PSALM 89 AND THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

by

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PREFACE

For many years the study of the Psalms has been a fascinating and profitable discipline to the author of this work. Psalm 89 is of captivating interest to the writer, not only because it is a portion of the biblical corpus, but for the reason that a large section of it is devoted to the Davidic Covenant. It is a covenant which has tremendous significance for the consideration of the movements of God in the providential control of history. How the covenant and the content of the Psalm blend together is an enriching study and leads to a greater appreciation of all the Scripture.

Another discipline has come to the attention of the author in recent years, namely, a study of a portion of the vast amount of literature from the ancient Near East. A perusal of this literature reveals that all poetry of the Near East, including Psalm 89, had much in common. And much comparative study has been made. However, some scholars have seriously neglected the distinct religious thought of the Psalm and accordingly have given unsatisfactory treatment the application. With the inconsistencies in some of these comparative studies, the writer felt that the relationship of the ancient Near East to Psalm 89 should be clarified.

To achieve this goal the author gratefully acknowledges the help of many, not all of whom are listed in the

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	*Analecta Biblica*
AJSL	*The American Journal of Semitic Languages*
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts, third edition, ed.* Pritchard.
ASTI	*Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute*
BDB	*A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament,* ed. Brown, Driver, and Briggs.
BJRL	*Bulletin of John Rylands Library*
BS	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CJT	*Canadian Journal of Theology*
EJ	*Encyclopaedia Judaica*
ET	*Expository Times*
ETL	*Ephemerides Theological Lovanienses*
GJ	*Grace Journal*
GKC	*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar,* Gesenius, Kautzsch and Cowley.
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
JAOS	*Journal of Ancient Oriental Studies*
JASTROW	*A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature,* Jastrow.
JBC	*The Jerome Bible Commentary*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*

JBR	*Journal of Bible and Religion*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JFB	*A Commentary: Critical Experimental and Practical on the old and New Testaments,* Jamieson, Fausset and Brown.
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JPOS	*The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
KB	*Lexicon in Veteris Testimenti Libros,* ed. Koehler and Baumgartner.
LXX	*The Septuagint*
MT	*The Massoretic Text.*
NASB	*New American Standard Bible*
NBCR	*The New Bible Commentary Revised*
RB	*Revue Biblique*
RHR	*Revue de L'Histoire des Religions*
TARGUM	*מקראות גדולות,* "*תהלים משלי*", "*פט*"
TS	*Theological Studies*
TZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
UT	*Ugaritic Textbook, Gordon.*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WLQ	*Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift fur die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

At the present time, the battle still rages over the
relationship of Psalm 89 to the finds of the ancient Near
East. While many facets of the problem may be seen, four
areas will be considered here: treatment, textual criticism,
parallelism, theology.

In terms of treatment

By treatment, it is meant how Psalm 89 as a portion
of the biblical corpus has been viewed. American scholars,
either through fear or oversight, have written very little
that offers anything exegetical in nature on Psalm 89. This
neglect may be due partly to the fact that some phrases and
doctrine in the psalm occur in Psalms one through eighty-
eight and, thus, are not treated fully. Other American
scholars just make a passing reference to Psalm 89 in their
treatment of different subjects. Few will even attempt to
show the significance of any ancient Near East connections.

But this is not so with European scholars. The fol-
lowing statement can be made by DuMortier only from his side
of the Atlantic Ocean. "Les nombreuses études dont a fait
l'objet le Ps. lxxxix témoignent amplement de la complexité

de ce psaume."[1] These numerous studies are from the pens of
European writers. Besides exegetical treatment, their arti-
cles and books are replete with ancient Near Eastern compar-
isons. Although this writer could not obtain all of the
European sources, this study will bear out the European con-
tribution, one which is not by any means conservative.

In terms of textual criticism

Ap-Thomas has said:

> Study of the Old Testament in general and of its Hebrew
> in particular has come into greater prominence in recent
> years. There are a number of reasons for this--a gener-
> ation of able teachers, some exciting archeological dis-
> coveries, the growth of interest in Near Eastern studies
> and in biblical theology. . . .[2]

Dahood goes at length to defend his position that
Ugaritic has its bearing on the Bible on this subject.[3] Con-
cerning Ugaritic and textual criticism, Dahood states else-
where:

> . . . Ugaritic literature remains one of the most effi-
> cient instruments at the disposal of the biblical re-
> searcher.

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[1]Jean-Bernard DuMortier, "Un Ritual d' Intronisation:
Le Ps. LXXXIX 2-38," *VT*, XXII:2 (April, 1972), 176.

[2]D. R. Ap-Thomas, *A Primer of Old Testament Text
Criticism*, Facet Books--Biblical Series 14, edited by John
Reumann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. iii.

[3]Mitchell Dahood, *The Anchor Bible--Psalms II, 51-100*
(Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1968),
pp. XVII-XXVII. For the criticism Dahood is answering, see
John L. McKenzie, a review of *Psalms 1:1-50* by Mitchell
Dahood, CBQ, XXIX:l (January, 1967), 138-40 and David A.
Robertson, a review of *Anchor Bible: Psalms 1, 1-50* by
Mitchell Dahood, *JBL*, LXXXV:IV (December, 1966), 484-86.

In some instances Ugaritic brings a peremptory solution to a biblical verse; in others the evidence is less direct, but does inject new elements and considerations which an exegete may not overlook.[1]

While the statement may be true, the method by which it is put into practice is not always valid, especially if the text is emended in an excessive manner. This aspect of the problem will manifest itself throughout the study.

The Targums, Old Latin Version, Septuagint, and Peshito are employed by Kennedy for the "removal of blemishes" in the Massoretic text.[2] Many of these "corrections" in Psalm 89 are not only unacceptable, but unnecessary. Other works[3] could be cited, but the above point out the problem

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[1]Mitchell Dahood, "The Value of Ugaritic for Textual Criticism," *AB*, 10 (Roma, 1959), 26-27. The same article may be found in *Biblica*, 40 (1959), 160-70. A favorable evaluation of Dahood's method is given by Stanislaw Segert, "The Ugaritic Texts and the Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible," *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright,* edited by Hans Goedicke (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), pp. 413-20. But a critical evaluation is noted by K. L. Barker, a review of *New Perspectives on the Old Testament,* edited by J. Barton Payne, *BS*, 129:514 (April-June, 1972), 154. For further study see H. L. Ginsberg, "The Ugaritic Texts and Textual Criticism," *JBL*, LXII (1943), 109-15.

[2]James Kennedy, *An Aid to the Textual Amendment of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), pp. 1-255.

[3]Christian D. Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Ind., 1966. This work was not given an altogether favorable report, see Bruce K. Waltke, a review of *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible* by Christian D. Ginsburg, *BS*, 123:492 (October-December, 1966), 364-65. For further study see Nahum M. Sarna, et al, "Psalms, Book of," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 16 Volumes (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, Ltd., 1971), Vol. 13, p. 1318 and Ernst Wurthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament*, translated by Peter R. Ackroyd (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), pp. 1-173.

that affects this study. Textual criticism will not be treated as a separate topic because it is an inherent part of practically all that follows.

In terms of parallelism

Parallels from the ancient Near East are seen everywhere in Psalm 89. Verbal parallels would be expected, but not to the extent that McKenzie saw them. "The verbal parallels between the Ugaritic tablets and several Old Testament passages make it impossible to suppose anything but direct dependence."[1]

As some have advocated, there are parallels in thought patterns.[2] Scholars see parallels in the ancient Near East to Psalm 89 in the realms of kingship, throne, covenant, Rahab, and even God. Concepts of ruling, praise, and enthronement are also included.

It is recognized that there have to be some relationships because various forms of ancient Near Eastern poetry are stereotyped. But does this constitute a direct parallelism? Since a whole chapter will be devoted to this portion of the problem, there is no need of further discussion here.

[1]John L. McKenzie, *Myths and Realities: Studies in Biblical Theology* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1963), p. 97.

[2]John Hasting Patton, *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1944), pp. 15-28. Theodor Gaster, "Canaanite Parallels to the Psalms," *JQR*, 35:3 (January, 1945), 355-56.

