vv. 7, 9, 10) and last section with hymn (24, 28, 35) by the vocative "O God."⁷

1-4, Opening Praise

This paragraph and the last are very similar (Table 5, chart), forming a frame. The initial hymn has several allusions to the Exodus, preparing us for vv. 5-10.

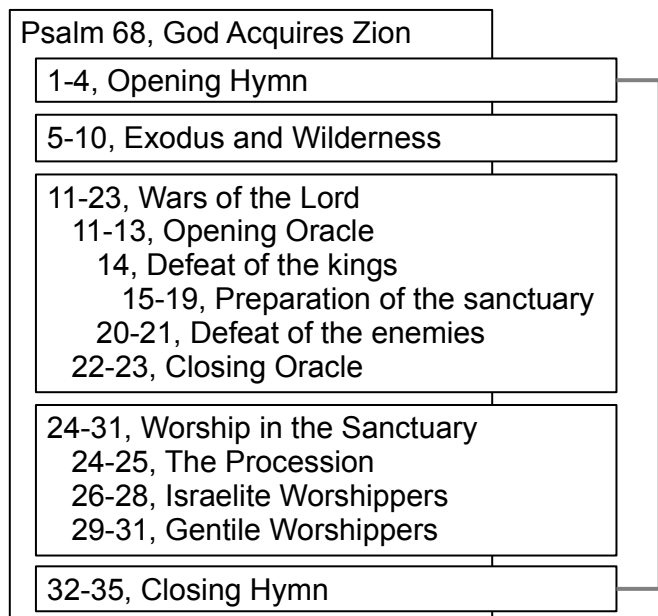


Figure 6: Structure of Psalm 68

6 This understanding is developed by Timothy Gombis, *The Triumph of God in Christ : Divine Warfare in the Argument of Ephesians*. PhD Dissertation, University of St. Andrews, 2005, and Todd Scaewater, *The Divine Builder: Psalm 68 in Jewish and Pauline Tradition*. PhD Thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 2017.

7 I am indebted to Anita Parunak for this observation.

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| | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. 2 As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. 3 But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. 4 Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens through the deserts by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.</p> | <p>32 Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah: 33 To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice. 34 Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds. 35 O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God.</p> |
|--|--|

Table 5: The Enclosing Hymn of Psalm 68

Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.—David begins by taking us back to Israel in the wilderness. This verse echoes Moses’ words when the cloud arose from the tabernacle and the ark set forth on its journeys:

Num 10:35 And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.⁸

In the closing hymn, it corresponds to v. 35, the fearfulness of God when he comes “out of [his] holy places.”

2 As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. 3 But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.—A second element of both hymns is God’s blessing on a special group, called “the righteous” in v. 3 and “his people” in v. 35.

4 Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens through the deserts by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.—Notice two expressions.

The first is the title, “him that rideth upon the heavens,” echoed in v. 33. The word translated “heavens” occurs many times in the Hebrew Bible, but elsewhere it always means “deserts,” “steppe-land,” and describes the territory through which Israel traveled during the Exodus (cf. Jer 2:6). Later, in v. 33, we will learn that God does indeed ride upon the heavens, an expression drawn from Deuteronomy:

Deu 33:26 There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who **rideth upon the heaven** in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.

This similarity led Jewish commentators to assume that this word might mean “heaven,” a lead followed by the King James translators. More recent scholars note that Baal is described as “rider on the clouds” and understand this word as cognate to the Ugaritic word for “clouds,” seeking to tie the Psalm to the Baal iconography. It is more straightforward to understand that in the opening of the Psalm, describing Israel’s exodus from Egypt, the Lord rides through the deserts, a vivid image in view of his victory over the chariots of Pharaoh at the Red Sea. By the end of the Psalm, he has achieved universal victory, and now rides through the heavens.

The second noteworthy expression is the name Jah, a short form of Jehovah. Like the cry for God to rise up (v. 1) and his riding through the desert (4a), this expression recalls the Exodus. This Psalm uses this relatively rare name twice, here and in v. 18 (in the name “LORD God”).

⁸ Num 10:36, “Return, O Lord,” may be echoed in v. 22.

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The first use of Jah is by Moses in Exodus 15 at the start of the Exodus. We will note the relevance of Exodus 15 when we study the relation of Psalm 68 to Ephesians 4.

5-10, The Exodus

Continuing the theme of the Exodus, David describes God in terms appropriate to Israel's experience in Egypt.

5 A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation. 6 God setteth the solitary in families:—We think in particular of Joseph, torn from his father, or Moses, who declared himself “a stranger in a strange land” (Exod 2:22).

he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.—Being bound with chains is a clear image of bondage.

7 O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah: 8 The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.—These verses describe Israel's march through the desert and the giving of the law at Sinai.⁹ We begin to hear echoes of the song of Deborah (chart):

Jdg 5:4 LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. 5 The mountains melted from before the LORD, even that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.

9 Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary. 10 Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.—As they traveled, he prepared the land before them by watering it with rain so that it would be fruitful for them when they arrived.¹⁰

11-23, Wars

As Israel approached the land, she faced opposition. Numbers and Deuteronomy record how she defeated Sihon king of the Amorites and Og king of Bashan on the east bank of the Jordan, and Joshua records the battles on the west bank by which the land was subdued.

This section of the Psalm describes these conflicts, and their outcome, chiasmically. The outer sections, mentioning the Lord's word (11, 22), are oracles from the Lord, promising victory.¹¹ The next two sections describe God's victory, and the center describing the fruit of the victory, God's chosen hill in Jerusalem. Let's consider the chiasm from the outside in.

11-13, 22-23, Oracles Promising Victory

The first oracle alludes to the victory over Jabin king of Hazor led by Deborah and Barak.

9 12 October 2020: On more careful study of Judg 5:4-5, of which this is clearly a quotation, I am now persuaded that *הוה סיני* is a divine epithet, “the one of Sinai,” and not one of the mountains that melted before the Lord. See notes on Judges 4-5 (www.cyber-chapel.org/sermons/judges/notes/Judg_45.pdf) for discussion and revised analysis of Psalm 68.

10 This feature of Canaan was in contrast with Egypt, where rain almost never falls and all irrigation is by foot-powered pumps from the Nile (cf. Deut 11:10-12).

11 I. Knohl, JHS 12:15 (2012), DOI:10.5508/jhs.2012.v12.a15

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11 The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.—“Those that published it” is feminine, reflecting the role of women in celebrating military victories, women like Miriam in Exo 15: 20-21, or the women of Jerusalem in 1 Sam 18:6-7, or Jephthah’s daughter in Jud 11:34, or most notably, Deborah in Judges 5. Recognizing this as a divine promise leads us to translate v. 12 as gnomic or future rather than past.

12 Kings of armies ~~did~~ will flee apace: and she that tarried at home ~~divided~~ will divide the spoil.—There is an allusion here to the hope of spoil expressed in Judges,

Jud 5:30 Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two; to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?

13 Though ye have lien among the pots שִׁפְתֵי־יָם,—The last word appears only here and in Ezek 40:43 in an obscure description of the temple, but is probably an allusion to the very similar term in Judges 5, describing tribes that did not fully participate in the battle:

Jud 5:16 Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds מִשְׁפְּתֵי־יָם, to hear the bleatings of the flocks?

yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.—The reference may be to the spoil gathered from the conquered enemies.

The paragraph at the end alludes to two of Israel’s other battles.

22 The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan,—Bashan is best known in Israel’s history as the home of Og, a king who opposed Israel during their final approach to the promised land, and whom they decisively defeated (Num 21:33-35; Deut 3:1-7).

I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea:—David once again draws our attention back to the victory at the Red Sea over Pharaoh (Exodus 15).

23 That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.—Now the Lord promises victory to some individual. God has brought his people from the Red Sea and their trans-Jordanian conquests in order to enable someone to win victory over his enemies. This might be Joshua, but more likely David is thinking of the encouragement God gave him in his battles to establish his kingdom with victories over Syria and Ammon.

14, 20-21, Descriptions of Victory

Working in from the divine oracles, we hear descriptions of victory.

