

9 The Canonical Shape of the Psalter as Cotexts for Understanding Psalm 110: A Study of Book V of the Psalter

In chapter seven, we argued that Psalm 110 should be read in a messianic and eschatological sense. In the last chapter, we argued that the Torah-Messiah framework of Psalms 1-2 opens up a perspective of reading the Psalter as a book. Afterward, we traced this framework notion throughout the remainder of Books I-IV of the Psalter, paying attention to several key psalms (72, 89), and concluded that the messianic reading prevails in all the materials we have studied.

In this chapter,⁶¹⁴ we will explore Book V of the Psalter in order to continue our search for this notion of Torah-revelation-to-trusting-messiah. Psalm 110's placement here, coupled with the fact that Book V serves as the immediate context of Psalm 110, justifies the study about to unfold in this chapter. The purpose of this unit, then, is to examine the structure and message of Book V and to provide pertinent exegetical insights from psalms such as 132. Based on the results of the previous study (chapters four to present), we will synthesize the theological implications of Psalm 110 in view of the other psalms and biblical texts, notably, Genesis 14, Numbers 22-24, and 2 Samuel 7, which this project has extensively examined.

9.1 A Theological Echo of Book V in the Torah-Revelation-to-Trusting the Messiah in the Psalter

Book V has been very challenging as far as its compositional structure is concerned.⁶¹⁵ Nonetheless, in recent years, various psalm scholars have begun providing some type of structural view of Book V.⁶¹⁶ In Books I through III, the presence (or absence) of

⁶¹⁴ These three chapters have been revised and incorporated into my book (text in Chinese), “Kiss God’s Son”: *From the Structure of the Psalms to Its Message* (Hong Kong: Tien Dao, 2009).

⁶¹⁵ Wilson, “Shaping the Psalter,” 78-79. Cf. Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 104. In contrast, Joseph P. Brennan, already back in 1976 noted the literary principle governing the structure of Book V. Brennan, “Some Hidden Harmonies in the Fifth Book of Psalms,” in *Essays in Honor of Joseph P. Brennan*, ed. R. F. McNamara (Rochester, N.Y.: St. Bernard’s Seminary, 1976), 126-158.

⁶¹⁶ It is impossible to review each one, though we single out two recent reviews: (1) Zenger has done a survey of three different views (Wilson, Koch and Kratz; see their bibliographical data there) of the editorial structure of Book V in his “The Composition and Theology of the Fifth Book of Psalms: Psalms 107-145,” *JSOT* 80 (1998): 82-88. He also proposes his own view in the same article. (2) Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire*, 62-68, where she surveys structural views of Book V by Koch, Zenger, Kratz (including bibliographical data).

superscriptions⁶¹⁷ reveals an important clue when reviewing the structure of Book V. Using the superscription as a guide, the following is the perception of the editorial structural of Book V (figure 5 below):

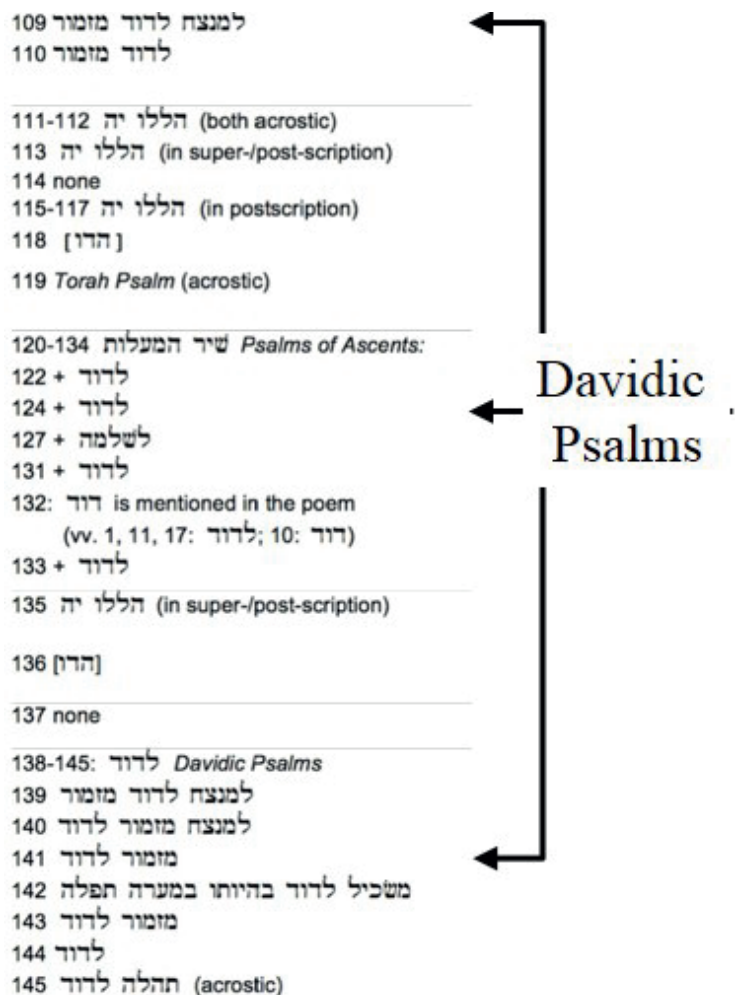


Figure 5. Editorial Structure of Book V According to Superscriptions. Word in [] is the first word of the psalm.

With this structure in mind, we proceed to argue and delineate that the theological notion of Book V is in agreement with the message of Psalms 1-2.

⁶¹⁷ Wilson noted that the absence of superscription in Books IV and V is striking, compared to Books I-III: "the majority of the psalms (57%) are altogether untitled and 42 out of 61 psalms (almost 69%) have no designation of author." Idem, "Royal Psalms," 75. Cf. our analysis in last chapter.

9.1.1 דוד in the Superscriptions and in the Texts of Book V Signifying a Similar Redactional Reading as Advanced by Psalms 1-2

The Davidic superscription, with the term דוד, is pivotal to the study of the editorial structure of the Psalter.⁶¹⁸ At the outset of our inquiry, a look at the distribution of this word דוד is illuminative (table 2):⁶¹⁹

Table 2. Distribution of דוד in Book V of the Psalter

Book	I	II	III	IV	V	Total
Superscription	37	20	1	2	15	75
Text	1	1	5	0	6	13
Total	38	21	6	2	21	88

From this table, one should note the following: first, in Book II, דוד appears twice in the superscription of Psalm 54. The one time דוד appears in the texts of Book II, it is at the conclusion of Book II, 72:20 (a post-scription). Second, in the texts of Book I, the one time דוד appears in the text is in Ps 18:51[50]. In the texts of Book III, דוד is found four times in Psalm 89 and once in 78:70. Both remarks are significant in view of the fact that Psalms 18 and 89 are labeled royal psalms (and we have studied the latter, with Psalm 72, in chapter eight), just like Psalms 2, 110, and 132. Third, as noted in our last chapter, דוד is nearly absent in Book IV, appearing only twice in the superscription. Fourth, nearly half of the appearances of דוד in the texts can be found in Book V; six out of thirteen times. Of the six times, four occur in Psalm 132.

The above observations lead to four arguments that the term דוד, whether it appears in the superscription or in the text, provides both a structural link and theological emphasis in the Psalter.⁶²⁰ The four arguments center on how דוד provides overall editorial links within Book V. Moreover, the presence of דוד in certain texts, particularly in Book V, implies theologically that the Psalter should be read messianically and in view of the Davidic covenant.

⁶¹⁸ Wilson, "Editorial Divisions," 337-40.

⁶¹⁹ Statistics are based on the word search דוד in BibleWorks for Windows.

⁶²⁰ Whether a term or a figure, the significance of דוד in the OT cannot be undermined. Biblical scholars have noted that דוד "David" serves as a model for the messiah. VanGemen's comment concerning David (and Solomon) is right: "the writers of Scripture would look back to the era of David and Solomon as a model describing the glories of the messianic age." See idem, *Progress of Redemption*, 213, 233-35. Cf. our discussion of the Solomonic superscription in Psalm 72 in our last chapter (footnote 79).