In terms of theology

Actually, the three facets of the problem above are involved in the theological, phase of the problem. Several scholars are named by Baumgartel as viewing the Psalms "separated from the individual and . . . understood as cultic in character."[1] This concept seems definitely to imply that the individual psalmist had no relationship to God.

Adherents of *Religionsgeschichte* provide another area of the theological problem.

> Quite apart from the formal parallels, it has come to appear likely that the Canaanite religion at least exerted some influence upon the content of the Old Testament psalms, although Yahwism and Israel's unique concept of God and existence carried the day.[2]

Similarly, the eminent scholar W. F. Albright holds that Psalm 89 swarms "with Canaanitisms."[3] And Kapeirud avers:

> It is instructive to examine individual psalms from the standpoint of their relationship to Ugaritic motifs, expressions, and details of cultic practice. The psalms are firmly rooted in the Yahwistic faith and the Jeru-

[1]Friedrich Bäumgartel, "The Hermeneutical Problem of the Old Testament," translated by Murray Newman, *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*, edited by Claus Westermann, English translation edited by James Luther Mays (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1963), p. 147.

[2]Ernst Sellin and Georg Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament,* translated by David E. Green (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 259.

[3]William Foxwell Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, Anchor Books edition (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1968), p. 124.

salem cult; but this does not mean that they do not contain many elements derived from Canaanite religion.[1]

What the above scholars have not considered is that God and all His works are supernatural. This includes His authorship of Scripture. The problem here is one of presupposition which will be covered later.

While there are many other problems that confront Psalm 89, these areas deal with the main corpus of this study. On the whole the problem is much more serious than stated above, but another problem involved in a work of this size is the avoidance of tautology.

The Raison d'Etre

The reason for writing may be observed first of all by cause and effect. Archaeology has brought much to light in the area of Old Testamentt background and studies. The findings of the ancient Near East have enriched our knowledge of the cultural background and linguistics within the biblical corpus. As already indicated, due to theological bias or lack of concern for the Author of Holy Writ, some scholars have misapplied the material from the ancient Near East to Psalm 89. As a result, passages of the psalm are misconstrued, parallels are seen everywhere, and knowingly or unknowingly,

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[1]Arvid S. Kapelrud, *The Ras Shamra Discoveries and the Old Testament*, translated by G. W. Anderson (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), p. 81.

theology itself is greatly affected.

Also, the present writer has found but few works that offer anything exegetical in nature on Psalm 89. Since all details in the biblical record are worthy of diligent attention, there is a need to examine this portion closely. Special study is also warranted because of God's covenant with David, an all important aspect in the light of God's revelation.

The Purpose of This Study

The purpose may be seen as many goals, all of which are inherently involved and intermeshed. Psalm 89 is a rich portion of eternal truth, therefore the first goal will be to highlight this from the original language. Of necessity, textual criticism will be important.

Some writers have seen parallels to Psalm 89. Therefore it is significant that an investigation be made in the light of biblical exegesis. The second goal is to demonstrate whether there are valid parallels from the ancient Near East. If there are bona fide parallels, these should be demonstrated, examined, and evaluated as to their contribution to the interpretation of the psalm. Likewise, if there are no valid parallels, then the goal is to demonstrate such. In essence, since archaeologists have uncovered material that relates to biblical studies, the present author believes it is a worthy goal to see if there is any exact relevance, as

some say there is, to Psalm 89.

The Contribution of Archaeology

The relationship of the Holy Scriptures and archae-ology has reached paramount interest. Archer says:

> For students of the Bible the last fifty years of archaeological discovery have been more momentous than in any previous period of comparable length in the history of the Christian church.[1]

Significant discoveries too numerous to mention have greatly aided both scholar and student in understanding the background of many biblical passages. Briefly, the contribu-tion will be considered in terms of sources and biblical studies.

In terms of sources

In order to avoid needless repetition, individual sources will not be named specifically here. Let it suffice to say that ample material comes from the following: Akka-dian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Hittite, Ugaritic, Dead Sea Scrolls and other inscriptions. It will be apparent that archaeology has contributed a very large portion of this study.

In terms of biblical studies

On the one hand there is the contribution to the study of biblical languages. Freedman writes:

[1]Gleason L. Archer, Jr., "Old Testament History and Recent Archaeology From Abraham to Moses," *BS*, 127:505 (Jan-uary-March, 1970), 3.

The non-biblical materials help to give a clearer picture of the dimensions and character of the languages which are only partially represented in the Bible. Since the inscriptions also come from a variety of places and periods, they provide a basis for analyzing the biblical languages according to a historical perspective, and thereby yield clues as to date and authorship.[1]

On the other hand there is the contribution for the theologian in his task of exegesis.

> . . . archaeology should not be used either to prove or to confirm the "truth" of divine revelation. The true function of archaeology is to enable us to understand the Bible better, insofar as it was produced by men in given times and places. Because it pleased God to give us the sacred record in many different forms of literature, with a great diversity of backgrounds in the ancient Near East, it is part of the theologian's task to use all the possible light that can be thrown on the biblical documents from outside sources.[2]

Thus it is that archaeology contributes by helping to supplement one's biblical knowledge. But it should be acknowledged that this contribution is not without its problems. While the following comment is directed mainly toward archaeology, it applies here quite well. According to Weddle:

> Even the most objectively-minded interpreter cannot fully escape from his cultural, religious, and philosophical

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[1]David Noel Freedman, "Archaeology and the Future of Biblical Studies," *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, edited by J. Philip Hyatt (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), pp. 310-11.

[2]Alfred von Rohr Saur, "The Meaning of Archaeology for the Exegetical Task," *A Symposium on Archaeology and Theology* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), p. 7.

biases. The annals of archaeology are replete with ex-
amples where bias affected interpretation.[1]

To which Smith would reply, ". . . it is not surpris-
ing that a long series of archaeological 'confirmations of
the Bible' have turned out to be howlers."[2] Some will not
agree with Sanders. He raises the question on the canon of
the Old Testament, particularly the Psalms, because of the
influence of archaeological finds.[3]

Wiseman refers to the issue in this study in a two-
fold manner. He concludes that archaeological discoveries

> . . . do not affect our understanding of any major doc-
> trine or detract from an obvious and vital interpreta-
> tion of the narrative. . . . At the same time these
> studies highlight the problems caused by divergent
> interpretation of the text. . . .[4]

The contribution of archaeology is very significant,
but the application to God's Word is the basic issue. The
matter of interpretation will be highlighted in the following

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[1]Forest Weddle, "The Limitations of Archaeology Im-
posed by Interpretation and Lack of Data," *GJ*, 11:3 (Fall,
1970), 6. For further study see Merrill F. Unger, "The Use
and Abuse of Biblical Archaeology," *BS*, 105:419 (July-Septem-
ber, 1948), 297-306 and John C. Jeske, "The Role of Archae-
ology in Bible Study," *WLQ*, LXVIII:4 (October, 1971), 228-36.

[2]Morton Smith, "The Present State of Old Testament
Studies," *JBL*, LXXXVIII:l (March, 1969), 31.

[3]James A. Sanders, "Cave 11. Surprises and the Ques-
tion of Canon," *New Directions in Biblical Archaeology,*
edited by David Noel Freedman and Jonas C. Greenfield,
Anchor Books edition (Garden City, New York: Doubleday
and Company, Inc., 1971), pp. 122-27.

[4]Donald J. Wiseman, "Archaeology and Scripture," *WTJ*,
XXXIII:2 (May, 1971), 152.

section.