14 When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon.—Next, we have a description of victory, scattering kings like flakes of snow. “Salmon” in Jud 9:48 is a wooded location near Shechem, and the reference may be to the conquest within the land.¹²

20 He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death. 21 But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.—The vivid description of the head of the enemy brings to mind the death of Sisera, head of Jabin’s army, at the hands of Jael in Judges 4.

¹² Delitzsch notes the description of massed arms in Iliad 19.357ff (457 in Cowper’s translation, <https://archive.org/stream/theiliadofhomer16452gut/16452.txt>) as a heavy snowfall. So the image might describe the spoil dropped by the fleeing adversaries.

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15-19, *The Spoils of War*

At the center we have references to the spoil that is gathered as a result of these victories.

15 The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan.—Notice the italics. We have in fact four descriptions of Bashan, probably the Golan heights or even Mount Hermon: “A hill of God” (perhaps “a mighty hill,” like Ps 36:6, or “a hill of gods,” a sanctuary), a high hill, and twice “Mount Bashan.”

16 Why leap ye, ye high hills?—The verb appears only here, but Arabic cognates (see Delitzsch, LePeau) suggest that it means “look enviously.” Mighty Bashan stares with amazement at humble Zion.

this is the hill which God desireth to dwell ישב in; yea, the LORD will dwell שכן in it for ever.—Zion is not a high hill. One looks down on it from the Mount of Olives. Yet God has chosen it for his dwelling place, and in the last days, it will be exalted above all others (Isa 2:2).

17 The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.—There David sees the Lord assembled with his angelic forces.

Most interpreters read the next verse as describing the Lord’s ascent to heaven after his conquests. But David frequently addresses the Lord directly in this Psalm, and every time he prefaces his words with the vocative “O God” (7, 9, 10, 24, 28, 35). In fact, a distinctive feature of the central section of the Psalm is that the Psalmist does *not* address God directly.

In contrast, in v. 23 we saw a statement like this addressed to the human conqueror who fights for God.¹³ In the context here, most likely verse 18 refers to David’s conquest of Jerusalem.

18 Thou hast ascended on high,—“On high” is frequently used to describe mountains, including Zion (Ezk 17:23; 20:40; 34:14).

thou hast led captivity captive:—The expression means, “to take captives,” and appears (among other places) in Judges 5:12.

thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also,—“For men” באדם is better “among men,” describing those whom he has subdued. God enables David to gather wealth to build the temple. This is the verse the NT quotes of Christ, who by his victory on the cross has gathered riches to construct God’s spiritual house.

that the LORD [YAH] God might dwell שכן among them.—Here is the purpose for which God has enabled David to overcome the citadel of Zion and receive tribute. The verb is the same that God used in instructing Moses to build the tabernacle:

Exo 25:8 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may **dwell שכן** among them.

Repetition of the name YAH (LORD God) strengthens the link to Exodus. The booty David received from his conquests formed the treasury with which the temple was constructed, just as the wealth the Israelites took from the Egyptians funded the construction of the tabernacle.

19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.—Now the captives respond. Formerly rebellious, they bless God. He has returned their

¹³ Jewish tradition understands the verse of Moses, ascending Sinai to bring the law down to the people.

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spoil to them by using it for a temple in which he will dwell with them. Their gifts to him become his gift to them—“He loads our salvation upon us.”

24-31, Worship in God’s sanctuary.

Marking the shift by returning to addressing God directly, David describes what will happen in the sanctuary to be built on the hill God has allowed him to conquer.

24 They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary. 25 The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels.—Now David envisions the victory procession moving toward the sanctuary, with accompaniment by the women (v. 11) proclaiming victory. It is natural to see this verse as describing the procession of the ark into Jerusalem in 2 Samuel 6,

2Sa 6:5 And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

26 Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord¹⁴, from the fountain of Israel. 27 There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali. 28 Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.—He calls on the people of Israel to bring their praise to the Lord who is now enthroned in Jerusalem. The roster of tribes again recalls Judges 5,

Jdg 5:14 Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek; after thee, Benjamin, among thy people; out of Machir came down governors, and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer. 15 And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah; even Issachar, and also Barak:

But that is not all.

29 Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee. 30 Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people that delight in war. 31 Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.—He envisions worship coming from pagan nations as well.

32-35, Closing Hymn

32 Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah: 33 To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice. 34 Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds. 35 O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God.—Resuming the themes of the opening hymn, he calls for universal worship of the powerful God. The God who once rode through the deserts to deliver his enslaved people, now dominates the entire heavens.

14 A rare instance where the AV uses “Lord” (with lower-case letters) to represent יהוה.

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To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim—The Psalm may have been sung at Passover because of its allusions to the Exodus. Traditionally, the Jewish people sing it at Pentecost, which is the conclusion of the Passover-based feasts.

Use of Psalm 68:18 in Eph 4:8-10

This part of our study is motivated by Paul’s citation of Psalm 68 in Ephesians 4.

Paul’s Quotation

Table 6 (chart) shows the citation in context. Notice the *context*, and the *change* in Paul’s quotation.

| | |
|---|--|
| | Eph 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, |
| Psa 68:18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for among men; | When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. |
| | 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for unto the work of the ministry, for unto the edifying of the body of Christ: |

Table 6: Paul's Citation of Ps 68:18 in Eph 4:8

The *context* is Paul’s discussion of spiritual gifts in the church. This is one of the two central passages on the notion that the church, the body of Christ, is made up of individual believers, each with a distinctive endowment by the Spirit. (The other is 1 Corinthians 12.) Each clause of Ps 68:18 is relevant to this theme.

- The last clause refers to gifts, and Paul is writing about the grace that is “given” “unto every one of us” (v. 7). He focuses (v. 11) on the gifts of church planting (apostles in the first century, evangelists subsequently) and local teaching (prophets in the first century, pastor-teachers later). But “every one of us” is the recipient of a gift, and the ministry of the distinctive gifts is to perfect the saints so that they (the saints) can exercise their gifts to do the work of ministry and edify (build up, like a temple) the body of Christ.
- These gifts are given by the Spirit (1Co 12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit), and our Lord taught that the Spirit could come only if he ascended to the Father (John 16:7). The first clause of Ps 68:18 refers to the messianic king “ascending.”
- The second clause says that the conqueror “led captivity captive,” which simply means “he took a host of captives.” We are those captives, delivered from Satan’s power and made God’s servants, the repositories of these gifts.

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The major *change* is that where the Psalm has him receiving gifts among (that is, from) men, Paul has him giving gifts *to* men. Our translators sought to soften this contrast by translating “received gifts for men,” but that’s stretching the Hebrew. The real solution lies in Psalm 68:19, where those whom the king has subdued declare,

Psa 68:19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits

The conqueror takes what he has won and turns it to the blessing of those whom he has conquered.

So the verse, as an isolated proof text, makes good sense. But there is reason to think that Paul’s understanding of Psalm 68 permeates Ephesians far beyond this single verse.

Review of the pattern of divine warfare and temple building

A common pattern in ancient near eastern literature is the picture of a divine hero (often, a king) who first conquers his enemies and then erects or renovates a temple in thanksgiving to God. This pattern can be traced in Egyptian and Assyrian annals of royal wars, Ugaritic myths about the god Baal, and the Babylonian creation epic, known as Enuma Elish.¹⁵

The OT reflects this pattern, as much as if to say, “Yes, the divine hero does conquer his enemies and erect a temple to God’s praise, but the God in question is not an Egyptian, Assyrian, Ugaritic, or Babylonian deity. It is YHWH.” Another way to look at this alignment is that these pagan records are a corrupt recollection of the true pattern of God’s working in the world.

Psalm 68 shows this pattern (Figure 6, chart). David recites the Lord’s conquests, culminating with his conquest of Jerusalem, and his use of the spoil he accumulated to build a temple.