9.1.2 The First Argument: The Transformation of the Songs of Ascents by the Presence of דוד

The first argument posits that there are three Davidic collections in Book V, Psalms 108-110, the Songs of Ascents,⁶²¹ and Psalms 138-145. The first and last collections are signified by the superscriptions that attribute them to David.⁶²² We suggest that the Psalms of Ascent should also be considered as part of a Davidic collection, or at least seen as possessing certain Davidic covenantal elements (Psalm 132). This suggestion goes against the conventional understanding of the Songs of Ascents, which are seldomly referred to as Davidic Psalms; generally they are referred to as pilgrim songs, songs of the return from exile, or songs for liturgical purpose (for temple use).⁶²³ Nonetheless, for our thesis we propose to label them Davidic for the following reason.

Viewing the Davidic superscription as significant in the editorial structure of the Psalter, an observant psalm reader would note the occurrence of דוד in Psalm 132, even without a Davidic superscription. The presence of דוד in Psalm 132 (four times) – flanked by two Psalms (131, 133) that clearly contain Davidic superscription⁶²⁴ – should foster a Davidic view of the Songs of Ascents. Furthermore, Psalm 132 is considered cardinal in the Psalms of Ascents. Thematically it concerns the theology of the Davidic Covenant, and like the genre of Psalm 110, Psalm 132 is a royal psalm.⁶²⁵

621 For an introductory understanding of the Songs of Ascents, see Loren D. Crow, *The Songs of Ascents (Psalms 120-134): Their Place in Israelite History and Religion*, SBLDS 148 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1994).

622 Goulder has put Book V in the following analytical structure by adding Psalms 1, 105-106 and deleting the Songs of Ascents, thus making Psalms 108-110 parallel to 138-145:

105-106	historical psalms	135-136
107	return from Exile	137
108-110	David psalms	138-145
111, 112	alphabetic psalms	145
113-118	Hallel psalms	146-150
119	praise of the Law	1

See Goulder, *Psalms of the Returns*, 16; cf. 14-15. The key weakness of his schema is the absence of the Songs of Ascents.

623 See Crow, *The Songs of Ascents*.

624 Of the four Davidic superscriptions found in the Psalms of Ascents, those in Psalm 122 and 124 are wanting in the LXX. See Allen, *Psalms 100-150*, 155, 162.

625 Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 209. See our analysis of Psalm 132 later in this chapter.

It is not too far off the mark to say the Psalms of Ascents should be labeled, in their essence, as a Davidic collection.⁶²⁶

9.1.3 The Second Argument: The Editorial Shape of Book V by the Presence of דוד

Related to the above, our second argument is that there is a certain redactional significance to the “reappearance” of דוד in Book V after being nearly absent in Book IV and only minimally present in Book III (both Books III and IV have been analyzed in chapter eight). Our contention can be built on the non-text level, that is, the superscription-level. This reappearance is first found in a small Davidic collection – in the superscriptions of Psalms 108-110 – at the very beginning of Book V, with Psalm 107 serving as its introduction.⁶²⁷ Thus, this makes Psalms 108-110 prominent because of their strategic position.⁶²⁸ Among these three psalms, the poetic analysis of Psalm 110 (in chapter seven) demonstrates how the message of the messianic king-priest is cast in a solemn prophetic tone (110:1, 4), thus making Psalm 110 more salient than the other two.

Moreover, if we classify Psalms 146-50 as the conclusion not merely of Book V but of the entire Psalter,⁶²⁹ this will noticeably mark Psalms 138-145, the last Davidic collection, as the end of Book V or as the text proper concluding the whole Psalter.

626 This structural layout, provided by Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire*, 64 is another collateral argument that explicates the two Davidic collections and the Psalms of Ascents as the center of Book V:

107-117	107 הדוד	108-110 Ps. De David	111-113, 115-117 הללודיה
118-135	118 הדוד	119	120-134 Ps. Graduels 135 הללודיה
136-150	136 הדוד	137	138-145 Ps. David 146-150 הללודיה

Psalm 119 poses a problem for most scholars when it comes to the structural view of Book V. Psalm 119 and Book V will be studied later in this chapter.

627 Klaus Koch puts Psalm 107 with Psalm 108-110 and sees Psalm 107 and 118 as the framework for the “1. Buchteil 107-118.” Koch, “Der Psalter und seine Redaktionsgeschichte,” in *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschung*, 253-254. Wilson regards Psalm 107 as an introduction to Book V and a response to the plea in Psalm 106 (v. 47). Wilson, *The Hebrew Psalter*, 220.

628 A similar observation is made by deClaissé-Walford, *The Hebrew Psalter*, 97. There she observes that Book V contains 15 Davidic psalms and their placement is to answer the question in Ps 107:43: “Who is the wise one?” The answer is David, the ideal king viewed through the Davidic collections.

629 The debate of Psalms 146-150 as part of Book V or serving as the conclusion of the Psalter can be found in Frank van der Velden, *Psalm 109 und die Aussagen zur Feindschädigung in den Psalmen*, SBB 37 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk GmbH, 1997), 126-27. Cf. Patrick D. Miller, “The End of the Psalter: A Response to Erich Zenger,” *JSOT* 80 (1998): 107-10 and see Zenger, “Fifth Book of Psalms,” 77-102.

If such a view is allowed, a clear picture of the thematic emphasis in the Psalter based mainly on the Davidic superscriptions can be shown in figure 6:

Introduction	1-2	Thematic Emphasis
Book I	3-41	I Davidic Collection
Book II	42-72	II Davidic Collection
Book III	73-89	
Book IV	90-106	
Book V	107-145	I Davidic Collection: 108-110 ("Davidicized" Collection: 120-134) II Davidic Collection: 138-145
Conclusion	146-150	

Figure 6. Thematic Emphasis of the Five Books in the Psalter Based on the Davidic Superscription.

At a glance, the two Davidic collections of Book V now seem to correspond to those two in Books I-II.⁶³⁰ In this redactional arrangement, the Davidic superscriptions may reinforce the same theme(s) throughout the Psalter, namely the messianic reading not just in Book V but also for the rest of the Psalms.

9.1.4 The Third Argument: The Thematic-Semantic Links of the “Three” Davidic Collections in Book V

An argument based merely on the Davidic superscription is insufficient for our thesis, however. Our third argument is based on our exploration of the semantic-thematic levels of connection in these three Davidic collections. These semantic-thematic connections among these Davidic collections within Book V are detected in two ways. First, in terms of lexical connections, using Psalm 110 as a point of reference, we

⁶³⁰ It is beyond the scope of this project to investigate the links between the Davidic collections in Books I-II and those in Book V but this seems to be potentially promising for a thesis or dissertation. See, however, our delineation of Book I-II in the last chapter. Zenger remarks that these two collections in Book V “plainly go back to the first two Davidic collections (Pss 3-41 and 51-72)” in Books I-II. Idem, “Fifth Book of Psalms,” 82.

have sampled three psalms: 110, 138, and 132.⁶³¹ The first two are in the two Davidic collections and the last one in the Psalms of Ascents of Book V. The finding is that there are numerous lexical ligaments between 110 and 132 and also between 110 and 138.⁶³² For example, for Psalms 110 and 138, the lexical links (see Psalm 138) are as follows: v. 3, עז; v. 4, ארץ; מלכּי, v. 5, דרך; v. 6, רום; v. 7, אף, בקרב, איבי, שלח, ימיניך, and v. 8, לעולם. Second, besides the lexical nexus, the last Davidic psalm-group, led by Psalm 138, echoes the first group of Davidic psalms (108-110) in thematic matter. For instance, the words in Psalm 138:7, when read with v. 8, are reminiscent of some words in Psalm 110: תַּחֲנִינִי עַל אֵף אֱיִבֵי תִשְׁלַח יְדֶךָ וְתוֹשִׁיעֵנִי וְיִמְיִנֶךָ אִם-אֵלֶּךָ בְּקֶרֶב צָרָה. In Psalm 110, the promise to the messiah of deliverance or victory by the right hand of Yahweh is now a prayer by David in Psalm 138, who in a metaphorical sense prefigures the messiah. That prayer will certainly be answered (1) when Psalm 138 is read back into the context of Psalm 110 where Yahweh made his promise through a solemn and prophetic oath; and (2) when Ps 138:8a יִגְמַר בְּעָדִי יְהוָה is read in light of Psalm 110, there is the sense that David appears to be confident in Yahweh.⁶³³