The Presuppositions of This Study

In biblical studies today great freedom is exercised
with such terms as "cult" and "myth." It is only fair to the
reader that he know the position of the present author, es-
pecially in a study of this type. All that has been said
before and all that follows will be clarified at this point.
The purpose of this study does not include all the schools of
thought and their differences. For example, Widengren refers
to the Pan-Babylonian school, the so-called Scandinavian
school, and the British "Myth and Ritual School" and comments
on the differing viewpoints.[1]

In terms of cult

The term itself seems to have various meanings, but
the chief concern is that which speaks of ritualistic acts
or ceremonies. For example, Johnson holds that there is
ritual drama in Psalm 89.[2] Mowinckel holds a very similar

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[1]George Widengren, "Early Hebrew Myths and Their In-
terpretation," *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, edited by S. H.
Hooke (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1958) pp. 149-203. Cf.
also S. H. Hooke, "Myth and Ritual: Past and Present,"
Myth, Ritual, and Kingship, edited by S. H. Hooke (Oxford:
The Clarendon Press, 1958), pp. 1-21 and Amos N. Wilder,
"Scholars, Theologians, and Ancient Rhetoric," *JBL*, LXXXI:I
(March, 1956), 1-11.

[2]A. R. Johnson, "The Psalms," *The Old Testament and
Modern Study*, edited by H. H. Rowley (London: Oxford
University Press, 1961), p. 196.

view.[1] Woudstra mentions several definitions and then he
concludes:

> One of the major deficiencies in the current defini-
> tions lies in the fact that cultus is defined in almost
> exclusively phenomenological terms. The element of
> revelation does not significantly enter into the defi-
> nition.[2]

Looking at Mowinckel's view in particular, Woudstra
goes on to say:

> . . . it should not be overlooked that Mowinckel's
> assertion that revelation precedes cultus is itself a
> purely comparative statement. For Mowinckel makes it
> clear that not only Israel has a God who "revealed"
> Himself as to where He may be found, but that this idea
> is "a fundamental idea in all religion." In other words,
> we are not face to face with revelation. All that we do
> confront is the claim to having received revelation, and
> this claim is fundamental to all religions. Hence we
> are not yet beyond the phenomenological and the compar-
> ative. In this respect the term "cultus" has undergone
> a radical transformation when it is compared with ear-
> lier usages in medieval and early Reformation theology.[3]

Even if the concept is based upon direct revelation,
it does not guarantee that the term is interpreted correctly.
Therefore, in this study the present writer will refrain from

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[1]Sigmund Mowinckel., *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*,
translated by D. R. Ap-Thomas (New York: Abingdon Press,
1962), p. 176. For further reference see Sellin and Fohrer,
Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 260-62. Although
Sarna does not employ the term as a ritual act, see his dis-
cussion in Sarna, *et al*. "Psalms, Book of," pp. 1316-17.

[2]Marten H. Woudstra, "The Tabernacle in Biblical-
Theological Perspective," *New Perspectives on the Old Testa-
ment*, edited by J. Barton Payne (Waco, Texas: Word Books,
Publisher, 1970), p. 93.

[3]*Ibid*.

any use of the word lest he be misunderstood.

In terms of myth

A perusal of the abundance of literature reveals

there is no consensus of opinion as to the meaning of myth.

Kirk postulates:

> There is no one definition of myth, no Platonic form of
> a myth against which all actual instances can be mea-
> sured. Myths, as we shall see, differ enormously in
> their morphology and their social function.[1]

And Knox says, "The term has a variety of uses in a

variety of connections and, as we have several times had oc-

casion to observe, is notoriously difficult to define.[2]

Still, these and others attempt definitions.[3]

But, with or without definition, some see mythology

in Holy Writ. Kapelrud avers:

> We have already noted the tendency in Israel to suppress
> mythological material. It is primarily in the Psalms,

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[1]G. S. Kirk, *Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in A
cient and Other Cultures* (Cambridge: University Press,
1970), p. 7.

[2]John Knox, *Myth and Truth: An Essay on the Language
of Faith* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia,
1964), p. 34.

[3]James Barr, "The Meaning of 'Mythology' in Relation
to the Old Testament," *VT*, IX:l (January, 1959), 1-10. John
L. McKenzie, "Myth and the Old Testament," CBQ, XXI:3 (July,
1959), 265-74. Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Old Testament as Word
of God,* translated by Reidar B. Bjornard (Nashville: Abing-
don Press, 1959), pp. 99-106. As one studies Mowinckel's
views on myth, he should also note his views on revelation
and inspiration, pp. 23-24, 46, 75.

which could not easily be altered, that such material is preserved.[1]

Goldziher definitely sees mythology in Psalm 89.[2]

Full discussion is not given here in order to avoid repetition later. Dulles states:

> . . . it is not surprising that the Israelites produced no mythology of their own. They did, however, borrow from the mythologies of the surrounding peoples, and in some cases subjected these to a process of demythologizing which is at best relatively complete. For example, in various references to the creation, we find allusions to mighty struggles between Yahweh and mysterious monsters such, as Leviathan and Rahab (e.g., Ps 73/74, Ps 88/89, Is 27, Job 9, Job 20).[3]

However, the position of the present author is quite clear. He dogmatically holds that the Israelites did not borrow any mythology nor is there any hint of belief in any mythology in the biblical corpus. Anything to the contrary immediately affects biblical revelation and inspiration, and thus, the very character of God. The employment of the word רהב in 89:11 (Heb.) will be discussed later.

But immediately, the liberal critic accuses the

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[1]Kapelrud, *The Ras Shamra Discoveries and the Old Testament*, p. 72.

[2]Ignaz Goldziher, *Mythology Among the Hebrews and Its Historical Development* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1967), p. 424.

[3]Avery Dulles, "Symbol, Myth, and the Biblical Revelation," *TS*, 27:1 (March, 1966), 16. Also see B. K. Waltke, a review of *Israel's Sacred Songs: A Study of Dominant Themes* by Harvey H. Guthrie, Jr., *BS*, 123:492 (October-December, 1966), 363. Stanley Brice Frost, "Apocalyptic and History," *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, edited by J. Philip Hyatt (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), pp. 100-05.

present writer of coming to his study with basic presupposi-
tions. The thoughts and conclusions of McCown are pertinent
here:

> The problem of objectivity, of avoiding unjustifiable
> assumptions and presuppositions, is a difficult one.
> . . .
> The line between the interpretation of ancient thought
> and its evaluation and application for modern use is no
> barb-wired iron curtain. It may be as easily and in-
> sensibly crossed as the equator; but the navigator must
> keep his bearings and know where he is. . . .
>
> But if biblical scholarship is to retain a place of re-
> spectability among modern fields of research, it must
> maintain full freedom of investigation, thought, and
> expression, with no claim to a preferred status or
> special immunities, and with no theological presupposi-
> tions.[1]

Without going into a detailed discussion, it can be
said that McCown's conclusion is not realistic. The liberal
critic ought to be honest enough to admit that everyone comes
to a study with some presuppositions. Erlandsson has devoted
an article to this very matter. To quote him in part:

> Can a scholar who believes in the Bible's reliability
> do research without presuppositions? . . . We have seen
> that the historical-critical scholars who claimed that
> they worked without presuppositions at the same time
> take as their starting point absolutely fixed presup-
> positions.[2]

Continuing on the same subject, Brown comments:

[1]C. C.. McCown, "The Current Plight of Biblical Schol-
arship," *JBL*, LXXXV:I (March, 1956), 17-18.
[2]Seth Erlandsson,, "Is There Ever Biblical Research
Without Presuppositions?" *Themelios*, 7:2-3 (1970), 28.

It may well be wondered what a scholar has to do to get a hearing for "conservative" results. Under such circumstances, one is tempted to conclude that much of the current consensus against the authenticity and reliability of most biblical material is a *presupposition* of "scientific Bible scholarship," not a *result*.[1]

And this is the crucial issue in this entire study. Because of one's assumptions, his interpretation is greatly affected. As a result, the viewpoints on Psalm 89 are like the demons of Gadara; their reply would be, "My name is Legion, for we are many." The words of Mendenhall are all too true:

Today, little can be said concerning Biblical history and religion (beyond specific historical "facts") which will receive general assent among the specialists in the field. If the ability to command general assent among those who are competent be the criterion of the scientific, it must now be admitted that a science of Biblical studies does not exist. Certainly, each scholar feels that the views he now holds represent a steady progress beyond those of a past generation, but that is not the point. A survey of the entire field shows rather such divergence of opinion and such disagreement on nearly every important issue that a consensus of opinion cannot be said to exist.[2]

It should not be surprising, then, that controversy will be evident in this work. If anything, this highlights the importance of such a study.