Psalm 68 frequently echoes the defeat of Pharaoh’s army in the Red Sea. In particular, along with Psalms 94 and 118, it is the only chapter that repeatedly uses the name “YAH”¹⁶ that is first used by Moses in Exodus 15:

Exo 15:2 The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

The parallel goes much deeper than simply a reference to the event. Exodus 15 is organized as an alternation of praise to the Lord and narrative describing what happened (Figure 7, chart), leading to five paragraphs that form a chiasm around the detailed recollection of the victory over Pharaoh’s army. Between the outermost members (brief summaries) and the central detail are descriptions of God’s conquest, not only of Pharaoh but also of his dominion over Philistia, Edom, Moab, and

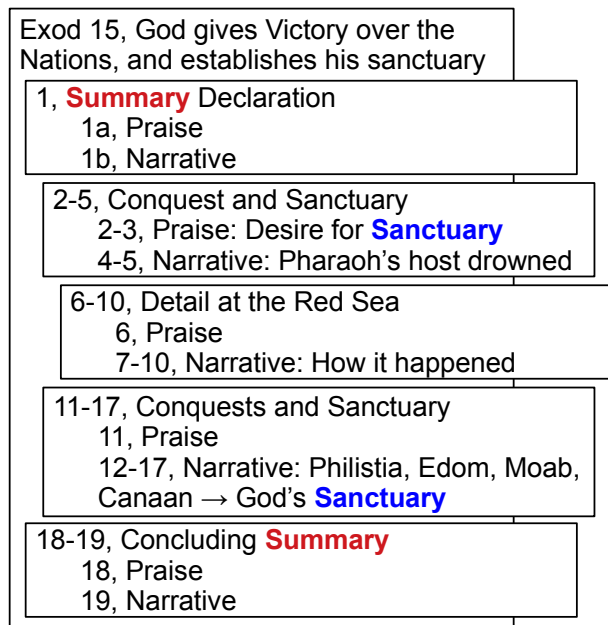


Figure 7: Structure of Exodus 15: Cycles of Praise and Narrative

¹⁵ Gombis and Scacewater give specific examples in their dissertations.

¹⁶ Setting aside instances of the clause “Hallelu-YAH,” “praise ye the Lord”

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Canaan, in both cases leading to the establishment of his sanctuary. We saw the notion of God’s habitation in v. 2. It recurs in v. 17,

Exo 15:17 Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, **in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established.**

Psalm 118 has the densest concentration of references to YAH (vv. 5 [2x], 14, 17, 18, 19), and it will not surprise us to find that it also illustrates the divine conqueror and builder. When we studied this Psalm in 2015, we saw that it is framed as a little drama whose main characters are Israel and the house of Aaron. Figure 8 (chart) shows the overall structure.

The psalm begins by inviting three groups to praise the Lord for his **חסד**, his faithful love: Israel, the house of Aaron (the priesthood), and those that fear the Lord. Then we hear from each of them.

First, Israel speaks. But the voice is of an individual, not of the nation—an individual who has fought a difficult battle, but emerged victorious. This identification of the nation with an individual is the “hourglass pattern” that we saw frequently in Isaiah. The promised Messiah is

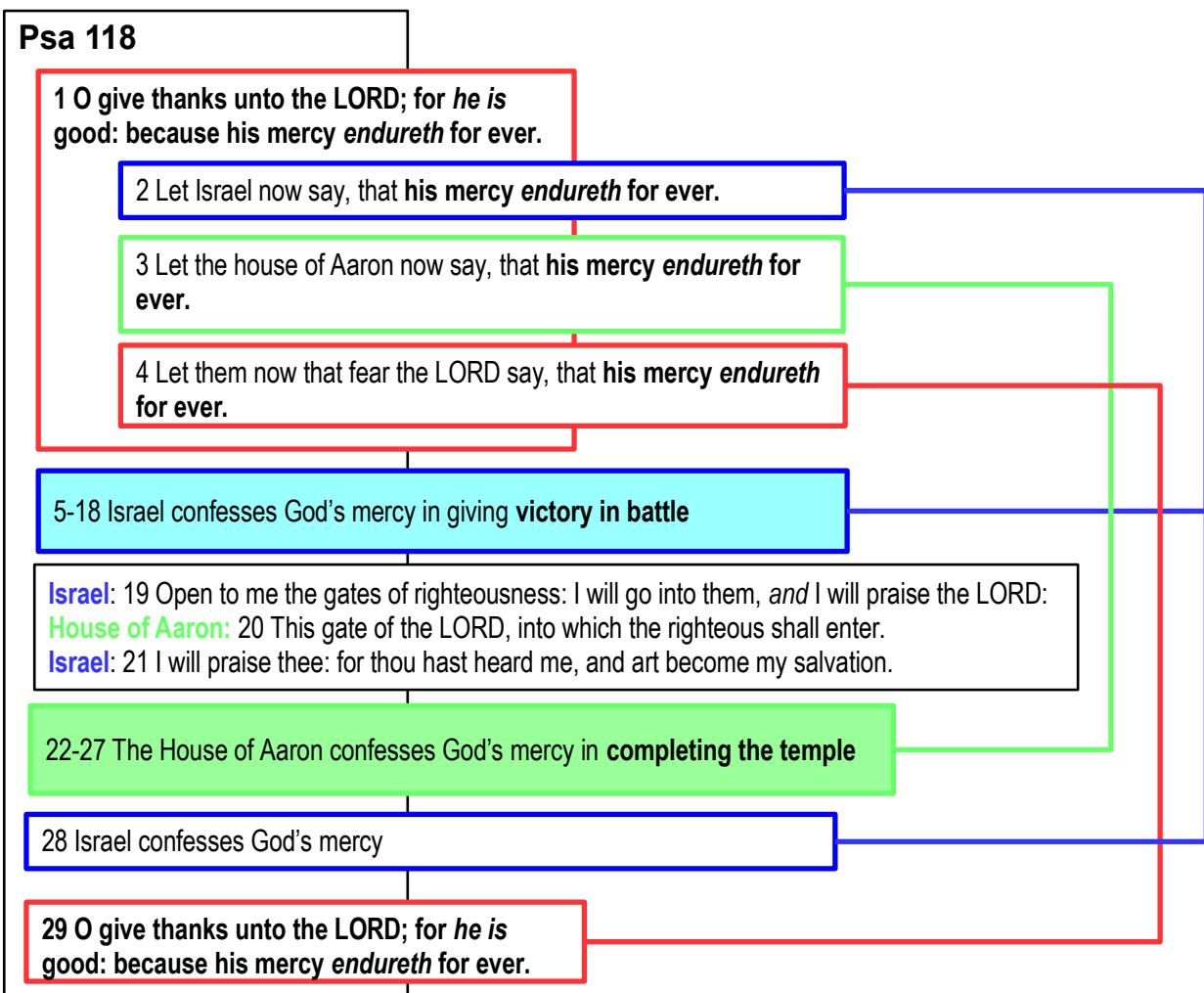


Figure 8: Structure of Psalm 118

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the ideal Israelite, who comes to fight on behalf of his people and redeem them. The pattern lies at the root of how David presents himself in the Psalms, as the representative of the nation.

This individual approaches the “gates of righteousness” (v. 19), a reference to the temple, and requests entrance. The house of Aaron replies, in keeping with Psalms 14 and 24, that only the righteous can enter, and Israel responds that his qualification rests on the fact that the Lord has heard and delivered him.

In reply, the house of Aaron announces that this Israelite is in fact the stone that the builders rejected, now the pinnacle of the temple. In other words, the temple was not really complete until the divine warrior arrives in victory.

The Psalm closes with praise once more from the warrior, and then a call to all who hear (“them that fear the Lord,” v. 4) to praise the Lord.

Here, as in Exodus 15 and Psalm 68, we again see the progression from divine victory in battle to the building or completion of a temple for God’s praise. The Psalm was probably written to celebrate the dedication of the second temple, recorded in Ezra 6 (see <https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/psalms/notes/Psa118.pdf>), a fitting occasion for such a theme.

The Pattern in Ephesians

To see what this all has to do with Ephesians, recall from 2000¹⁷ the overall structure of the book (Figure 9, chart). The key to the book is the Paul’s prayer in 1:18-19. After a long section of praise to the Father, Son, and Spirit, he prays that God would enable them to know three things:

Eph 1:18 ... that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,
19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe,

Each of these is the subject of an extended portion of the book, in chiasitic order (solid lines in Figure 9).