9.1.5 The Fourth Argument: The Presence of דוד in Book V Having the Davidic Covenant as a Major Concern

In addition to the Davidic superscription and subject matter that link together the three Davidic collections in Book V, our fourth argument is that the appearance of David in the *text* of the fifth portion of the Psalter underlies the Davidic covenant as one key theological concern of the Psalter. Besides Psalm 132, the two other times “David” occurs are in 122:5 and 144:10; the former in the context of the Psalms of Ascents and the latter in the last Davidic collection.⁶³⁴ In 122:5, mentioning the phrase כְּכִאֲוֹת לְבֵית דָּוִד as pertaining to David’s throne and dynasty remarkably resembles the Davidic covenant in 2 Samuel 7 (cf. vv. 13, 16). In 144:10, another phrase, יְהוָה עֲבָדִי, is

⁶³¹ Note that in Book V, Psalm 110 is the last song of the first Davidic collection and Psalm 138 is the first song of the last Davidic collection. Therefore, we should discard the observation of Mark S. Smith, who assesses that “Ps 2 stands at the beginning of Book I, Ps 72 at the end of Book II and Ps 89 at the end of Book III, but Ps 110 shows no special placement of this sort.” Idem, “The Theology of the Redaction of the Psalter: Some Observations,” *ZAW* 104 (1992): 411.

⁶³² For Psalms 110 and 132, please refer to the latter part of this chapter.

⁶³³ Wilson (*The Hebrew Psalter*) also notices the thematic connection – reliance on Yahweh – between the two Davidic collections; see his comments on Psalms 108-110 (pp. 220-21) and 138-144 (p. 222). We will modify his comment to suit our thesis that it is the messiah that David represents in Psalm 138 who puts his confidence in Yahweh’s faithfulness to fulfill what he has promised him in Psalm 110.

⁶³⁴ Note both psalms contain Davidic superscription.

strikingly reminiscent of 2 Sam 7:5 (cf. also vv. 8, 19, 20, 21, 25-29).⁶³⁵ Do both psalms reflect a theological foundation laid by the covenantal concern in 2 Samuel 7, already delineated in our chapters seven and eight? The answer is positive: both psalms – in their own literary contexts (Songs of Ascents and Davidic) – share the same theological notion centered on the Davidic covenant as depicted in 2 Samuel 7.⁶³⁶

Thus far, our study has shown that the Davidic superscription and the term “David” in Book V call forth a messianic reading of Book V. That is, the two Davidic collections, in collaboration with the Psalms of Ascents, reiterate “the Davidic-messianic idea again in a positive way and put it into the service of its theocratic message”⁶³⁷ for the last section of the Psalter. By extension, the Davidic superscription and the term “David” applies to the Psalter as a whole.⁶³⁸

Yet this is only in partial agreement with the programmatic reading of Psalms 1-2. Where can one find mention to the Torah as divine revelation of the messiah in Book V? Here the focus turns to Psalm 119, a massive Torah psalm in Book V and the Psalter.

9.2 Psalm 119 Signifying a Similar Redactional Reading Advanced by Psalms 1-2

Like Psalm 1 in the redactional debate of the Psalter, Psalm 119 also poses a challenge to any psalm interpreter. Seybold’s question is worthily quoted: “Is the law-based piety which speaks out of Psalms 1 and 119 intended to embrace and enhance the belief in Messianic salvation, or to abolish and replace it?”⁶³⁹ The massive length of

⁶³⁵ Cf. Ps 143:2, 12. We are indebted to Kratz, “Die Torah Davids,” 25-26, who points out these two verses in addition to 144:10. Note how Psalm 143 has a Davidic superscription. If read with the superscription, the poem sounds like a prayer by David, the servant (self-referring in vv. 2, 12) of Yahweh.

⁶³⁶ Other evidence to sustain this notion will be provided later in the chapter. At the risk of being repetitious, the analysis of 2 Samuel 7 (in chapter six) has shown that Nathan’s oracle (Davidic covenant) pronounces the messianic king, who will establish an eternal dynasty for Yahweh and will come from David. Also, David prayed that the promise be fulfilled (2 Sam 7:19-29).

⁶³⁷ Zenger, “Fifth Book of Psalms,” 81-82.

⁶³⁸ In Waltke’s proposal of the canonical process for the Psalter, messianic significance is evident in the second and third of his four-stage process. Idem, “Canonical Process Approach,” 14-16. See our summary of his proposal in footnote in chapter eight.

⁶³⁹ Klaus Seybold, *Introducing the Psalms*, trans. R. Graeme Dunphy (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 27.

Psalm 119 speaks voluminously and because of its size it prompts many to allow it to be the center of or a binding force for Book V.⁶⁴⁰

Can such a “central” position of Psalm 119 be sustained? We offer two counter-arguments, one brief and one more detailed, that the center of Book V lies not in Psalm 119 but elsewhere.

First, the two Davidic collections of Book V contain 164 verses in total.⁶⁴¹ If one includes the Songs of Ascents as a “Davidicized” collection, the total is 265, far exceeding the “massive” volume of Psalm 119.⁶⁴²

Second, by placing the Songs of Ascents after Psalm 119 and by noting the Davidic elements (Psalm 132) – with its implication of messianic overtone – in the Songs of Ascents,⁶⁴³ we argue for a reading proposition similar to the paradigm of reading Psalm 2 interactively with Psalm 1. The revelatory aspect of the Torah again points to the messiah being portrayed in Psalm 132 (vv. 10, 17).⁶⁴⁴ Strikingly, Psalm 119 ends with this: *הַשִּׁיחַ כְּשֶׁה אֲבֵר*. The last word, *אֲבֵר* is axiomatic to reminding a perceptive

640 Velden, *Psalm 109*, 127. There he notes: “das voluminöse Akrostichon von Ps 119 überzeugend in die Komposition des fünften Psalmenbuches einzubinden. Ein Psalm, der mit seinen 176 Versen zehmal so lang ist wie der Durchschnitt seiner Nachbartexte, . . . Entweder wird Ps 119 durch das Schwergewicht seiner Textmasse derart bestimmend, dass er zum Zentrum der Komposition des fünften Psalmenbuches erklärt werden muss, oder jeder ‘Kompositionsbogen’ zwischen Pss 107-118 und Pss 120-150 versandet im Übergewicht seiner 176 Verse.”

641 The number of verses is based on the MT.

642 Our comparison of the number of verses between psalms or psalm-groups is not innovative in biblical study. Millard also notes and compares the extensive verses of Psalm 119 to its neighboring psalm-groups: “Dieser Psalm überragt mit 176 Versen selbst die umgebenden Psalmengruppen, da das Ägyptische Hallel nur 85 Verse und die Wallfahrtspsalmen Ps 120ff. 94 Verse erreichen.” Millard, *Komposition des Psalters*, 227.

643 The position of Psalm 132 may not be as obvious as it should be. But see Klaus Seybold, *Die Wallfahrtspsalmen: Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte von Psalm 120-134* (Neukirchen-Vlyun: Neukirchener, 1978), 71-72. There he argues: “dass in Ps 120-134 drei Grossgruppierungen, eine Eingangsgruppe (Ps 120-122), eine Mittelgruppe (Ps 123-132) und eine Schlussgruppe (Ps 133-134), unterschieden werden können.” Psalm 132 is the last psalm in the middle part of the Songs of Ascents.