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[1]Harold O. J. Brown, "Editor's Page," *Themelios*, 7:2-3 (1970), 30.

[2]George E. Mendenhall, "Biblical History in Transition," *The Bible and the Ancient Near East,* essays in honor of William Foxwell Albright, edited by G. Ernest Wright (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961), p. 32.

The Method of This Study

In terms of scope

The aim is to exegete the entire psalm and to treat its related problems. But it will be virtually impossible to deal with every word in the psalm and every theological implication. Only those matters relevant and pertinent to the purpose of this study will be considered. Therefore, this dissertation will accordingly be limited to the study of hermeneutics in this area.

As for the ancient Near East, the scope includes only what scholars deem as parallels, extending from the life and literature of Sumer to the life and literature of Qumran. This does not encompass an interpretation of all ancient Near Eastern literature cited. The concepts and beliefs of the ancient Near East that apply to the psalm will be discussed and examined very briefly. Again, the purpose is not to compare Psalm 89 to the ancient Near East, but to compare aspects of the ancient Near East to Psalm 89. In other words the principal study concerns Psalm 89; the ancient Near East is confined entirely to its contribution or so-called parallelism.

In terms of procedure

The first task will be to treat the antecedents of exegesis: author, date, etc. Also, no study of this type would be complete without an investigation of form-criticism.

In the following chapter of exegesis, the procedure

will be to follow the guidelines of normal or literal inter-
pretation. It does not exclude figurative language. The
method will be to determine the ordinary meaning and intention
of what the author sought to communicate. Only fantasy and
speculation are excluded.

Valid comparisons from the ancient Near East will be
viewed in the fourth chapter. This does not necessarily
imply nor comprise parallelism because of the stereotyped
patterns of poetry.

The next chapter involves what some scholars call
parallelisms to Psalm 89. If there are valid parallels,
they will be examined as to their contribution. Of necessity,
this chapter will be somewhat extended due to the explanation
of some ancient concepts.

A brief chapter preceding the conclusion will contain
New Testament references. It is hoped that this procedure
will aid the reader's comprehension.

CHAPTER II

ANTECEDENTS TO THE EXEGESIS

Form Criticism

It seems evident that form criticism should precede any study on the Psalms. In one way or another it affects most of the remaining topics in this chapter: author, date *Sitz im Leben*, and types. The significance of form criticism is stated by Alexander:

> Though some have misused the results of this study, the results themselves have opened new vistas in the understanding of the Old Testament. An outstanding example of a portion of the Old Testament unlocked by this study of literary genre is the book of Psalms and hymnic literature.[1]

Since this subject is another large enough to be a dissertation in itself, especially with voluminous sources at hand, the present work will only touch it in summary fashion.[2] Briefly, consideration will be given to approach and method, weaknesses, and contribution.

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[1]Ralph Holland Alexander, "Hermeneutics of Old Testament Apocalyptic Literature," (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1968), p. 4.

[2]The reader is referred to a rather exhaustive treatment by Klaus Koch, *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition: The Form-Critical Method,* translated from the 2nd German edition by S. M. Cupitt (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969). Especially note pp. 68-91.

In terms of approach and method

Johnson observes:

> In so far as the study of the Psalter has made any progress during the generation which has passed. it is largely due to the influence of one man--Hermann Gunkel.[1]

Gunkel is generally regarded as the scholar who first applied the principles of form criticism to the Psalms. Historically speaking, he seems to be the pivotal point.

> The author of it was first and foremost H. Gunkel, who applied form-critical methods to the study of the Psalms, classifying them into various types and studying the *Sitz im Leben* from which these sprang. Gunkel's work marked such a turning point that one may divide all study of the Psalms into pre- and post-Gunkel phases.[2]

The basic approach and method of Gunkel began with the conviction that all poetry in Israel's religion was composed first to be sung as an accompaniment of a ritual act. He viewed the Psalms as having their origin in various occasions of Israel's worship. Thus he sought to determine the specific situation in life for each Psalm. The next step was to take the Psalms having a common *Sitz im Leben* and classify them according to types or literary forms (*Gattung*). Besides having a common occasion, the Psalms must have the following

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[1]A. R. Johnson, "The Psalms," *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, edited by H. H. Rowley (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 162.

[2]John Bright, "Modern Study of Old Testament Literature," *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, essays in honor of William Foxwell Albright, edited by G. Ernest Wright (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961), p. 26.

characteristics to distinguish the types: common motifs,

forms of expression, and ideas.[1]

Another eminent scholar in this field, Sigmund Mo-

winckel, declares:

> Form criticism, "die Form-und Gattungsforshung", is
> the absolutely indispensable basis of any understanding
> of the Psalms. It has taught us to distinguish between
> a certain number of types ("Gattungen"), easily defin-
> able with regard to form and content, in which each
> individual example has been composed according to the
> very fixed, established rules of form and content, and
> has shown that each of these types has sprung up out of
> a definite "Sitz im Leben", out of its traditionally
> fixed function in religious life, a situation and a
> function, which have created the very elements of form
> and content, which are peculiar to the type in question.[2]

Mowinckel does build upon the form-critical approach,

but he differs with Gunkel's view. The difference is ex-

pressed by Hohenstein in a very concise manner:

> The majority of Biblical psalms are to be associated
> with the Hebrew cult. They were composed for, and used
> in, actual temple services. In this emphasis Mowinckel
> is at odds with Gunkel. While the latter admitted that
> many of the psalms were originally old cultic songs, he
> hastened to point out that in the form in which we have
> them they were no longer connected to the cult but were
> more personal and spiritual in outlook. Mowinckel, on
> the contrary, insists that there is no private poetry in

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[1]This summary of Gunkel's basic approach and method
was extracted from Hermann Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-
Critical Introduction*, translated by Thomas M. Horner, Facet
Book--Biblical Series XIX, edited by John Reumann (Phila-
delphia: Fortress Press, 1967). For another viewpoint see
James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond, *JBL*, LXXXVIII:I
(March, 1969), 1-18.

[2]Sigmund Mowinckel, "Psalm Criticism Between 1900 and
1935," *VT*, V:1 (January, 1955), 15.

the Psalter, but that all of it has group-cultic associations.[1]

Details cannot be given here, the reader is asked to read the works cited in the footnotes. It may be simply said that Mowinckel viewed ancient Israel as celebrating annually a great New Year festival in many of the Psalms.[2] Hahn says, "But Mowinckel seems to have overshot the mark by assigning each category of psalm to one ritual occasion exclusively."[3] Although the Norwegian employs the form-critical approach, his premise might be better entitled "the cultic approach."

There is another variation of the form-critical approach. A leading advocate is the Swedish scholar, Ivan Engnell. "Engnell calls his approach traditio-historical."[4]

[1]Herbert E. Hohenstein, "Psalms 2 and 110: A Comparison of Exegetical Methods," (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, 1967), p. 76. For a direct study of Mowinckel's method see Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols., translated by D. R. Ap-Thomas (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962). Especially note Vol. I, pp.. 23-41. The disagreement between Gunkel and Mowinckel is also expressed by A. R. Johnson, "Divine Kingship and the Old Testament," *ET*, LXII:2 (November, 1950), 36-42.

[2]Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, Vol. I, pp. 106-92. A brief treatment of his position is given in Harvey H. Guthrie, Jr., *Israel's Sacred Songs: A Study of Dominant Themes* (New York: The Seaburg Press, 1966), pp. 14-17.

[3]Herbert F. Hahn, *The Old Testament in Modern Research* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 139.

[4]Ivan Engnell, *A Rigid Scrutiny: Critical Essays on the Old Testament*, translated and edited by John T. Willis (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), p. 3. See also J. T. Willis, "Engnell's Contributions to Old Testament Scholarship," *TZ*, 26:6 (November-Dezember, 1970), 385-94.

The apparent aim of this approach is to seek to reconstruct
the occasion at which the psalm was first used. In reality,
it seems to differ very little from what the present writer
calls "the cultic approach."