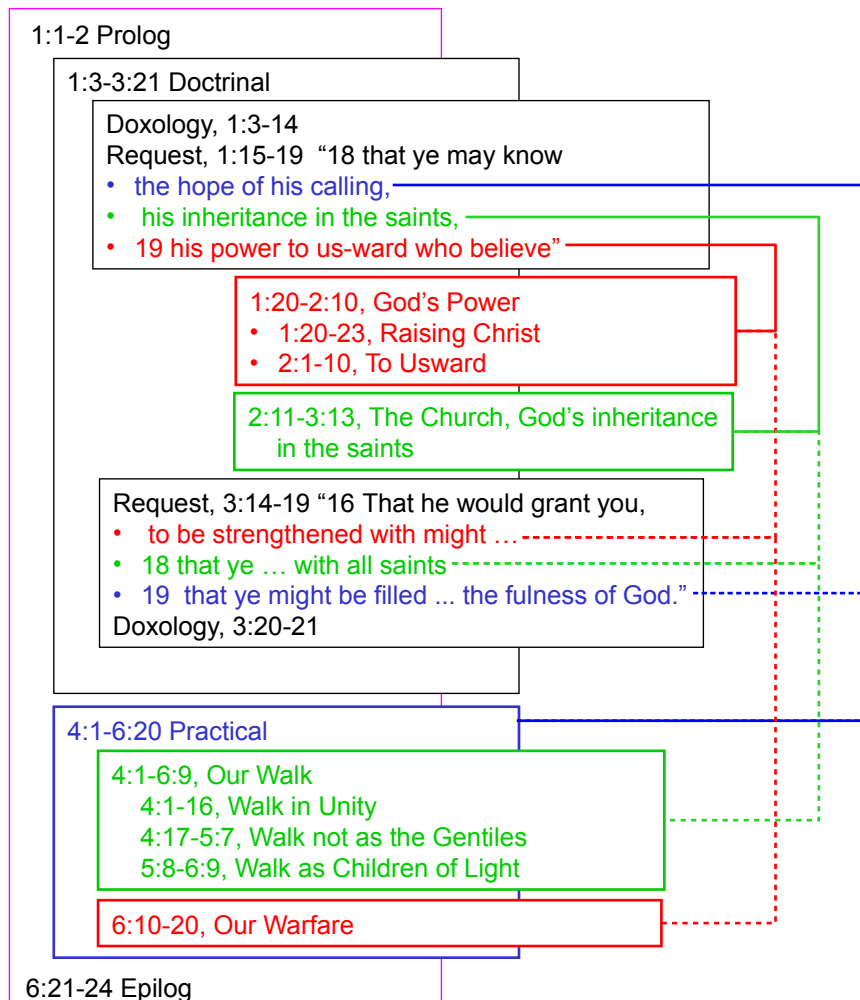


Figure 9: Structure of Ephesians

¹⁷ <https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/ephesians/notes/Overview%20of%20Ephesians.pdf>

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God's power is seen in the resurrection of Christ and his exaltation to a power of authority "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named" (1:21), placing all things under his feet (v. 22). This is the position of a conqueror over his foes, who are described in 2:2 in terms of their effect on us. He has delivered us from their control, claiming us as his captives (taking "captivity captive").

The second thing that Paul wants them to know is God's inheritance in the saints. In the OT, God's inheritance is the nation Israel, but in 2:11-3:13 Paul describes how God has reconciled both Gentiles and sinful Israelites to himself to create a new entity, the church. Note in particular that Paul describes this entity as a temple that Christ has built for his Father's praise:

Eph 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

The divine warrior, having conquered his foes and taken many captives, now builds a temple. Paul is tracking exactly with the pattern we saw in Exodus 15, Psalm 68, and Psalm 118.

The first thing Paul asked that his readers might know, and the last to be discussed, is the hope to which God has called them. This is the subject of chapters 4-6, introduced by references to their "calling" (v. 1) and referring to "the hope of your calling," v. 4 (moving from subjective genitive in 1:18 to objective genitive in 4:4). Like many of Paul's epistles, Ephesians has a theologically focused first half and a second half full of practical exhortations, and this is the practical section of this epistle. Between the two halves, Paul prays again, and again his petition has three parts:

Eph 3:16 That [God] would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be **strengthened** with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend **with all saints** what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be **filled with all the fulness** of God.

To be "filled with all the fulness of God" is nothing more or less than to realize "the hope of his calling. Similarly, just as God showed his power in raising Christ, they are to be "strengthened with might," and in order to realize the spiritual temple that Christ is building, they must be "rooted and grounded in love" and so united "with all saints." So we are not surprised to find that within the application section, there is an extensive section devoted to the unity of believers in the church (4:1-6:9), followed by a description of our warfare with spiritual enemies (6:10ff). In other words, our lives as believers living in the body of Christ are to echo our Savior's mission. He struggled with the forces of darkness and subdued them; we are to do warfare on his behalf. He brought his captives together into a spiritual temple for the Lord; we are to live with one another in a way that realizes his vision. The spoils of his conquest become the living stones that make up the temple. Our contributions to this edifice are determined by the gifts that the Spirit has given, when the ascended Christ sent him to bless his captives by turning his spoils (those very captives) into agents of God's praise.

So when Paul quotes Psalm 68:18, he is really drawing our minds back to the entire Psalm, reminding us of the warfare in which we are engaged, and challenging us to reflect our Savior both in his combat and in building up a temple to God's praise.

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Psalms 69-71, Committing Judgment to God

The last three Davidic Psalms in Book 2 are marked by imprecations, which were absent in 61-64 (Figure 2). All of these Psalms come from David’s later life: he confesses his sin in 69:5 (compare Pss 38-41), suggesting the period of Absalom’s rebellion after his sin with Bathsheba, while 70 is part of Psalm 40 (from the same guilty sufferer section of Book 1) and 71 explicitly states his old age.¹⁸ David has learned not only to call on God in times of distress, but also to commit his judgment into the Lord’s hands.

Ps 69, Suffering for God’s Sake

69:1 A Psalm of David.—In Hebrew, just “of David.” No musical heading.

This Psalm contains all of the components of lament¹⁹ (Table 7, chart). The negative portions are organized in two panels (1-29), followed by two panels of praise and confidence (30-36).

The invocation and plea in both cases includes imagery of water and mire, and the reality of enemies also called those that hate him.

The complaint sections both begin by declaring that God knows his situation. They both emphasize his reproach and shame, and both end with “But I” There are numerous other parallels (see notes).

The first and second panels of each set align. The first panels are personal (e.g., confession in the complaint). The second panels are

more official. His confidence in vv. 35-36 concerns Zion’s national status, and the imprecations are also in the second panel of the first section. We have seen that imprecations should be understood as official statements by the Psalmist speaking as the anointed king and responsible for enforcing God’s law. Compare Psalm 35 (Table 8, chart), which also separates his personal from his official statements, and where also imprecations fall in the official section.

Table 7 also shows the clearest citations of the Psalm in the NT. Most of them are from the second complaint section, and some of them cite the imprecations, showing their validity, as statements of divine judgment, even under the New Covenant.

The NT citations of this Psalm lead many commentators understand the Psalm as a prophecy of the Messiah rather than David’s experience as a type. There are two difficulties with this view.

18 Both books 1 and 2 end with laments, apart from Psalm 72. So does book 3 (Psalm 89). In the last two books, which end positively, laments drop to 10 and 14%, compared with 47%, 47%, and 38% in 1-3.