644 In 11Q5, Psalm 119 follows the Songs of Ascents, and in fact, Psalm 132 is the last one in the Songs of Ascents with Psalms 133 and 134 scattered elsewhere (later) in that Qumran manuscript collection. See Wilson, *The Hebrew Psalter*, 124-25, cf. 111. For a reproduction of the Hebrew text of Psalm 132 followed by Psalm 119, see J. A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11*, DJD 4 (Oxford, Clarendon, 1965), 27. It is impossible to draw any convincing conclusion or argue for the different placement of psalms in this Qumran manuscript since (1) in various places, scribes added Davidic superscriptions where the MT was lacking (e.g., Psalm 123); (2) they added non-canonical materials (e.g., Psalm 151A and 151B) to their collection; (3) they omitted Psalms 108 and 110 and any Davidic reference in Psalm 144. See Wilson, *The Hebrew Psalter*, 130. Regarding the omission of Psalm 110, cf. Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms*, 191: by computerized reconstruction on the basis of spacing, Flint comes to conclude that Psalm 110 should have been there. Hence, he points out that the only Psalm with a missing Davidic title in the manuscript is Psalm 108 (see footnote 100 there). Nonetheless in a recent article, Wilson argues for a messianic focus on David in the present arrangement in 11Q5, balanced by obedience to the Torah. See Wilson, “*The Qumran Psalm Scroll (11QPSa) and the Canonical Psalter: Comparison of Editorial Shaping*,” CBQ 59 (1997): 448-464. Cf. Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms*, 193-94, on “Davidic Emphasis” of 11Q5.

reader who reads the Psalter as a collection that Psalms 1-2 have already been delineated on this word: the one who is going to perish (אֲבֵד) is the one who rejects the messianic king (Psalm 2:12), pointedly revealed by the Torah (Psalm 1). If the reading of Psalm 1 is shaped by Psalm 2, then the understanding of Psalm 119 is now shaped by the Songs of Ascents, particularly Psalm 132.

Viewing the above discussion from the genre category, the Torah/wisdom psalms, often placed alongside the royal psalms, are shaped by the latter.⁶⁴⁵ For example, Psalm 107, though not strictly a wisdom psalm, ends with a clearly wisdom element: מִי־הָקֵם וְשִׁמְרֵהָ אֱלֹהִים וְתַבְּנֶנּוּ חֹסְדֵי יְהוָה (v. 43).⁶⁴⁶ Its juxtaposition with the David psalm-group, Psalms 108-110, provides a reading and an answer to the question in Ps 107:43. It is the messianic king, signified by the Davidic superscriptions of the three poems and depicted in detail in Psalm 110 that is wise (חָכָם).⁶⁴⁷

Up to this point in our study we have focused on the Davidic psalm-groups with the Songs of Ascents and on Psalm 119 to review the redactional structure and theme of Book V. These psalms' placements in the Psalter share the same theological message that we have shown through the interaction of Psalms 1-2. Psalm 119 points to the revelation of the need of the messiah, while the Davidic psalm groups with the Songs of Ascents further depict what this messiah looks like.

9.3 An Investigation of the Editorial Shape of the Psalter: The Contribution of Psalms 1-2, Book V, Particularly with Psalm 132 to the Reading of Psalm 110

The editorial shape of Book V and the Psalter provides the reader with a guideline, namely, that the Psalter should be read messianically, flanked by both the Torah and Wisdom as its pointers. If such a reading is correct, reading Psalm 110 messianically is in agreement with the structure of the Psalter. Moreover, Psalms 2 and 132, strategic to the editorial shape of the Psalter and Book V respectively, can shed more light on the reading of Psalm 110. Therefore, the goal of this section is first, to look at theological contribution of the messianic inclusio of Psalms 2 and 132 to the understanding of Psalm 110; second, to consider the theological and literary role of Psalms 1-2, particularly with Psalm 2, in our study of Psalm 110; and third, to reflect on the theological input of Book V, particularly Psalm 132 to Psalm 110.

⁶⁴⁵ The juxtaposition of "Tora- und Weisheitspsalmen" and "Zions- und Königsspsalmen" as in the beginning, or middle or end of a psalm-group is noted by Millard, *Komposition des Psalters*, 165-66.

⁶⁴⁶ According to Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 60, vv. 33-43 "are a hymn . . . marked by both hymnic and sapiential features."

⁶⁴⁷ Cf. deClaissé-Walford, *The Hebrew Psalter*, 97. deClaissé-Walford also observes that half of the wisdom psalms are found in Book V and 15 Davidic psalms in Book V are the largest in number since Book II. See deClaissé-Walford, *The Hebrew Psalter*, 95, 97.

In addition to that of Psalm 110, the role of Psalm 132 in Book V has also not been sufficiently studied. Scholars have long recognized that Psalm 132 differs from the other Ascents psalms both in length and oracle nature.⁶⁴⁸ Yet Psalm 132 should be explored in view of the broader context of the Psalter.

9.3.1 The Two Royal Psalms with Messianic References Serving as “Inclusio” for the Reading of the Psalter: A Study of Psalms 2 and 132

The word מָשִׁיחַ “messiah,” occurs first and last in the Psalter in Pss 2:2 and 132:10, 17. If the messianic reading advocated by Psalm 2 is permitted, then the last occurrence of this word in Psalm 132 is noteworthy. Due to its strategic position in Book V and in the Psalter, the role of Psalm 132 should be explored.

First, in looking at the poetic structure of Psalm 132, we observe its two parallel parts echo each other in their semantic parallels, as set out below (figure 7):

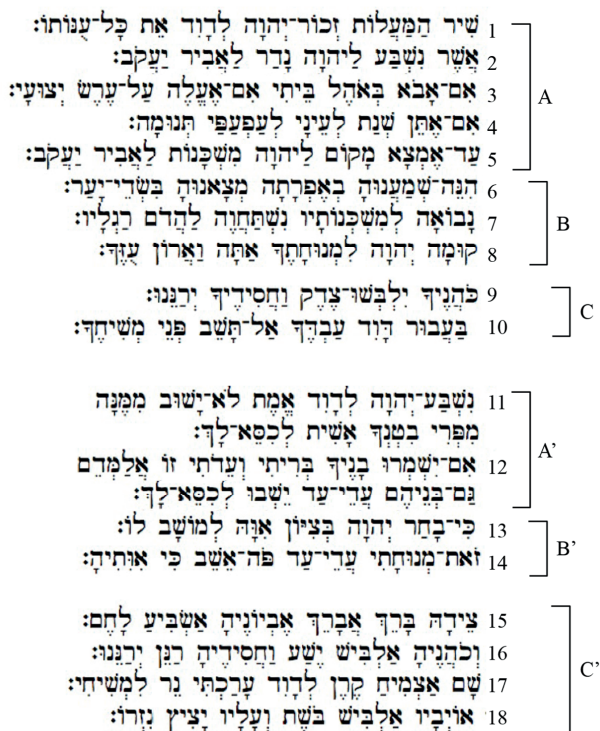


Figure 7. Poetic Structure of Psalm 132

⁶⁴⁸ Millard, *Komposition des Psalters*, 77: “Innerhalb der Wallfahrtspsalmen fällt Ps 132 sowohl wegen seiner Länge als auch wegen seiner Orakelmotive aus der Reihe der anderen Psalmen heraus.”

Several observations and comments are due here: first, both parts (vv. 1-10, 11-18)⁶⁴⁹ begin and end with דָּוִד “David” (v. 1, 10, 11 and 17) and therefore serve as an enveloping structure. Second, both AA’ contain נִשְׁבַּע-לַיהוָה and a אֵם-structure poetic structure. In A, it is David who makes an oath to Yahweh; David vows he would look for a place for Yahweh. In A’, it is Yahweh who makes an oath to David that one of his descendents will sit on the throne.