In terms of weaknesses

To this present author, the first and foremost major
weakness is not of the system itself, but the hermeneutic of
those who employ the form-critical method. Coppes has writ-
ten an excellent article on the "Hermeneutic of Hermann
Gunkel."[1] The author shows how in Gunkel's method of re-
search "Fact and fantasy flow freely together."[2] In his
biased presuppositions Gunkel's conception of God's guidance
"was thoroughly humanistic."[3] "Gunkel is trapped between his
presupposed anti-supernatural humanism and his osbervation of
historical phenomena leading him to supernaturalism."[4] As to
his methodology, Coppes plainly states, "It is evident that
Gunkel's hermeneutical methods are colored by his theological

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Engnell's views are also elucidated in G. W. Anderson, "Some
Aspects of the Uppsala School of Old Testament Study," *HTR*,
XLII:4 (October, 1950), 239-56.

[1]Leonard J. Coppes, "'An Introduction to the Hermen-
eutic of Hermann Gunkel," *WTJ*, XXXII:2 (May, 1970), 148-78.

[2]*Ibid.*, 159.

[3]*Ibid.*, 167.

[4]*Ibid.*, 170.

presuppositions."[1]

A major weakness in the system itself is found in the approaches just reviewed. The Spirit of God through Scripture has not given the slightest hint that one should reconstruct historical incidents based upon imagination. The Bible makes no statement of Israel celebrating a New Year's festival such as Mowinckel, Engnell, *et al* advocate. If such a festival is a key to understanding the psalms, God would have had it recorded.[2]

A third weakness is seen when one aspect of Gunkel's *Gattung* is applied to the origin and composition of Scripture. Mihelic outlines Gunkel's view:

> . . . the study of these types will reveal that all of these various categories were originally spoken and not written. This accounts for the brevity of the ancient compositions. Thus, wisdom literature existed originally as single proverbs and sayings, and the same was true for most ancient legal judgments, prophetic utterances and thorah statues.[3]

Then he relates the weakness:

[1]Ibid., 172. A contrast may be observed in R. Lansing Hicks, "Form and Content: A Hermeneutical Application," *Translating and Understanding the Old Testament: Essays in Honor of Herbert Gordon May*, edited by Harry Thomas Frank and William L. Reed (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), pp. 304-24.

[2]An answer to Mowinckel and his followers is given by K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1966), pp. 102-06.

[3]Joseph L. Mihelic, "The Influence of Form Criticism on the Study of the Old Testament, *JBR*, XIX:3 (July, 1951), 122.

Now, even though Gunkel s sketch of literary forms has
been of great value for the smallest units, it has not
taught us anything new about the composition and origin
of our biblical books. This is especially true in re-
spect to books and collections of books which are more
than loose compilations of small units. This is due to
the fact that form criticism is inclined to look at the
typical and ignores or pushes into the background that
which is personal and individual.[1]

Even though there may be more, a fourth and final
weakness is set forth here. Just because it has been placed
fourth by the present writer, its importance is not diminished.
In consideration of any biblical truth, the understanding and
usage of terminology are exceedingly significant. Hals avers,
"The field of OT form-critical terminology is one in which
there exists great diversity and greater confusion."[2] And
later he remarks:

It seems to me that the confusion in usage of form-
critical labels has progressed to such an extent that
it must be asked whether in some cases any standardly
acceptable technical terminology is salvable.[3]

Actually, all of this is just the result of divorcing
interpretation from the grammatical, historical method of
interpretation. A perfect example of this is a work on Psalm

[1]*Ibid*., 127. For a refutation of Gunkel's smaller
units in the Pentateuch see Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey
of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1964),
Pp. 87-88.
[2]Ronald M. Hals, "Legend: A Case Study in OT Form-
Critical Terminology," *CBQ*, XXXIV:2 (April, 1972), 166.
[3]*Ibid*., 172.

89 by G. W. Ahlström.[1] He followed Engnell in his approach
that was explained earlier in this study.[2] Also, his pre-
suppositions are similar to those of his Swedish colleague
and the Uppsala school with the myth-ritual interpretation.
Rather than go to Ahlstrom's work and a lengthy discussion,
a quote from Moran will be sufficient for an explanation. In
a review of Ahlström's effort on Psalm 89, Moran notes:

> Following the commentary there are some brief studies:
> 1. *Dwd*--David (pp. 163-173, *Dwd* is a vegetation deity,
> and Yahweh's son); 2. *Anschliessende Bemerkungen* (pp.
> 174-185, meter, relation of TM and the versions, cult-
> prophets, Ps 89 and 2 Sam 7); 3. *Spezialanmerkungen* (pp.
> 186-192, Tabor as cult-center of Tammuz, Hermon = "holy
> place", date of Canaanite influence on Israelite liter-
> ature, tenses in Hebrew).[3]

Obviously, Ahlström's work offers little or no help
in this dissertation. Weaknesses in the form-critical ap-
proach are evident everywhere. One of the latest attempts on
the subject is by Gene M. Tucker.[4] In his review, Waltke
reveals the basic problem:

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[1]G. W. Ahlström, *Psalm 89: Eine Liturgie aus dem
Ritual des Leidenden Königs*, translated by Hans-Karl Hacker
and Rudolf Zeitler (Lund: Hakan Ohlssons Boktryckeri, 1959).

[2]Joseph J. DeVault, a review of *Psalm 89: Eine Litur
ie aus dem Ritual des Leidenden Königs* by G. TW. Ahlstrbm, TS,
21 1960), 280.

[3]W. L. Moran, a review of *Psalm 89, Eine Liturgie aus
dem Ritual des Leidenden Königs* by G. W. Ahlström, Biblica,
42:2 (1961), 237. Moran concludes by saying, "One can only
wish that more respect had been shown for basic tenets of
Israelite faith." 239.

[4]Gene M. Tucker, *Form Criticism of the Old Testament*
(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

In his attempt to popularize the form critical approach as developed by H. Gunkel in the narrative literature, by C. Westermann in the prophetic literature, by S. Mowinckel in the hymnic literature and by Alt in the legal literature, the author has produced a work that combines the strength and weakness of popular literature; viz. clarity and dogmatism. But by combining this virtue with this vice he unwittingly makes it painfully clear, to the reader that most of the practitioners of this approach are humanists who regard the Bible as only a human document and presume that the direct intervention of God in the affairs of man exists only in man's creative imagination and not in historical fact.[1]

In terms of contribution

One contribution is in the area of hermeneutics, especially literary genres. Alexander says:

It is recognized, however, that liberal scholars have often misused this profitable hermeneutical tool in biblical studies. But, on the contrary, conservative scholars have often failed to take advantage of this important means of studying Scriptures, simply because liberal scholars employ it. Recently, however, conservative scholars have begun to acknowledge the usefulness of studying the forms of literature in Scripture, and the results have been richly rewarding.[2]

The *Gattung* of each psalm does help the scholar to see where natural divisions fall within the psalm. Ideas or concepts expressed by the author often help one to discern how the song was organized. In another way the approach enables the student to see the emphasis of the author within a

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[1]Bruce K. Waltke, a review of *Form Criticism of the Old Testament* by Gene M. Tucker, *BS*, 129:514 (April-June, 1972), 175.
[2]Alexander, "Hermeneutics of Old Testament Apocalyptic Literature," p. 108.

Gunkel-type. Probably the greatest aid has come in word studies. To observe how a word is used in a similar literary form in one psalm greatly assists one in his study of another psalm.

Then, too, Gunkel's approach has validity that has been employed rightly by many. He states:

> To understand the literary types we must in each case have the whole situation clearly before us and ask ourselves, Who is speaking? Who are the listeners? What is the *mise en scene* at the time? What effect is aimed at?[1]

What might be seen as another contribution is Gunkel's use of archaeology and form-criticism to prove wrong Wellhausen's theory on the evolution of Israel's religion. It is much too lengthy to discuss here.[2]

Though it will not be stated as such, the reader will detect the employment of the form-critical method in this present study, but it will be based on the grammatical, historical method of interpretation and the presuppositions already mentioned. The above discussion not only acquaints one with what is to follow, but it also will eliminate verbosity.