19 T. Longman, *How to Read the Psalms*. IVP, 1988, p. 27

| | Personal | Official |
|---|---|---|
| Invocation and Plea: • Image: water, mire • Reality: haters, enemies | 1-4: <i>Jn 15:25</i> | 13b-18 |
| Complaint: • “Thou knowest ... “ • Reproach, shame • “But I ... “ | 5-13a + Confession <i>Jn 1:11; 2:17;</i> <i>7:5</i> <i>Rm 15:3</i> | 19-29 + Imprecation <i>Mt 27:34 = Mk 15:23</i> <i>Mt 27:48 = Lk 23:36</i> <i>Mk 15:23</i> <i>Jn 19:28-29</i> <i>Rom 11:9-10</i> <i>Mt 23:38 = Lk 13:5</i> <i>Ac 1:20</i> |
| Praise to God | 30-32 | 34 |
| Confidence | 33 (Personal) | 35-36 (National) |

Table 7: Structure of Psalm 69

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The first is v. 5, where the writer confesses his own sin. The second is v.10, which fits John the Baptist but not our Lord, which is OK if the Psalm describes David as an example of the godly sufferer (of whom both the Baptist and our Lord were instances). It is better to see David's experience as a link in a chain of verbal and typical prophecies stretching from Gen 3:15 to the passion of our Lord.²⁰

| Official | Personal | Official |
|---|--|---|
| <p>1-10: Plea for Defense against Harm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-3, Plea: רִיב • 4-6, 8, Imprecation: Let them be confounded ... put to shame ... brought to confusion • 7, Complaint: Net, Pit, Without a Cause <p style="text-align: right; color: purple;">9-10, Promise of Praise</p> | <p>11-18: Complaint and Innocence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11-12, Complaint: False Witness • 13-14, Innocence: Intercession • 15-16, Complaint: Mockery • 17, Plea: Rescue my Soul <p style="text-align: right; color: purple;">18, Promise of Praise</p> | <p>19-28: Plea for Defense against Speech</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19, Plea: Without a Cause • 20-21, Complaint: deceit, accusation • 22-25, Plea: רִיב • 26, Imprecation: Let them be ashamed ... brought to confusion ... clothed with ... dishonor <p style="text-align: right; color: purple;">27-28, Promise of Praise</p> |

Table 8: Structure of Psalm 35

The Psalm not only reaches forward to our Lord, but also echoes earlier Psalms, in particular the Songs of the Sufferer at the end of Book 1 (Table 9, chart).

1-4, Initial Plea

Both pleas describe David's condition using images of mire and overwhelming flood.

| Psalm 69 | Psalms 34-41 |
|--|---|
| 2 I sink in deep mire , where there is no standing: 14 Deliver me out of the mire , | 40:2 He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay טִיט הַיִּוֹן |
| 4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: | 35:19 Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause . |
| 5 O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee. | 38:3 neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin . 4 For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: ... 5 My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness . 39:8 Deliver me from all my transgressions : 40:12 mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, 41:4 heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee. |
| 30 I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify גדל D him with thanksgiving. | 34:3 O magnify גדל D the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. |
| 32 The humble shall see this, and be glad | 34:2 My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad . |

Table 9: Parallels between Psalm 69 and the Songs of the Sufferer (34-41)

²⁰ Recall our discussion of manifold fulfillment in Isaiah 60 and Matthew 2. Other links in this chain would include the sufferings of Joseph and Jeremiah, both of whom suffered in pits (Gen 37:23; Jer 38:6).

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Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. 2 I sink in deep mire יין, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.—The language recalls Psalm 40, which is also the source of Psalm 70.²¹

3 I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.—At this period in his life, David felt that God had forgotten him. He cried out continually, but could find no comfort.

4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head:—Our Lord cites this verse (and the parallel in 35:19) to explain the world's hatred of him and of his followers (chart):

Joh 15:25 But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, **They hated me without a cause.**

they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty:—It is interesting that in a psalm of confession (v. 5), David can still claim that his enemies are in the wrong. Absalom and his party were God's instruments of chastisement to David, but they were wrong in opposing God's anointed king.

There are other examples of this paradox, that an agent that chastises God's erring people may itself sin in doing so. Jehu (2 Kings 9-10) was God's instrument to judge the house of Ahab, but was himself wicked (2 Kings 10:31). Similarly, Assyria was God's rod against Israel, but was condemned by God for its cruelty (Isa 10:5-12). David will return to this theme in v. 26.

then I restored that which I took not away.—“Took” גזל Strong 1497 refers to violent robbery, tearing something away from someone. In the case of David, the expression has reference to the kingdom, in light of Shimei's accusation,

2Sa 16:8 The LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son:

David did not tear the kingdom away from Saul. He bent over backwards to recognize Saul's authority, and punished those who killed Ishbosheth, Saul's son, thinking to win David's favor. Yet under Absalom, he is forced to relinquish what God had given him.

5-13a, Complaint and Confession

5 O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.—Both complaints begin with the confidence that God knows his problems, and end with the contrast, “But I.”

In the first complaint, what God knows is the speaker's foolishness and sin. This verse is the main obstacle to understanding the entire Psalm as directly prophetic. Some commentators understand the speaker here to be describing our sin, imputed to the Messiah (thus John Gill). But we have ample examples of David's own confession of his sin. We have already seen this in the references to the sons of the guilty sufferer (Table 9). Recall also Psalms 51:1-3 and 32:5.

6 Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.—The dominant theme of

²¹ In the Psalms, יין appears only in 40:2 and 69:2 (and nowhere else in the Bible), and טי only in 40:2, 69:14, and 18:42 (plus ten other instances elsewhere).

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both complaint sections is shame and reproach, a fitting description both of David during his flight from Absalom, and of our Saviour in his passion.

7 Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.—David is conscious that he is God's anointed, and that opposition to him is really opposition to the Lord. He repeats this thought in v. 9.

8 I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.—Recall David's rejection by his kinsmen the people of Ziph and by Nabal during his flight from Saul. Our Saviour also suffered rejection by those who should have been close to him:

Joh 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

Mat 13:55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? 57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

Joh 7:5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.

9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up;—We have already seen how David, during his exile from Jerusalem, longed to return to the city that he had conquered and the tent that he had pitched for the Ark. Now that holy place is controlled by godless men who have no respect for the Lord's anointed, a perfect picture of the state of the temple in our Lord's day. So it is fitting that when he purged the temple (chart),

Joh 2:17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.—David repeats the thought of v. 7. Paul recognizes that this picture fits our Lord as well when he cites this text?

Rom 15:3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

10 When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.—The reference is probably to David's mourning for Absalom in 2 Sam 19:1-7, which his associates (and Joab in particular) rebuked as a sign of weakness.

Interestingly, this detail is more prophetic of John the Baptist than of our Lord. Recall the contrast that our Lord draws between himself and John:

Mat 11:18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. 19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.

Like v. 5, this verse is awkward if the Psalm is a prophecy, but fine if it is an example of the godly sufferer, of whom both John and our Lord were instances.

11 I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them. 12 They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards.—While Absalom's coup was in preparation, David was conscious that the city was turning against him, as we saw in our study of Psalm 55. If Roman soldiers shared the propensity for drunkenness characteristic of many armies, the mocking treatment of our Savior by the soldiers (Matt 27:27-30) may have been an example of v. 12.

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13 But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time:—In the face of all this opposition, David turns to the Lord, and so did our Lord, in Gethsemane.

13b-18, Second Plea

Like the first plea, this paragraph pictures his suffering in terms of mire and floods.

O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation. 14 Deliver me out of the mire טיט, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. 15 Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me. 16 Hear me, O LORD; for thy lovingkindness חסד is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies רחמים. 17 And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily. 18 Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.—His resolve to cry to the Lord transitions nicely into the second plea.

19-29, Complaint and Imprecation

19 Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee. 20 Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness:—As in the first complaint, the theme of reproach and shame is prominent.

and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.—Think of Peter, James, and John in the garden, unable to watch with the Lord.

21 They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.—David may have been speaking metaphorically, but these details are prominent in our Lord's passion:

Mat 27:34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. ... 48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. [Also Mark 15:23]

Joh 19:28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. [also in Ps 22:15]

The first complaint, focused on his personal sin before the Lord, had no imprecation. But judgment must fall on the wicked, and here David as the king calls for that judgment. The validity of his action is seen in the citation of some of these curses in the NT.

22 Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. 23 Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.—Paul sees the blindness of Israel in the face of the gospel as a consequence of this imprecation (chart):

Rom 11:9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: 10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

24 Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. 25 Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.—Our Lord echoed this imprecation when he was rejected by the religious leaders in the temple:

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Mat 23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. = Lk 13:35

And Peter saw in it an explanation for Judas' sad end:

Act 1:20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein:

26 For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.—As in the first half, just because someone is the agent of God's chastisement does not justify their actions.

27 Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness. 28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.—The consequences of this declaration are seen in every generation of those who reject God's anointed king.

29 But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.—As before, David's recourse is not to his own strength, but to the Lord.

30-36, Praise and Confidence

With v. 30, the Psalm moves from plea and complaint to praise and confidence, in two stanzas. Each includes a declaration of praise, followed by a reason for the praise. The first is personal in nature, while the second is national. This dualism reflects what we saw about David's distinction in Psalm 35 between his personal attitude (vv. 11-18) and his official role as king (1-10, 19-28).