Third, both BB’ share בָּ with geographical locations (בְּשִׁירֵי-יֶזְרַע, בְּאֶפְרָתָה) and the word מְנוּחָה (“resting place”). In B, the resting/dwelling place is identified while in B’ Yahweh affirmatively chooses Zion to be his dwelling place. Fourth, in CC’, almost all the words in v. 9 are repeated in v. 16 and the “messiah” is found in v. 10 and v. 17. Fifth, between the two parts, there is a link, אֶל-יְהוָה and לֹא-יָשׁוּב (vv. 10, 11), serving as an “interstrophic hinge.”⁶⁵¹

Thematically, part I mirrors part II, but with the key character reversed: David swore an oath to Yahweh in the format of a prayer, while Yahweh swore an oath and made a promise to David in fulfillment of what David prayed. Such a theme – prayer-to-promise – reminds a Bible reader of 2 Samuel 7 where prayer follows divine promise.

The literary and theological relationship of Psalm 132 and 2 Samuel 7 (with 6) has long been noted.⁶⁵² Our aim here is to highlight the parallel progression of these two texts. From the earlier study of 2 Samuel 7 in this project, we have concluded that the יְהוָה-promise is portrayed with the grand word בָּיִת in Nathan’s oracle. The use of the key

⁶⁴⁹ It is not necessary, as Nel does, to argue that this psalm is composed of two poems. Philip Nel, “Psalm 132 and Covenant Theology,” in *Text and Context: Old Testament and Semitic Studies for F. C. Fensham*, ed. W. Claassen, JSOTSup 48 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 184. Such notion often leads to a composite nature of this psalm, for example, cf. Seybold, “Die Redaktion der Wallfahrtspsalmen,” ZAW 91 (1979): 256. See a short defense of the psalm’s unity by C. Brekelmans, “Psalm 132: Unity and Structure,” *Bijdragen* 44 (1983): 262-65. However, our division of this psalm is indebted to Nel’s idea and based on his analysis. As a whole, the strophic division is varied. See Elizabeth F. Huwiler, “Patterns and Problems in Psalm 132,” in *The Listening Heart: Essays in Wisdom and the Psalms in Honor of Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm.*, ed. Kenneth G. Hoglund, Elizabeth Huwiler, Jonathan T. Glass and Roger W. Lee, JSOTSup 58 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), 201. There, she divides it based on the formula of “inflicted verb + YHWH + preposition + noun,” thus giving us four strophes, with vv. 1, 8, 11 and 13 as the beginning of each strophe. Allen remarks: “The psalm falls into two halves, with systematic repetition of the terminology of the first half in the second.” Idem, *Psalms 101-150*, 204. Louis Jacquet sees part one is “historique” and part two as “prophétique.” Jacquet, *Les Psalmes et le cœur de l’Homme: Etude textuelle, littéraire et doctrinale. Psalms 101 à 150*, vol. 3 (Paris: Belgique, 1979), 526.

⁶⁵⁰ Cf. T. E. Fretheim, “Psalm 132: A Form-critical Study,” *JBL* 86 (1967): 292-93, quoted in Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 205.

⁶⁵¹ Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 204.

⁶⁵² Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 257. There Mettinger notes: “This psalm presupposes the existence of the prophecy of Nathan.” From a cultic point of view, see Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theology of Psalms*, 116-17.

word בית encompasses a paramount notion explicated in 2 Samuel 7: It is a king with an eternal dynasty (בית) and a kingdom (ממלכה) through David's זרע. Above is a summary of the thematic progression in 2 Samuel 7 from temple-house (בית) to seed as king (מלך).

Psalm 132 progresses in the same fashion: from temple/house to messiah. The argument follows. The temple/house in 2 Samuel 7 is now replaced by מנוחה and מושכן ("dwelling/resting place") in Psalm 132, which David sought (vv. 2-5) and found (vv. 6-9) and later Yahweh affirmed, especially with vv. 13-14a: ערר ער כרבחר יהוה בציון אלה למושב לו: (and cf. vv. 15b-16). Yet added to this theme of dwelling/resting place is a theme, that is, "messiah" (v. 10, 17; cf. 11). The "messiah" in Psalm 132 is an explication of Nathan's oracle in terms of the זרע ("seed") in 2 Samuel 7 when the two texts are compared: first, similar to Nathan's prophecy, the king comes from one of David's descendants (לכסא־לך) and second, though absent from 2 Samuel 7, is that the one who will sit on David's throne is now entitled with the word משיח "messiah."⁶⁵³ This is in complete agreement with Psalm 2 yet in a reversed order as noted in figure 8:

653 If Psalm 132 should be read messianically, the key question is, should David be identified as the "messiah"? Can vv. 10 and 17 refer to David as the messiah? Some would answer this question positively by referring to 2 Sam 23:1-7, especially v. 1. In this project, we have not dealt with 2 Sam 23:1-7 primarily due to space constraints. Nonetheless, here we briefly comment on this text: (1) This passage should be read in light of its larger context and its immediate context, 2 Samuel 22 (// Psalm 18). For the larger context, as mentioned while examining 2 Samuel 7, David's prayer (7:18-29) focuses not on his own house but on God's, anticipating that Yahweh will make good on his promise that an eternal kingdom will be established by "one" of David's seed in the future (7:13). In the immediate context, David's men thought he was the lamp of Israel (נר ישראל, 2 Sam 21:15) but David flatly denied it in the poem, 22:29: נר לא הייתי, referring to Yahweh as the lamp (this echoes Ps 132:17, לנר למשיח). (2) The text of 2 Sam 23:1-7 seems to support the notion that David is the messiah, but a careful reading will dismiss such an idea. Note how the word משיח appears early in 22:51. It is unclear who this messiah is in 22:51: it could refer to "David," or to "לדוד," "his seed"; both terms follow למשיחו. The key is in 23:1 and the key word is the Hebrew word על. First, we should note the textual variants: both 4Q51 and the Lagarde edition of the LXX have אל, "God" (see McCarter, *II Samuel*, 477, where he points out these two textual traditions that support אל). Second, however, we should compare the MT and the LXX word by word for v. 1 as follows:
הקם as καὶ οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι Δαυὶδ οἱ ἔσχατοι; בְּיָמֵי as πιστὸς Δαυὶδ υἱὸς Ἰεσσαι;
הקם as καὶ πιστὸς ὁ κύριος; וְעַתָּה as ἀνέστησεν with יִשְׂרָאֵל as θεοῦ Ἰακώβ καὶ εὐπρεπείας ψαλμοὶ Ἰσραηλ. As of this point, we have accounted for everything. The problem is: על is not matched with κύριος ἐπὶ χρυσόν word-by-word here. In other words, the LXX support a *Vorlage* as אלהים על משיח or אלהים על משיח, which is rendered as "[of] God (אל), concerning (על) messiah (משיח)." Three explanatory notes are due: (a) The Greek word ἐπὶ always renders the Hebrew word על. We have sampled five chapters (1, 7, 15, 22 and 23) in 2 Samuel on how על being translated in the LXX, ἐπὶ is consistently used (on several occasions, ἐπὶ is used to render ב: 7:9, 22:3, 22:31.). Note particularly in 23:8, 18, that ἐπὶ stands for על. (b) The word κύριος sometimes reflects the Hebrew word אלהים (with the article ה): 2 Sam 2:27, 6:3 (cf. v. 12; the MT and the LXX), 7:25 and 15:24 (cf. v. 25). This may explain why the Qumran and the LXX support אל. (See also the LXX for 22:31, 32 and 48 where אל occurs and is rendered as ἰσχυρός). (c) Others regard the Hebrew word על as the divine name as עליון but see *HALOT* 2: 824-25, that such parallel is rejected there. Moreover, על is mostly listed as a preposition, see *HALOT* 2: 825-27. Our reconstruction of the MT only involves a change of vowel point: וְעַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב / על משיח אלהים יַעֲקֹב, "and the oracle of the man exalted [by God]/ concerning the messiah of the God of Jacob." The presence of ἐπὶ is a strong contention for our repointing. Thus, our conclusion is that the "last words" of David in 2 Sam 23:1-7 concerns the messiah.