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[1]Coppes, "An Introduction to the Hermeneutic of Hermann Gunkel," p. 161. The citation was taken from Hermann Gunkel, "Fundamental Problems of Hebrew Literary History," *What Remains of the Old Testament*?, translated by A. K. Dallas (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1928), p. 62.

[2]*Ibid.*, 150-54.

Author

There is absolutely no consensus of opinion on the authorship of Psalm 89. The issue is confusing and quite involved. Date and background cannot be divorced from the discussion, although they will be dealt with under separate headings.

The superscription in English reads, "A Maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite."[1] In the Hebrew and Greek, the superscription is incorporated as verse one. The *MT* has מַשְׂכִּיל לְאֵיתָן הָאֶזְרָחִי[2] and the LXX has Συνέσεως Αιθαν τῷ Ισραηλίτῃ.[3] The authenticity of the superscription has raised many questions. Kirkpatrick writes:

> It is now generally acknowledged that the titles relating to the *authorship and occasion* of the Psalms cannot be regarded as prefixed by the authors themselves, or as representing trustworthy traditions, and accordingly giving reliable information.[4]

Partially, Perowne would disagree. "That in some cases the authors themselves may have prefixed their names to

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[1]All English passages quoted in this work are from the NASB, unless otherwise rioted.

[2]Rudolf Kittel, ed., *Biblia Hebraica* (Stuttgart: Privileg. Württ. Bibelenstalt, 1937), p. 1053. All references to *MT* in this study are taken from this source.

[3]Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Septuaginta*, 2 Vols. (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935), Vol. II, p. 95. Psalm 89 in the *MT* is Psalm 88 in the *LXX*. All references to *LXX* in this study are taken from this source.

[4]A. F. Kirkpatrick, ed., *The Book of Psalms* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1910), p. xxxi. For a few

their poems may be granted."[1] Inherent in the problem is the date of the headings, especially in relation to the *LXX.*

Rather than cite several different views, a few quotes from Archer will set forth and clarify the problem.

> The critics generally regard the Hebrew psalm titles as very late and unreliable, usually being derived by inference from the internal evidence of the psalms themselves. This conclusion is often based upon two lines of evidence: the occasional discrepancies between the psalm titles in the MT and those in the LXX, and the lack of correspondence between statements of historical background and the situation presupposed in the psalms themselves. . . .

> Mature reflection, however, should lead the investigator to quite an opposite conclusion. . . .

> The LXX furnishes conclusive evidence that the titles were added to the Hebrew Psalter at a date long before Hellenistic times. That is to say there are several technical terms appearing in the Hebrew titles the meanings of which had been completely forgotten by the time the Alexandrian translation was made (c. 150-100 B.C.).[2]

Wilson adds:

That some of the headings of the Psalms are not

rash statements that have yet to be proved see Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary,* translated by Herbert Hartwell, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 95, 98-99.

[1]J. J. Stewart Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2 Vols., revised edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1966) Vol. I, p. 95. See several arguments for and against the authority of the superscriptions in John McClintock and James Strong, "Psalms, Book of," *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, 12 Vols., first published in 1879, reprint (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969), Vol. VIII, pp. 748-49.

[2]Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press,. 1964), p. 428.

rendered in the LXX would indicate that the songs, instruments, times of circumstances to which they refer had passed out of the memory and tradition of the Jews. If the headings had been inserted after the Greek version was made, it is hard to see how the later Jews who made the Targums and Talmud, should not have understood their sense.[1]

And later he claims:

As to the text of the headings of the Psalms, the evidence of the manuscripts and versions goes to show that they are not merely substantially the same as they were in the third century B.C., but that most of them must even then have been hoary with age.[2]

The age of the title is important for this Psalm because the author is actively involved in the context. The following material and the chapter on exegesis will seek to demonstrate the relationship of the title to the content of the Psalm.

The next problem relating to the above is the understanding of ל in the MT. As Smith declares, "We have no clear objective guide as to the meaning of the preposition in such contexts."[3] It has been translated in the titles as "by," "of," "about," or "for." At least a few seem to follow

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[1]Robert Dick Wilson, *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament*, revisions by E. J. Young (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), p. 414.

[2]*Ibid*., p. 154.

[3]J. M. Powis Smith, *The Psalms* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1926), p. 241.

the *LXX* rendering and translate the *lamed* as "for."[1] If so, then this deprives Ethan of authorship. However, Murphy signifies that this and the other translations above are "The most common designations of 'authorship'. . . ."[2] But then another source says, "While it can imply authorship, . . . more literally it means 'belonging to.'"[3] And Sarna purports, "Usually the preposition *le* must indicate either authorship or a collection identified with a guild."[4]

A most prominent Hebrew grammarian views the *lamed* as indicating authorship without any question.[5] Gesenius concludes by noting, "Moreover, the introduction of the author, poet, etc., by this *Lamed auctoris* is the customary idiom also in the other Semitic dialects, especially in

[1]See André Robert and André Feuillet, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2 Vol., translated by Patrick W. Skeham, *et al,* Image Books edition (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1970), Vol. II, p. 35 and A. R. Fausset, "Psalm LXXXIX," *JFB*, 6 Vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), Vol. III, p. 292.

[2]Roland E. Murphy, "Psalms," *JBC*, edited by Raymond E. Brown, *et al* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 570.

[3]Leslie S. M'Caw and J. A. Motyer, "The Psalms," NBCR, edited by D. Guthrie, *et al* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970),, p. 446.

[4]Nahum M. Sarna, *et al,* "Psalms, Book of," *EJ*, 16 Vols. (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, Ltd., 1971), Vol. 13, p. 1318.

[5]William Gesenius, *GKC*, reprint (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1910), p. 419.

Arabic."[1] In his discussion on the subject, Engnell writes,
". . . *lᵉhêmān* in Psalm 88 and *lᵉ'êthān* in Psalm 89 are in-
tended to provide information concerning authorship."[2]

One may think the last remarks sound convincing, but
they are not to some. There are a few theories that can be
dismissed rather quickly. The Talmud says of Ethan,
the name is a pseudonym for the patriarch Abraham."[3] Briggs
claims

> Three pseudonyms are together in the midst of the
> Psalter, doubtless of editorial design: 88 ascribed
> to Heman, 89 to Ethan, 90 to Moses; all alike with
> the same purpose, to compose Pss. in the name and from
> the point of view of these ancient worthies.[4]

Plainly, he declares of the Psalm, "It came from one
of the companions of Jehoiachin in his exile."[5] Another
views Psalm 89 as ". . . the work of the general-in-chief of
Zedekiah. . . ." with the facts relating to 587 B.C.[6] The

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[1]*Ibid.*, p. 420.

[2]Engnell, *A Rigid Scrutiny,* p. 80.

[3]Cecil Roth, ed., "Ethan the Ezrahite," *The Standard Jewish Encyclopedia* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966), p. 642.

[4]Charles A. Briggs, and Emilie G. Briggs, *The Book of Psalms,* 2 Vols., *International Critical Commentary*, edited by Samuel R. Driver and Alfred Plummer, 47 Vols., reprint, 1969 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906), Vol. I, p. lxvii.

[5]*Ibid.*, p. lxviii. See also.Vol. II, p. 250.

[6]G. Castellino, a review of *Die Psalmen nach dem Hebräischen Grundtext* by Bernard Bonkamp, *VT*, 111:2 (April, 1953), 205.

latter view will be handled in the next section of this

chapter. Wilson has an answer for Briggs:

> . . . it is absurd to suppose that the writers of them
> would have attributed so many of the Psalms to precap-
> tivity authors, when their contemporaries must have
> known that the whole body of Psalms had arisen after
> the fall of the first temple, had such been actually
> the case.[1]

Besides late authorship, Albright postulates that

Ethan was a Canaanite.[2] He does so on the basis of his in-

terpretation of Ezrahite.[3] Harrison agrees with the interpre-

tation, but sees Ethan in the time of the monarchy.[4] Gray

also holds the same view and adds Egyptian color to the

Canaanite influence.[5] Ahlström's stand has been cited by

Italian scholars as a position of Ethan-a-Canaanite.[6]

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[1]Wilson, *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testa-ment,* p. 154.