30 I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. 31 This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.

32 The humble shall see this, and be glad:—Here is another echo from Psalms 34-41:

Psa 34:2 My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

and your heart shall live that seek God.

33 For the LORD heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.—The reason for this praise is God's care for individual people in their miserable condition

34 Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.—Now the praise is to come, not from David, but from all creation and all of its inhabitants.

35 For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession. 36 The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein.—David's concern in the second half of the blessing is national, for the safety and growth of Zion and its people.

To the chief Musician

Ps 70-71, Cry for Rapid Help

Psalm 70 has a heading, but Psalm 71 does not, suggesting (cf. Psalms 9-10 and 42-43) that they were intended to be read together.²² We will study them as a unit.

²² Some mss unite them: BHS, note to Ps 71:1 "mlt mss cj Ps 71 c Ps 70"

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70:1 A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.—Psalm 70 repeats 40:13-17, with two substitutions of “God” for “Lord” and some other minor changes. Psalm 71 also echoes earlier Psalms (Table 10, chart). Together with references to old age in Psalm 71, these features suggest that David is recalling his past experiences and merging them into a final lament.

Table 10: Parallels between Psalm 71 and Other Psalms

| Ps 71 | Other Pss |
|---|--|
| 1 In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. 2 Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me. 3 Be thou my strong habitation (rock), whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress. | 31:1 In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness. 2 Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. 3 For thou art my rock and my fortress; =18:2 |
| 5 thou art my trust from my youth . 6 By thee have I been holden up from the womb : thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels : 17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth : | 22:10 I was cast upon thee from the womb : thou art my God from my mother's belly . |
| 12a O God, be not far from me : | 22:1 my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me , and from the words of my roaring? 22:11 Be not far from me ; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. 22:19a But be not thou far from me , O LORD: |
| 12b O my God, make haste for my help . | 22:19b O my strength, haste thee to help me . 38:22 Make haste to help me , O Lord my salvation. 40:13 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me . = 70:1, cf. 70:5 141:1 LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me ; |
| 13 Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt. | 35:4 Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt. 35:26 Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me. 40:14 Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil. |
| 19 Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high | 36:6 Thy righteousness is like the great mountains ; |

Figure 10 (chart) shows the combined structure. The key indicator is the close repetition between 70:1-5 and 71:12-13, both asking God to “make haste” and praying for his judgment on the adversaries with almost identical language. But the urgency is much greater in the first stanza.

The body of each stanza includes pleas for deliverance and expressions of confidence and praise. In the first body plea surrounds the confidence and praise section, while in the second, confidence and praise surrounds the plea. The bodies are linked by references to God’s

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faithfulness from David’s youth, his old age, and God’s righteousness.

70:1 Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O LORD.—The plea for God to hurry is a repeated theme in the invocations to the two stanzas.²³ Why is David eager for God to hasten?

David repeatedly emphasizes his age (71:9, 18). He wants God to respond before he dies, so that he can demonstrate God’s faithfulness to the next generation.

2 Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt. 3 Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha.—The complaint in Psalm 68 focused on the shame and reproach felt by the righteous sufferer. In keeping with “an eye for an eye” (Ex 21:23-25), the king must repay this to the oppressors.

4 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.—But he also prays for the encouragement of the righteous.

5 But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying.—The invocation closes, as it begins, with urgency.

Now the body of the first stanza moves from plea to confidence and back to plea. First the plea:

71:1 In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. 2 Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me.—“Thy righteousness,” referring to God, appears only in Psalms, and this Psalm is the high point (Figure 11, chart), preceded by 69:27 (excluding the wicked from it) and ending with 72:1 (asking it for David’s son).

What is “God’s righteousness”? We usually understand “righteousness” in terms of conformity to a moral standard, but God *is* the moral standard, and it seems tautologous to say that he is righteous in this sense. In addition, his righteousness is often described as the basis for his kindness toward his people (as here, and in 31:1, on which this verse rests). This expression confused Luther: confronted with the law of God, he thought that a righteous God would naturally punish people, not deliver them.

A clue to its meaning may lie in Psalm 40, which is quoted elsewhere in Psalm 71:

Ps. 40:10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart;
I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation:
I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

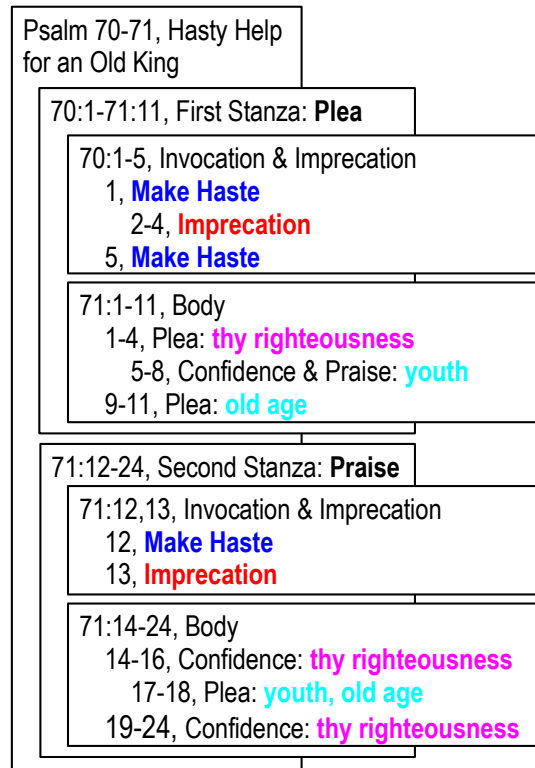


Figure 10: Structure of Psalms 70-71

²³ In citing Psalm 40, Psalm 70 adds one extra instance of “make haste” to v. 1 and again to v. 5.

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The verse has three clauses, each describing something that David is making known. In the first clause it is simply “thy righteousness.” In the other two, it is two things: faithfulness and salvation, and lovingkindness and truth. In each of these pairs, one word (faithfulness, truth), derived from the same root נאם, refers to trustworthiness, doing what one says. The other word (salvation, lovingkindness) describes an attitude of favor

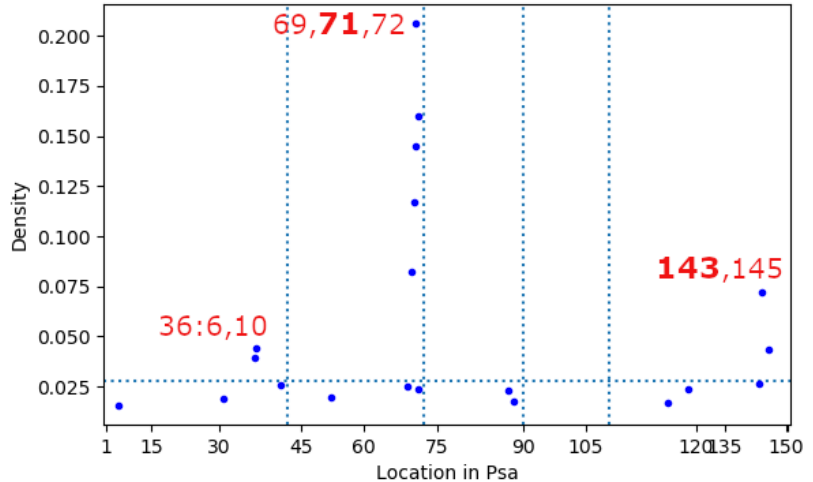


Figure 11: "Thy righteousness" נאם in Psalms

toward people. Perhaps the three clauses are equivalent: God’s righteousness is his character of doing what he says for the benefit of his people. This attitude can indeed be the basis for his deliverance of his people. Compare Calvin on Psalm 31: “God’s righteousness means his faithfulness, in the exercise of which he defends all his people who commit themselves to his guardianship and protection.”

3 Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress. 4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.—The plea continues by completing the quotation from Psalm 31, and describing his adversary.

5 For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth. 6 By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother’s bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee. 7 I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge. 8 Let my mouth shall be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day.—His confidence is based on the long time that God has cared for him, and he promises to praise God (reading the prefix form in v. 8 as future rather than request).