Psalms 2	messiah v.2	→ my king v.6	→ my son v.7	→ son v.12
2 Samuel 7 – Psalm 132	seed (after David) 2 Sam 7:12 (Psalm 132:11b)	Sitting on the throne (=king) 7:13	son 7:14a	messiah Ps 132: 10, 17

Figure 8. Thematic Parallels of Psalms 2 and 132 (2 Samuel 7)

While Psalms 2 and 132 reflect a very similar messianic portrait, it seems appropriate to explore the literary and theological relationship between Psalms 2 and 110.

9.3.2 The Contribution of Psalms 2 to Our Understanding of Psalm 110

Both psalms are linked by their shared semantic elements and thematic emphasis. The literary-semantic links of Psalms 2 and 110 are obvious, enumerated as follows: (1) מִצִּיּוֹן (2:6; 110:2, 3); (2) הַדְרִיקָשׁ/עַל־צִיּוֹן הַדְרִיקָשׁ (2:5, 11; 110:5); (3) אֶרֶץ רַבָּה/אֶפְסֵי־אֶרֶץ (2:8; 110:6); (4) מִנְחָל/נִחְלָתָךְ (2:7; 110:3); (5) מְלָכִים/מְלִכֵי־אֶרֶץ (2:10, 2; 110:7); and (6) בִּדְרֶךְ/דֶּרֶךְ (2:11; 110:7).⁶⁵⁴

On the thematic front, some scholars also establish some mutual relationships between Psalms 2 and 110.⁶⁵⁶ For example, Kissane notes how both psalms (together with other Psalms 20-21, 72, 89, 132) address the kingdom of David on the basis of Nathan's oracle and "Psalms 2 and 110 deal with the same theme."⁶⁵⁷ Others see both Psalms cast in divine speeches.⁶⁵⁸ Yet Psalm 110 is more explicit in this regard (see 110:1, 4) and therefore in a more solemn format re-dresses the divine speech in Psalm 2.

⁶⁵⁴ The Hebrew word יִלְדֶּתִיךָ is given two different sets of vowel points in the MT but the LXX renders it with two similar words: ἡγενησῶ and ἡγενησῶ. See the apparatus of Ps 110:3 in *BHS* and our textual discussion in chapter 7.

⁶⁵⁵ Note that נִחְלָתָךְ (2:8) is from the word נִחַל while מִנְחָל (110:7) is from the word נָחַל. See *BDB* 635-36.

⁶⁵⁶ See, for example, David Wallace, "Texts in Tandem: The Coalescent Usage of Psalm 2 and Psalm 110 in Early Christianity" (Ph. D. diss., Waco, Tex.: Baylor University, 1995), particularly chap. 4. There Wallace argues that these conceptual links became a foundation for Christian and intertestamental literature to formulate imagery concerning the messiah.

⁶⁵⁷ Edward J. Kissane, "The Interpretation of Psalm 110," 106, cf. 105.

⁶⁵⁸ Hermann Spieckermann, "Rede Gottes und Wort Gottes in den Psalmen," in *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschung*, 158. Spieckermann has reviewed other psalms of divine speech in a diachronic fashion using the Exile (pre- and post-) as the framework. Kistemaker, besides pointing to the shared messianic theme in these two psalms, also remarks that "there is some correspondence between the Hebrew form of הָקָם Ps 2:7a and the introductory words נָאם יְהוָה of Ps 110:1." Kistemaker, *Psalm Citations*, 80.

The divine speeches or oracles of Psalm 2 or 110, however, have been studied for various purposes. Some advocate a father-son imagery in both psalms, and while Ps 2:7 is explicit, Ps 110:3 (the LXX) is subtle in this respect. Widengren proposes that Ps 2:7 is a good explanation of 110:3.⁶⁵⁹

Notwithstanding these proposals, our semantic analysis produces some thematic elements that both psalms affirm: first, Zion is the chosen place for the messianic king; second, the war-theme in the days of wrath of the messianic king; third, the worldwide dominion of this king; and fourth, the messianic king, besides his divine relationship (father-son) with God, is also a priest. This is what Psalm 110 adds to the messianic reading of the Psalter in a theme-rheme progression.

9.3.3 The Contribution of Book V, Spearheaded by Psalm 132, to the Reading of Psalm 110

Since we have already explored Psalms 2 and 132, followed by Psalms 2 and 110 in their theological relationships, noting how Psalms 2 and 132 contribute to the messianic understanding, it is logical to examine the literary-semantic relationship of Psalms 110 and 132. The existing verbal or semantic parallels between these two poems are striking: (1) אשית (110:1, 132:11); (2) כִּי־בָחַר יְהוָה בְּצִיּוֹן / יִשְׁלַח יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן (110:2, 132:13); (3) לְעוֹלָם (110:4, 132:13); (4) יִלְבַּשׁ־צִדְקָה / מַלְכ־יִצְדָק (110:4, 132:9, 16); (5) וְכִהְיֶה אֱלֹהִים יֵשַׁע וְיִשְׁעוֹ וְיִשְׁעוֹ וְיִשְׁעוֹ (110:4, 132:9); (6) אֵיבֹאֵי / אֵיבֹאֵי (110:1-2, 132:18); (7) יִשְׁבֹּ / יִשְׁבֹּ (110:1, 132:12; cf. לְמוֹשֶׁב in 132:13); and (8) נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה .. לֹא יִשׁוּב־יִנְחָם נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה וְאֵל (110:4, 132:11).⁶⁶⁰ These shared verbal similarities between Psalms 110 and 132 reinforce the messianic interpretation of Psalm 110. They echo each other, not only verbally but thematically.

The seventh verbal similarity listed above deserves brief mention. Adding to the fact that both poems are cast in an irrevocable and divine oath, Psalm 110 portrays the king figure also as priest while Psalm 132 sees this figure as messianic as well as one of David's seed, whose reign is in Zion (affirmed by both psalms).

The messianic reading occasioned by the presence of "messiah" in Psalms 2 and 132 as an *inclusio* frame was discussed earlier. Nonetheless, the present shape of the Psalter reinforces this frame by providing another one, namely the *בֵּרַךְ*-motif in Psalms

⁶⁵⁹ Geo Widengren, "Psalm 110 und sakrale Königtum in Israel," in *Zur neueren Psalmenforschung*, ed. Peter H. A. Neumann (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), 193-94. Like others from the "Myth-and-Ritual school," Widengren's view has been seriously criticized. See Starbuck, *Court Oracles*, 47-52. Nonetheless, recently, Antti Laato argues similarly as Widengren. See Laato, *A Star Is Rising: The Historical Development of the Old Testament Royal Ideology and the Rise of the Jewish Messianic Expectations*, International Studies in Formative Christianity and Judaism 5 (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1997), 92-93.

⁶⁶⁰ Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 81; he links this phrase נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה to the Davidic covenant. The above-shared verbal similarities have largely gone unnoticed by commentators.

1-2 and Book V. This frame of the בִּרְךְ-motif is crucial as we attempt to link the message of the Psalter to what we have delineated in Genesis 14 and its cotexts in chapters four through six.

9.3.4 The בִּרְךְ-Motif as Frame in the Psalter Particularly in Light of Psalms 1-2 and the Songs of Ascents, Led by Psalm 132

The בִּרְךְ-motif in the Psalter can be traced by the occurrence of בִּרְךְ as illustrated in table 3:⁶⁶¹

Table 3. The Occurrence of בִּרְךְ in the Psalter

Book	I	II	III	IV	V	Total
as "bless"	5	9	0	0	17	31
as "praise"	7	8	1	11	16	43
	12	17	1	11	33	74

The root בִּרְךְ appears more frequently in Books I and II as compared to Books III and IV, then reappears many times in Book V.⁶⁶² Within Book V, בִּרְךְ appears nine times (6 times as "bless") in the Songs of Ascents.