[2]William Foxwell Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, Anchor Books edition (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1968), p. 124.

[3]*Ibid*., p. 210, fn. 95. Also see p. 204, fn. 44.

[4]R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 979, 1166. Another who seems to agree is Mitchell Dahood, *The Anchor Bible--Psalms II* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1968), pp. 308, 311.

[5]John Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan: The Ras Shamra Texts and their Relevance to the Old Testament, revised edition, Supplements to Vetus Testamentus* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), p. 207.

[6]The reviewer seems to agree completely with the statement, "Etan 1'Ezrahita a cui it salmo è attribuito è un sapiente ei un clan cananeo." P. Giovanni Rinaldi, ed.,

According to Rowley, the meaning of Ezrahite is obscure.[1] The LXX has it meaning *Israelite* (Ισραηλίτη) . Granted that the term may mean *native-born*, the present writer holds that Ethan was an Israelite. The linguistic study of Albright, Gray, and Ahlström may be valid to a certain extent, but they have gone too far. Just because *'ezrah* means *aboriginal*, it does not have to indicate Canaanite origin. From the following comments it will be seen that Ethan was either of the tribe of Judah or Levi. Both of these sons of Jacob were born in the land of Canaan, and Jacob had received the land from God as a permanent establishment (Gen. 28:1-4, 13). A reading of the passages reveals that Jacob's seed was included. Therefore, that Ethan was *native-born* means that he was a member of the original settlers to whom the land had been given for an everlasting possession. The humanistic approach has left out God again.

But the problem still remains as, to Ethan's identity. Peters concludes that he was a Galilaean of the temple of Dan, which is not convincing at all.[2] Burney has brought the

"I1 Salmo 89," a review of *Psalm 89* by G. W. Ahlström, *Bibbia e Oriente*, Anno 4 (Milano, 1962), 197.

[1]H. H. Rowley, *Worship in Ancient Israel: Its Form and Meaning* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 174.

[2]J. P. Peters, "A Jerusalem Processional," *JPOS*, 1:1 (October, 1920), 36. His argument is based on. 89:13 (Heb.).

remaining issues to the forefront:.

> Ps. 88 is ascribed in the title to הימן האזרחי, Ps. 89 to איתן האזרחי, Pss. 39, 62, 77 to ידותון. Hence the chronicler distinguishes Ethan and Heman, the sages of the tribe of Judah, from Ethan and Heman the musicians, who were Levites; and further, his statement that they were sons of Zerah need not conflict with that of Kings, 'sons of Mahol,' since Zerah, as is suggested by the title האזרחי may have been the remoter ancestor, Mahol the immediate father. On the other hand, the author of Psalm titles, in naming his men Ezrahites, seems to be introducing a confusion between Levites and the Judaeans.[1]

Considering Jeduthun (II Chron. 5:12) first, May declares that ". . . Jeduthan has been substituted for Ethan because it appeared in the Psalms."[2] Driver says, ". . . it is generally allowed that Jeduthan . . . is another name of Ethan."[3] With an added feature another agrees, ". . . it is not necessary to assume that the Ethan here (I Kings v. 11;

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[1]C. F. Burney, "Notes on the Books of Kings, *The Book of Judges and Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings*, revised, The Library of Biblical Studies, edited by H. M. Orlinsky (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1970), p. 51. Arthur G. Clarke says, "Ezrahite = Zerahite," *Analytical Studies in the Psalms* (Kansas City, Kansas: Walterick Publishers, 1949), p. 218.

[2]Herbert Gordon May, "'AL . . . in the Superscriptions of the Psalms, *AJSL*, LVIII:l (January, 1941), 83.

[3]S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1956), p. 370. For a full discussion of this and related problems see Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms,* 3 Vols., translated by Francis Bolton, reprint (Grand Rapids; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, [n.d.], Vol. I, pp. 9-10; Vol. III, pp. 32-33 and John M'Clintock and James Strong, "Ethan," (and) "Ezrahite," *Cvclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature,* 12 Vol., reprint

I Chron. xi. 6) is the same as the Ethan or Jeduthan (I Chron. xv. 17), who was of the tribe of Levi and a Merarite."[1]

Assuming Burney is correct, the problem now revolves around Ethan of Judah (I Kings 5:11 [Eng. 4:31]; I Chron. 2:6) and Ethan of Levi (I Chron. 6:29 [Eng. 6:44]; 15:17, 19). Perowne holds that Ethan was of the tribe of Judah and because of his musical skill he enrolled in the tribe of Levi.[2] One argument could be that I Kings 5:11 has איתן האזרחי which is the same as the title of Psalm 89:1.

But I Chronicles 6:29; 15:17-19 has Ethan belonging to the tribe of Levi. In the latter passage Ethan is known as a singer, but not called an Ezrahite. Of course, the silence does not mean that he could not have been *native-born* and still be the Ezrahite of Psalm 89. There are still too many problems to be dogmatic one way or another.

The last part of total discussion involves the period of his existence. Was he David's contemporary, Solomon's, both or neither? Someone writing with Sarna views Ethan of

(Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969), Vol. III, pp. 317-18; 439-40 and "Psalms, Book of," Vol. VIII, pp. 749-50.

[1]Carl Bernard Moll, "The Psalms," translated with additions by C. A. Briggs, *et al, Lunge's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, 12 Vol., revised edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960), Vol. 5, p. 482.

[2]J. J. Stewart Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2 Vols., revised edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), Vol. I, p. 95.

Psalm 89 as a Temple musician under David[1], while Sarna him-
self believes that the real author lived after 735-34 B.C.[2]
Bewer says that he was David's musician.[3] This cannot be de-
nied in the light of the biblical statements. Dickson claims
that Ethan survived Solomon's kingdom.[4] Spurgeon avers,
". . . Ethan . . . was a musician in David's reign; was noted
for his wisdom in Solomon's days and probably survived till
the troubles of Rehoboam's period."[5] Actually, this view
ties all the passages together well, if the Ethan of I Kings
5:11 were of the tribe of Levi.

     As for Barnes, he is not sure who the author was.[6]

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[1]Nahum M. Sarna, *et al*, "Psalms, Book of," *EJ*, 16
Vols. (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, Ltd., 1971), Vol.
13, p. 1318.

[2]Nahum M. Sarna, "Psalm 89: A Study in Inner Bibli-
cal Exegesis," *Biblical and Other Studies*, edited by
Alexander Altmann, Philip W. Lown Institute of Advanced
Judaic Studies, Brandeis University, *Studies and Texts:
Volume I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 45.

[3]Julius A. Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testa-
ment*, revised edition (New York: Columbia University Press,
1940), p. 343.

[4]David Dickson, *The Psalms*, 2 Vols., first published
in 1653, reprint (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1959),
Vol. II, p. 107.

[5]C. H. Spurgeon, "Psalm LXXXIX," *The Treasury of
David*, 6 Vols. (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott Limited,
1950), Vol. IV, p. 23.

[6]Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament: Psalms,*
3 Vols., reprint (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1964),
Vol. II, p. 369.

The present author would conclude that Ethan the Ezrahite is

the author. It would be helpful, but Smith's remarks cannot

be easily applied to Psalm 89:

> The general conclusion as to the value of the super-
> scriptions that is forced upon us by the foregoing facts
> is that the testimony of a superscription regarding the
> origin of a biblical book or a psalm may not be accepted
> as authoritative in and of itself. Only if the psalm or
> writing by its spirit and content supports the claim of
> the superscription may it be accepted as stating the
> actual fact.[1]

As much as possible, this study will seek to demon-

strate that the spirit and content support the claim of the

superscription. Even though Ethan is the author as concluded

above, he may not have placed the superscription above the

psalm. If so, the present writer totally agrees with Wilson

when he avers, "It is hardly to be supposed that the writer

of these headings would make his work absurd by making state-

ments that his contemporaries would have known to be untrue."[2]

The authorship cannot be studied thoroughly without

consideration of date and historical background. The treat-

ment of these facts will not be as extensive since much of it

has been covered here.