9 Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth. 10 For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, 11 Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him.—He seeks God’s help as the end of life draws near.

The second stanza, like the first, begins with a plea for hasty help and an imprecation.

12 O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help. 13 Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.—The second invocation and imprecation closely echoes the first, but is shorter.

Now the confidence/praise sections surround the plea, reversing the first stanza.

14 But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more. 15 My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof. 16 I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy

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righteousness, even of thine only.—God’s righteousness, which formed the grounds of his plea in the first stanza, is now the focus of his confidence, as he promises to praise God.

17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. 18 Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.—The plea recalls God’s faithfulness from his youth to old age. We see here his motive for wanting God to hurry: he wants to be sure that the next generation sees God’s faithfulness to deliver.

19 Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee! 20 Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. 21 Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side. 22 I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel. 23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed. 24 My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.—Again, his confidence rests in God’s righteousness, his beneficent truth.

Ps 72: Messiah’s Reign

Psalm 72 answers David’s desire in Psalm 70-71 that the next generation would recognize God’s faithfulness. It also rounds off the second book by responding to the Psalms of despair (42-43, 44) with which the book opened (Figure 1, chart).

72:1 A Psalm for Solomon.—The Hebrew construction (“to” plus a name) is used elsewhere (with David, Asaph, the sons of Korah, or Moses) to indicate authorship, and it is better to understand it in this way here. The structure of this Psalm suggests that Solomon wrote it in response to the last words of David (2 Sam 23, chart),

2Sa 23:3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. 4 And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

Notice two features of this prayer:

- The ruler’s just decisions
- The blessings coming from this rule.

Solomon responds to his father’s prayer with two stanzas, each celebrating both of these facets (Figure 12). The overall Psalm begins and ends by acknowledging that these gifts come from God, and concludes recalling 2 Samuel 23.

Solomon’s history falls far short of the ideal in this Psalm. The Jewish targum calls “the king” in v. 1, “King Messiah,” and we should see here a picture of the future kingdom of our Lord.

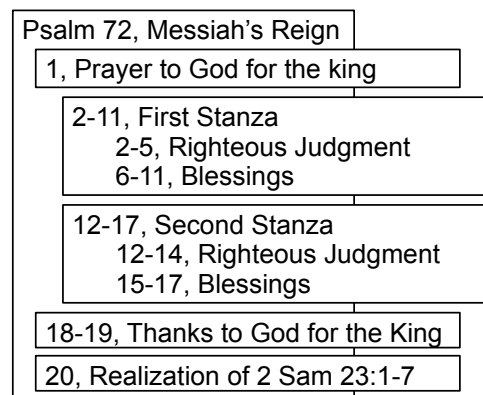


Figure 12: Structure of Psalm 72

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2, Invocation

Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.—Before focusing on the characteristics of the king, Solomon describes how God enables him. He prays that God will give the king two things: God's judgments and his righteousness.

“Judgments and righteousness” are frequently paired in the Bible (as in the next verse). To “do judgment and righteousness” (or “righteousness and judgment”) is the responsibility of a leader: Abraham (Gen 18:19), Gad (Deut 33:21), David (2 Sam 8:15; 1 Chr 18:14), Solomon (1 Ki 10:9 = 2 Chr 9:8), Josiah (Jer 22:15), other Davidic kings (Jer 22:2; Ezek 45:9), Messiah's kingdom (Is 9:6; Jer 23:5; 33:15), and of course God (Ps 99:4; 103:6; with רוח, Jer 9:24). A blessing rests on all those who conduct themselves according to these standards (Ps 106:3; Pr 21:3; Is 56:1; 58:2; Ezek 18:5, 19, 21, 27; 33:14, 16, 19).

Solomon begins by praying that God will enable the king in this responsibility, as described in v. 2. The next three verses show that the gift of God's judgments is intended to enable the king to judge as God judges. The link of “thy righteousness” is even stronger, with references to “righteousness” in vv. 2 and 3. So giving the king God's righteousness probably means to enable him to manifest the same faithful, beneficent rule that God does toward his people.

2-5, First Stanza: Righteous Judgment

2 He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.—He will use the judgment and righteousness of God in ruling God's people.

3 The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.—Righteous judgment will be so pervasive that it will spring forth from the hills, like bountiful crops (cf. v. 16).

4 He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.—Judgment that is like God's own judgment cares for the oppressed.

5 They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.—“Thee” is God (v. 1). The result of this rule is to promote the fear of the God who has enabled the ruler. Righteous judgment that truly cares for the poor and needy ends up pointing people back to the Lord, unlike the atheistic counterfeit so prevalent in our day.

6-11, First Stanza: Blessings

6 He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.—Now the focus returns to the ruler, who is described in terms reminiscent of 2 Sam 23:4. He is like the rain, that causes the earth to be prosperous.

7 In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.—Internally, the nation will enjoy the blessings of peace and prosperity.

8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. 9 They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. 10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba

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and Seba shall offer gifts. **11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.**—Internationally, all nations shall be subdued to him.

12-13, Second Stanza: Righteous Judgment

12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. 13 He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. 14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.—We return to the theme of defending the poor and needy with righteous judgment.

15-17, Second Stanza: Blessings

The blessings of the first stanza were both domestic and international. Here the two are arranged chiastically

15 And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.—We begin with international tribute, anticipated in the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon.

16 There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.—Then we see the domestic prosperity that the land enjoys.

17 His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.—Finally, we return to the international recognition of the king.

18-19, Benediction

18 Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. 19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.—When this king arises, all the earth will glorify the Lord.

20, Epilog

20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.—Coming at the end of the second book of Psalms, this verse sounds like a comment from the compiler that he has gathered all of the Psalms written by David. But later books contain 18 more Psalms labeled “by David.”

Based on our comparison of 2 Samuel 23 and Psalm 72, v. 20 is more likely an integral part of Psalm 72, written by Solomon. He realizes that his father had prayed for a ruler who would execute righteous judgment and bring blessings to the people. The Spirit of God has moved him to write a Psalm describing just such a king, and with the advent of this promised king, David’s prayers will be accomplished, fulfilled, brought to realization. The compiler of Psalms then uses Psalm 72, with its benediction and comment on David’s vision, to conclude the Book of Communication, the message that God desires to give to the nations.

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Notes

Key Words

This final section emphasizes three themes that are common in the beginning, but less so in the center of Book 2: kingship, the divine name, and God's house. All three are concentrated in 45-48 and 61-72, and יהוה also peaks in 59.

יהוה is concentrated in 69-71, and occurs in the final Psalm of each of 61-64 and 62-68, and 72. מלך occurs mostly in 72 (2x of Israel's king, 3x of other kings), once each in 61 and 63 of David, 3x in 68 of other nations and once of God as king. Figure 13 (chart) shows both terms: they are together in 45-48, but then מלך brackets יהוה in 61-72.

In Psalms 61-64, David longs for the house of God; in 65-68 he praises him there (esp 65:4). We also read of God's house in 45-48.

Psa 65:1 Silent Praise

How can praise be silent for God in Zion? Modern translations often emend the text from דַּמְיָהּ לַדְּמִיָּהּ "is fitting." Explanations that respect the MT include:

Delitzsch: to thee, resignation (silence) is praise. We praise God when we wait patiently on him, as in 62:1, 5. He claims that the accents support this parsing.

Kidner: It may sometimes be the height of worship, in other words, to fall silent before God in awe at his presence and in submission to his will.

Hengstenberg: Silence-praise is praise which is bound up with silence, has silence for its consequence, or has the effect of allaying that tumultuous agitation, that distressing excitement, which prevails in the soul till it has attained to a living knowledge of the glory of God: against this, his praise, which quiets all the tumult of the soul, is the only effectual remedy; the more a man praises God, the more quiet does his soul become:

Alexander: such praise as is accompanied by a cessation of all tumultuous and passionate excitement.

Calvin: God's people wait patiently, silently, ready to praise him with each fresh revelation of his grace.

Setting of Psalm 68?

The Psalm has to do with the movement of the ark: compare v. 1 with

Num 10:35 And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.