Of all the occurrences of בִּרְךְ, Ps 132:15 is by far the most important because it is configured as an oath and speech by Yahweh (cf. vv. 11, 14). Yahweh will bless where he chooses to dwell, that is Zion (v. 13; the relationship of Psalm 132 with Psalm 110 then provides a בִּרְךְ-frame to embrace the latter as also part of Yahweh's blessing:⁶⁶³

⁶⁶¹ Statistics are based on BibleWorks for Windows; The root בִּרְךְ appears twice as "knee" (see 95:6, 109:24). When the object of בִּרְךְ is Yahweh or God, בִּרְךְ is glossed as "praise." Otherwise, it is glossed as "bless." While the role of Davidic superscription and Davidic psalms in Book V has been expounded earlier in this project, the occurrence of בִּרְךְ, when compared to that of Davidic superscription, coincidentally matches a similar occurrence pattern in the Psalter. Please refer to table 2 of this chapter for the distribution of David in the Psalter. Both בִּרְךְ and יִרְךְ appear more frequently in Books I, II, and V than elsewhere in the Psalter.

⁶⁶² K. Koch has noted and discussed בִּרְךְ as "Stichwort" in Book V and in the Songs of Ascents. Idem, "seine Redaktionsgeschichte," 256-57.

⁶⁶³ Daniel Grossberg observes keenly that the בִּרְךְ-frame is used to conclude the first four books of the Psalter but its position in Psalm 134 is a "variant," for it only brings to a close the Songs of Ascents, not Book V. Idem, *Centripetal and Centrifugal Structures in Biblical Poetry* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1989), 19-20.

the promise of a messianic king-priest is also the divine blessing conferred to his people.⁶⁶⁴

The question remains: does this בֵּרַךְ-frame extend to other parts of the Psalter, particularly to Psalms 1-2? Surely Psalms 1-2 do not contain the word בֵּרַךְ for instead they use אֲשֶׁרִי. Therefore, the answer lies in the syntagmatic relationship between the words: בֵּרַךְ and אֲשֶׁרִי⁶⁶⁵ detected in 72:17. Since Ps 72:17 is placed at the close of Book II or marked as the end of the second Davidic collection, this could be further evidence of a purposeful redaction. This verse functions redactionally as a hinge to bind Book I and II (as Davidic collections) to Psalms 1-2: תִּבְרַכּוּ בּוֹ כָּל-גּוֹיִם וְאֲשֶׁרוֹהוּ יְהִי שְׁמוֹ לְעוֹלָם לְפָנֵי-שָׁמַיִשׁ: 72:17. The poet uses both אֲשֶׁרִי and בֵּרַךְ as if in the same breath. The clause בּוֹ כָּל-גּוֹיִם is familiar to this project (Gen 22:18;⁶⁶⁶ cf. Gen 12:3): all nations will be blessed (בֵּרַךְ) through the king (see Ps 72:1), and in return they will call him blessed (אֲשֶׁרִי). That reminds an engaged psalm-reader of Psalms 1-2 that those who are called “blessed” (אֲשֶׁרִי) are called so because God has blessed them through him (יִתְבְּרַכּוּ בּוֹ), the messiah.

We need to recap the above findings in Book V of our investigation of its editorial shape, with special reference to Psalms 1-2 and 132 and their contribution to the reading of Psalm 110. First, Psalms 2 and 132 serve as inclusio to frame a messianic reading of the Psalter based on the word “messiah,” which occurs first and last in both Psalms. Second, since Psalm 132 ties in thematically with 2 Samuel 7, by comparing Psalm 2 with Psalm 132 in juxtaposition with 2 Samuel 7, we have detected a progressive reading that focuses on the sonship as well as on the messianic aspect of the king depicted in Psalm 2 and 2 Samuel 7. Third, the shared semantic-thematic notions of Psalms 2 and 110 – both cast in the divine oracles – help us to read Psalm 110 messianically, despite the absence of the word “messiah.” The king portrayed in Psalm 2 is depicted as a priest in Psalm 110. Fourth, Psalm 132, as the key representative psalm for Book V, shares verbal similarities with Psalm 110; it further reinforces the messianic reading of Psalm 110, that the king who reigns in Zion (110:2; 132:11, 13) is one of David’s seed.

We have noted that Book V is the immediate cotext for Psalm 110, which through our analysis in chapter seven, should be read messianically. Thus far in our study in

⁶⁶⁴ Hossfeld and Zenger have observed the role of בֵּרַךְ in Books I-III: “Auf diese ‘messianische’ Redaktion geht auch die Gliederung von Ps 2-89 durch die Benediktionen/Doxologien (Ps 41:14, 72:18-19, 89:53) in die drei ‘Bücher’ Ps 2-41, 42-72, 73-89 zurück.” Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalmen 51-100*, 33. It will be interesting to see how they both deal with Book IV-V in this regard when their third-volume commentary appears.

⁶⁶⁵ The word אֲשֶׁרִי has the following distribution in the Psalter based on BibleWorks for Windows; total occurrences are 26::

Introduction Psalms I-II	Book I	Book II	Book III	Book IV	Book V	Conclusion Psalms 146-150
2	6	1	4	2	10	1

⁶⁶⁶ The phrase וְיִתְבְּרַכּוּ בּוֹ כָּל-גּוֹיִם is a recollection of Gen 22:18: וְיִתְבְּרַכּוּ בּוֹ כָּל-גּוֹיִם הָאֲדָמָה.

this chapter, our delineation has shown that, as in Books I-IV, the notion of “Torah-revealing-messiah” is a guide to read the Psalter. This can be detected in Book V, particularly when examining the juxtaposition of Psalm 119 and the Songs of Ascents. Such “Torah-messiah” reading agrees with what we have detected in the introduction of the Psalter, Psalms 1-2. We now proceed to review together in their entirety all of the OT texts we have covered from chapter four to the present.

9.4 A Summary: The Literary-Theological Relationships of Genesis 14 (with Its Cotexts) with 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 110

In one sense, this summary is redundant because through a detailed study of Genesis 14, its cotexts (Genesis 12-15, 49, Numbers 22-24), 2 Samuel 7, and Psalm 110 (with its cotexts) we discovered numerous similar notions throughout their theological messages as profiled in various places throughout this project. Nonetheless, it is fitting here to recap all of the findings from the perspective of Psalm 110. By reviewing our materials through the lens of Psalm 110, we argue that the poet of Psalm 110 composed this text under the literary-theological influence of Genesis 14 (with other passages as stated above). Furthermore, this extends to the editorial shape of the Psalter in which Psalm 110 plays a similar literary-theological role.

It is worth remembering that the connection of Genesis 14 and Psalm 110 does not solely depend on the quotation of the name “Melchizedek” (Gen 14:18-20; Ps 110:4).⁶⁶⁷ First, the images described in Psalm 110 match the story of Genesis 14; in other words, the poet of Psalm 110 was keenly aware of the text of Genesis 14 in the following ways: first, while Yahweh delivered Abraham from his enemy into Abraham’s hand (יָצִיחַ בְּיָדְךָ, Gen 14:20), Yahweh promised to make the messianic king’s enemy a footstool (אֲשִׁית אִיְיָךְ הָרָם לְתַלְמִיד, Ps 110:1). The change from “hand” to “foot” may signify the complete and ultimate victory Yahweh has promised. Second, the geographical center of messianic rule is in Zion, as set out in Ps 110:2. This location can be traced back to Gen 14:18 where Melchizedek was coming from the city indicated as שָׁלֵם. Salem is positively identified with Zion in Ps 76:3[2]: וְיִהְיֶה בְּשָׁלֵם סֵבֹא וּמִעוֹנָתוֹ בְּצִיּוֹן.⁶⁶⁸ On the one hand, the reference to Melchizedek – king of Salem – by Psalm 110 in the context of the messianic king’s rule in Zion reinforces this possible identity. On the other hand,

⁶⁶⁷ Whybray contends that Melchizedek’s being mentioned in Ps 110:4 goes back to “an early tradition” that links to Davidic kings and thus these two texts are linked by traditions rather than linked at the text level. His contention should be rejected, however, by this study’s results. See Whybray, *Reading the Psalms*, 95.

⁶⁶⁸ Hamilton argues that we can connect Salem with Jerusalem based on the word “city” in Sumerian being *uru*. Therefore, Jerusalem is a combined word for “city of Salem.” Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, 409-10.

by juxtaposing Zion with Melchizedek of Salem, the author of Psalm 110, we argue, may have been influenced by the text of Genesis 14.