Suggested options: Perowne has a good survey

1. Installation of the ark on Mount Zion,
 - (a) By David? 2 Sam 6

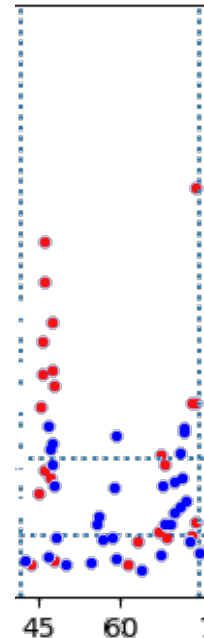


Figure 13:
יהוה and מלך
in Book 2

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- (b) By Solomon in the new temple, cf. end of his prayer of dedication, 2Ch 6:41 Now therefore arise, O LORD God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength:
2. Return of the Ark to the temple after a battle. Compare 2Sa 11:11 And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing. Options:
 - (a) The Syrian-Edomite war of 2 Sam xxx
 - (b) The Ammonite-Syrian war of 2 Sam 10-12, which is the context in which 2 Sam 11:11 appears, Hengstenberg
 3. Cannon, Kirkpatrick: rebuilding of Jerusalem after the captivity (but where was the ark at that time?) Kirkpatrick

Addressee of 68:18

Most commentators see this as addressed to God. But note the frequency of the vocative “O God” when the psalmist wants to address God directly: vv. 7, 9, 10, 24, 28, 35. In addition, an unadorned “thou” in 23 is clearly addressed to someone other than God, perhaps the king.

Cassuto mentions a rabbinical tradition that v. 18 is addressed to Moses, who ascended [Mount Sinai] to receive valuable spoil [the law] to be kept among men. Paul’s use of the text of the HS would correspond to the general parallel in the NT between the role of the law in the OT and the Spirit in the NT.

ישב vs. שכן (Ps 68:18) of God

God is the subject of ישב Qal 46 times (out of 1036) according to the Dictionary of Classical Hebrew, and of שכן Qal 27/111 times. So the latter is more specific of God’s relation to his people. As the rarer word, שכן comes second in the parallelisms in 68:6, 16. Exod 25:8 is the earliest instance listed of God as the subject of שכן, and for ישב, Exod 15:17. The latter is in reference to Zion; the former in reference to the tabernacle.

Detailed Parallels in Psalm 69 (Allen)

Allen, L. C. “The Value of Rhetorical Criticism in Psalm 69.” JBL 105 (1986) 577–98

| | |
|--|---|
| Save me, O God; | O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation. |
| for the waters are come in unto my soul. 2 I sink in deep mire, [Ps 40] where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. 3 I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. | 14a Deliver me out of the mire, [Cf. Ps 40 and relation to 70] and let me not sink: 14c and out of the deep waters. 15 Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me. |
| 4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: | 14b let me be delivered from them that hate me, |

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| | |
|--|---|
| | 16 Hear me, O LORD; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. 17 And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily. |
| they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away. | 18 Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies. |
| 5 O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee. | 19 Thou hast known |
| 6 Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel. 7 Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. ... 9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me. 10 When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach. | my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee. 20 Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: |
| 8 I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. | and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. |
| 11 I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them. 12 They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards. | 21 They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. |
| | 22 Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. 23 Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. 24 Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. 25 Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents. 26 For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. 27 Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness. 28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous. |
| 13 But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time: | 29 But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high. |

What does God do “in thy righteousness”?

Divine actions enabled בצדקתך

Ps. 5:8 **Lead me נהג, O LORD, in thy righteousness** because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.

Ps. 31:1 <A Psalm of David.> In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: **deliver פלט me in thy righteousness.**

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Ps. 71:2 **Deliver me נצל C in thy righteousness**, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me.

Ps. 89:16 In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and **in thy righteousness shall they be exalted רום**.

Ps. 119:40 Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: **quicken me חיה in thy righteousness**.

Ps. 143:1 <A Psalm of David.> Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness **answer me ענה, and in thy righteousness**.

Ps. 143:11 Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake: **for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble מצרה C יצה**.

God's Righteousness as Object of Praise

Ps. 36:6 **Thy righteousness is like the great mountains**; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.

Ps. 40:10 **I have not hid thy righteousness** within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

Ps. 51:14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and **my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness**.

Ps. 71:15 **My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness** and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.

Ps. 71:16 I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: **I will make mention of thy righteousness**, even of thine only.

Ps. 71:19 **Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high**, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!

Ps. 71:24 **My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness** all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

Ps. 88:12 Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and **thy righteousness** in the land of forgetfulness? *motive for God to deliver him, so that he can make God's righteousness known*

Ps. 119:142 **Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness**, and thy law is the truth.

Ps. 145:7 They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall **sing of thy righteousness**.

Request for God's Righteousness to be granted or withheld

Ps. 36:10 O **continue** thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and **thy righteousness** to the upright in heart.

Ps. 69:27 Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and **let them not come into thy righteousness**. *Hengstenberg cites 24:5 and 132:9 to show that God's righteousness is a gift that he can bestow, a theme later developed at length by Paul. But contrast 72:1. Tate: "Your righteousness' refers to the saving work of God." Consistent with the other OT uses, it might be better to understand God's righteousness as a quality that motivates him to defend his people and punish the wicked,*

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and then David would be praying here that the wicked would not enjoy his defense. But wouldn't they come into God's righteousness in the sense of suffering his judgment? Kirkpatrick: "Let them have no share in the manifestation of that righteousness or faithfulness to His covenant in virtue of which Jehovah pardons sin and delivers from danger." Thus his righteousness motivates his gracious acts to his people, and the consequences for the wicked are collateral and incidental.

Ps. 72:1 <A Psalm for Solomon.> **Give** the king thy judgments, O God, and **thy righteousness unto the king's son**. *Here the request is not so much for the king to be justified, as for him to partake of that quality of God that enables him to give right judgment.*

God's Righteousness and **TÖN** (and other virtues)

Ps. 33:5 He loveth **righteousness** and judgment: the earth is full of the **goodness** of the LORD.

Ps. 36:10 O continue thy **lovingkindness** unto them that know thee; and thy **righteousness** to the upright in heart.

Ps. 40:10 I have not hid thy **righteousness** within my heart; I have declared thy **faithfulness** and thy **salvation**: I have not concealed thy **lovingkindness** and thy **truth** from the great congregation. *This may be the key verse, explaining God's righteousness in terms of two pairs. Each pair combines God's confirmity with a standard (faithfulness, truth) with his beneficent regard for his people (salvation, lovingkindness).*

Ps. 103:17 But the **mercy** of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his **righteousness** unto children's children;

Jer. 9:24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise **lovingkindness**, judgment, and **righteousness**, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

Ps 72:20

See Mitchell, Message of the Psalter, ch. 2, for an excellent discussion of this heading.

How can David's prayers be ended at the end of Ps 72, in light of the fact that there are 18 Psalms of David in the later books,²⁴ mostly isolated, but also a block in 138-145?

The critical explanation sees in this statement the conclusion of an earlier collection of Psalms, to which others were later added. This suggests that the overall editing of the Psalter was incremental, and that the later editors were reluctant to adjust earlier parts of it.

Hengstenberg (Treatise VI, Collection of Psalms—5 Books) rejects this explanation, and claims instead,

We shall reach perfect clearness and certainty by perceiving that all the Psalms of David in the two last books are inserted as component parts into the later cycles. The subscription at the end of the second book must have been designed to separate the free and the bound, the scattered and the serial Psalms of David, from each other. Analagous in some measure the subscription: at an end are the speeches of Job, in Job xxxi. 40, which is not contradicted by

²⁴ Psalms 86, 101, 103, 108, 109, 110, 122, 124, 131, 133, 138-145

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the fact, that Job appears again speaking, in ch. xl. and xlii.; it should rather be regarded as serving to give us a right understanding of that formal conclusion.

That is, the Davidic collections in books 1 and 2 are more central to their organizational principle, while the Psalms of David in later books are incidental to other purposes.

Kimhi understands this as a statement by the Psalmist that with the establishment of the kingdom described in Ps 72, "David's prayers are fulfilled."

Rashi suggests that this was the last of David's Psalms to be written, when he installed Solomon his son. Calvin adopts this idea.

I have not seen my solution elsewhere: that the reference is specifically to 2 Samuel 23, as the inspiration for Solomon's Psalm.