Third, the smell of war permeates Psalm 110; likewise that is the scene in Genesis 14. The battle in Psalm 110 seems to involve a wider geographical area (110:6, cf. Gen 14:1-9), a great slaughter (110:6, cf. Gen 14:10), and the defeat of kings (110:5, Gen 14:8-11). Through Abraham, the nations represented by kings were “judged” (defeated) in Genesis 14 while Ps 110:6 reiterates this notion: *יָדִין בְּנֵי־נָם*.⁶⁶⁹ Fourth, a consequence of fighting a great battle is that the vigor of the victor is sorely taxed, and as Ps 110:7 reports, the warrior needs to be refreshed (*בְּנַחֵל בְּדָרֶךְ יִשְׁתָּה*); this reported account is much like the scene when Melchizedek brought provisions (*לֶחֶם וְיַיִן*) to rejuvenate Abraham in Gen 14:18.⁶⁷⁰

It is noteworthy that the oracle nature of Psalm 110 can attribute to a divine revelation to the poet (David), though it could also originate from the literary influence of the cotexts of Genesis 14 and Numbers 22-24.⁶⁷¹ There are three words, *נָם*, *נָחַם*, and *נָשַׁב* used in Ps 110:1 and 4 to potentially illustrate that the poet has been influenced by the cotexts of Genesis 14. First, note that the word *נָם* in Ps 110:4 also appears in Num 24:3, 4, 15 and 16, that is, all within the third and fourth oracles of Balaam. The study (in chapter five of this project) of the Balaam pericope has resulted in this understanding: the divine blessing is unchanging in the second oracles of Balaam, which streamlined into a messianic, royal figure stemming from Jacob’s seed in the third and fourth oracles. Psalm 110 basically reiterates this blessing, cast in the victory and in the rule of the messianic king who is also a priest in Melchizedek’s order. Furthermore, the poet adds the little qualifying phrase *וְלֹא יִנָּחַם* after *יְהוָה*. This qualifier, penned by our poet, most likely reflects his reading of the Balaam text in Num 23:19-20, particularly v. 19: *לֹא אִישׁ אֶל וְיִכָּזֵב וּבִן־אָדָם וְיִתְנַחֵם*. Second, the exact phrase, *נָאֻם יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי* (Ps 110:1), is only⁶⁷² found in Gen 22:16: *נָאֻם יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי*. There an element is redundantly added: *בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי*. Nonetheless, the poet seemed to have taken note of Gen 22:16 and recast this in the composition of Psalm 110: *נָאֻם יְהוָה* (v. 1) and *נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה* (v. 4). In Gen 22:16, the content that follows that divine oracle – buttressed by the divine oath – is twofold: (a) *וְיָרַשׁ זָרְעֶךָ אֶת שַׁעַר אֲבִיבִי* and (b) *וְהִתְבָּרַכְוּ בְּזָרְעֶךָ כָּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ* (vv. 17, 18). Yahweh’s plan is to have Abraham’s seed overcome its enemy and to bless the

⁶⁶⁹ This idea is nearly repeated verbatim in Gen 15:14: *וְהָיָה אֶת־הַנָּגִי אֲשֶׁר . . . דָּן אֲנִי*.

⁶⁷⁰ Additional textual allusions that support the poet of Psalm 110 reading and interpreting Genesis 14: (1) *שָׁב* (in Ps 110:1) to *שָׁבִי . . . הָשִׁיב . . . וּשְׁבִי* (Gen 14:16-17) though they come from a different Hebrew root, (2) *יָדִין* (Ps 110:7) to *הִרְיִמְתִּי יָדִי* (Gen 14:22), (3) *נָל* (Ps 110:3) looks like *לוֹט*, “Lot” (reversal of *ל* and *ט*) in Genesis 14.

⁶⁷¹ McCarter has noted that the oracle formula serves as an opening for 2 Sam 23:1 (*נָאֻם דָּוִד*) and Num 24:3, 15 (*נָאֻם בְּלָקִם*). McCarter, *II Samuel*, 479.

⁶⁷² “Only” in the sense of those texts we are interested in this project. This phrase appears 7 times in the narrative texts, once in Psalm (110:1), with the remainder of its occurrences being in prophetic literature.

nations through it. We have expounded on the syntagmatic progression of the word “seed” in chapter five: while it replaced Abraham as the agent of blessing, Abraham’s seed has a military victory over its enemy and is later transformed into a specific son with royal notion. The author of Psalm 110 may have picked up the notions of military victory over the enemy and kingly rule of Gen 22:16-18 as he composed the psalm. At the very least, the poet’s vocabulary (יְהוָה רִבָּה בְּקֶרֶב אֹיְבָיו אִשִּׁית אֹיְבָיו חָרָם לְרִגְלֵיךָ נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה) reflect his awareness of what is in the text of Gen 22:16-18.

Another aspect is that the eternal kingdom, augmented by a Davidic son in the covenant God made with David in 2 Samuel 7, is reiterated in the framework of בֶּרֶךְ in David’s final words as prayer (vv. 25-29, especially v. 29 with threefold בֶּרֶךְ). That kingdom is depicted in Psalm 110 with words like “scepter” (מִטָּה) and “rule” (רָדָה). The ruler of that kingdom is described in the same psalm that mentions the divine birth with human nature (vv. 3, 7). It is the priest-king figure who will augment Yahweh’s kingdom, and who is assured of triumph over his enemy (vv. 1-2, 5-6). Viewed in the context of the Psalter (that is, the Psalter’s בֶּרֶךְ-frame and within the interaction of Psalm 119 and Psalm 132), Psalm 110 is in complete agreement with the בֶּרֶךְ-theme in Genesis 14 (and its cotexts), that is, the messianic development in Numbers 22-24 with the element of Davidic sonship in the kingly rule of the messiah in 2 Samuel 7. In other words, Psalm 110, embedded in the Psalter’s בֶּרֶךְ-frame and with the assumption of the Davidic covenant as background, depicts God’s promise of his kingdom. Furthermore, the kingdom will be ushered in by a Davidic king, who is also a priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Finally, the reason behind the placement of Psalm 110 in its present canonical (MT) position is probably due to the theological influence of these antecedent Scriptures (Genesis 14, Numbers 22-24 and 2 Samuel 7). As noted earlier, there are a few devices in the editorial shape of the Psalter: the בֶּרֶךְ-frame (in view of Genesis 14), the messianic sonship and kingship inclusio of Psalms 2 and 132 (in view of Numbers 22-24 and 2 Samuel 7), and the strategic Davidic superscriptions (in view of the Davidic covenant in 2 Samuel 7) to guide the reader to read the Psalter messianically. Since Psalm 110 should be read messianically (absence of the word “messiah” from the text itself notwithstanding), its placement in the first Davidic collection of Book V is to echo Psalm 2 (first four Books of the Psalter) and Psalm 132 (in the Davidicized collection of the Psalter).

From our study so far, we could draw a preliminary conclusion. The biblical writer did not write his text in a vacuum. Quite likely, the biblical writer was influenced by the antecedent Scriptures; indeed, he may have been familiar with antecedent Scripture before constructing any text. While of course we do not know for certain the actual process of how the biblical writer wrote Scripture, our investigation seems to suggest, through a strong attestation of semantic-literary parallels and similarities between two texts, that this could probably be the case. It is more verifiable whether the later biblical writer wrote his piece while reading and interpreting antecedent Scriptures – within a more “controlled” environment, borrowing a term from science

– than whether the biblical writer was influenced by traditions although we should not (and can not) rule out the influence of traditions. The “controlled” environment is the existence of the text itself (reflected either in the MT or the LXX). Nonetheless, the investigation should not stop here but should proceed to further support what was just stated. Thus in the next two chapters, the aim is to detect the literary structure of Hebrews, which also reflects how the author of Hebrews read and interpreted the OT Scriptures that may have shaped his composition of this letter.