Date and Unity

For beneficial study of the background which is to

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[1]Smith, *The Psalms*, p. 243.
[2]Wilson, *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testa-
ment*, p. 154.

follow, an approximate date or time period must be established. From the above considerations it is held that Ethan is the author, but when did he compose the song?

Usually, date and unity could be viewed separately, but the complexity of viewpoints does not allow a total separation here. It is impossible in this dissertation to spell out all the reasons why scholars hold the dates they do. The reader is asked to complete the study by perusing the sources in the footnotes.

In the discussion, expressions of *early date* and *late date* will be employed. An early date is the David-Solomon period or shortly thereafter. The time from Josiah to the Exile or after is considered a late date.

The date of Psalm 89 is tossed in contrary directions with the unity or disunity of the composition not held consistently with either. Buttenweiser holds a late date and no unity.[1] Others such as Crim,[2] Kissane,[3] McCullough,[4]

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[1]Moses Buttenweiser, *The Psalms: Chronologically Treated with a New Translation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1938), pp. 227, 239.

[2]Keith R. Crim, *The Royal Psalms* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1962), pp. 104-09.

[3]Edward J. Kissane, *The Book of Psalms*, 2 Vols. (Dublin: Browne and Nolan Limited, 1954), Vol. II, p. 90.

[4]W. Stewart McCullough, Exegesis of Psalm "89," *The Interpreter's Bible*, 12 Vols. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1955), Vol. IV, pp. 478-79.

and Rodd[1] view the psalm as late but having unity. Both Leslie[2] and Sarna[3] see it composed in the eighth century, but the former says with disunity and the latter claims unity. DeQueker[4] agrees with Gunkel[5] on the disunity, and both discern that one portion of Psalm 89 is pre-exilic and another is exilic.

On the disunity, Buttenweiser writes dogmatically that it is two Psalms and "The two pieces differ so radically in tone and content that they cannot possibly be considered an organic whole."[6] As for Cheyne, he goes a step farther by suggesting, . . . if we admit the vv. 4 and 5 were inserted later as a link between the two psalms, it is surely most natural to assume that originally they had no connexion

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[1]Cyril S. Rodd, *Psalms 73-150*, Epworth Preacher's Commentaries, edited by Greville P. Lewis (London: The Epworth Press, 1964), p. 34.

[2]Elmer A. Leslie, The Psalms (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1949), pp. 273-79.

[3]Sarna, "Psalm 89: A Study in Inner Biblical Exegesis," p. 45.

[4]DeQueker, "Les Qedôsîm du Ps. lxxxix à la Lumiére des Croyances Semitiques," *ETL*, 39 (1963), 474-75, 482.

[5]Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction,* pp. 24-25. A similar view is held by J. T. Milik in E. M. Laperrousaz, "Chronique," *RHR*, 171 (Nouvelle Serie, 1966), 108.

[6]Buttenweiser, *The Psalms: Chronologically Treated with a New Translation*, p. 239. On the basis of "Selah," Snaith sees three psalms but does not admit unity nor disunity: Norman H. Snaith, "Selah," *VT*, II:1 (January, 1952), 47-48.

whatever."[1] In reference to the same two verses, Crim replies that they ". . . form an excellent introduction to the whole, and any rearrangement of verse order would mar the literary perfection of the Psalm."[2]

Elsewhere, Crim affirms:

> Psalm 89 contains material characteristic of several different Psalm categories, but they are united in a harmonious whole in which each part contributes to the petition to God to fulfill his promises to King David.[3]

Ward says, "Turning to the pattern of ideas in the poem, we find, I believe, a beautifully articulated unity."[4] Another source states:

> The unity of this psalm is seen by the recurrence of the words *faithfulness*, *mercy*, and *lovingkindness* (vs. 1, 2, 5, 8, 14, 24, 28, 33, 49), and the word *covenant* (vs. 3, 28, 34, 39).[5]

According to Hillers:

> Hebrew poems are ordinarily not notable for logical organization, but this is exceptional, for it follows

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[1]T. K. Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2 Vols. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Company, Ltd., 1904), Vol. II, p. 63.

[2]Crim, *The Royal Psalms*, p. 105.

[3]Keith R. Crim, "Translating the Poetry of the Bible," *The Bible Translator*, 23:1 (January, 1972), 104.

[4]J. M. Ward, "The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX," *VT*, XI (1961), 322. A little later in his work Ward is correct in asserting ". . . that Ps. lxxxix is in its present form an 'original' composition." p. 324.

[5]Francis D. Nichol, ed., "Psalm 89," *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7 Vols. (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1954), Vol. 3, p. 837.

a carefully conceived plan and the fundamental unity of.
theme and imagery becomes even more apparent with study.[1]

To sum it up, the present writer thoroughly concurs
with Ridderbos:

> The assumption is often made that this psalm does not
> present an original unity. It seems to me, however,
> that such a thought is insufficiently motivated, and
> that this psalm, as it stands before us, is an example
> of complete unity.[2]

Tables by Sarna emphasize the unity by words and
phrases.[3] Should anyone carefully study these tables, he
would be convinced of the unity.

Besides those already mentioned, several other
scholars take the late date. Usually, the reason given is
that 89:39-52 are looked upon as the end of David's dynasty
when the Kingdom of Judah fell. For example, Dahood after
a brief discussion writes, "The question of this psalm's
date invariably sparks lively debate, but the language and
conception comport well with a dating in the post-Davidic
monarchic period."[4] Some scholars who hold this position

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[1]Delbert R. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), p. 116.

[2]N. H. Ridderbos, "The Psalms: Style-Figures and Structure," *Studies on Psalms*, Deel XIII, *Oudtestamentische Studiën,* edited by P. A. H. DeBoer (Leiden: E-. J. Brill, 1963), p. 58..

[3]Sarna, "Psalm 89: A Study in Inner Biblical Exegesis," TABLE I, p. 31; TABLE II, p. 32. Explanation of headings are on pp. 30-31.

[4]Dahood, *The Anchor Bible--Psalms II*, p. 311.

with no firm conviction and those who unquestionably advocate
an exilic date or after are Perowne,[1] Driver,[2] Tournay,[3]
Kirkpatrick,[4] Russell,[5] Westermann,[6] Eissfeldt,[7] Zimmerli,[8]

[1]Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, Vol. II, p. 146.

[2]Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 381, 385.

[3]R. Tournay, "En Marge D'une Traduction des Psaumes," *RB*, 63:2 (Avril, 1956), 176-77.

[4]Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 531.

[5]D. S. Russell, *The Jews From Alexander to Herod* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 289. On the same page Russell assigns a number of the psalms to the late date. This is somewhat significant since he is a recent author.

[6]Claus Westermann, *The Old Testament and Jesus Christ,* translated by Omar Kaste (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1968), p. 50.

[7]0tto Eissfeldt, "Die Psalmen als Geschichtsquelle," *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright,* edited by Hans Goedicke (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 103.

[8]Walthe:r Zimmerli, "Promise and Fulfillment," translated by James Wharton, *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*, edited by Claus Westermann, English translation edited by James Luther Mays (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1963), p. 111. Zimmerli is a good example of one using the latter part of the psalm to determine a date. He writes, " . . . at a time when the Davidic monarchy has disappeared, one can hear the passionate questioning of Yahweh about the fulfillment of the promise which still tarries."

G. B. Gray,[1] Toy,[2] Clarke,[3] Treves,[4] Pfeiffer,[5] and North.[6]
A slightly different position is advocated by Box who regards
" . . . the psalm as based upon a pre-exilic one."[7]

McKenzie dates it near the fall of the Kingdom of
Judah in 587 B.C.[8] Barnes[9] and Leupold[10] concur by fitting
it in the days of Josiah or Zedekiah. Crenshaw writes,

[1]G. Buchanan Gray, "The References to the 'King' in
the Psalter, in Their Bearing on Questions of Date and Messi-
anic Belief," JQR, 7 (July, 1895), 665. See also by the same
author *A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament* (London:
Gerald Duckworth and Company, Limited, 1913), pp. 135, 141.

[2]C. H. Toy, "Rise of Hebrew Psalm Writing," *Journal
of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis*, VII
(June, 1887), 53.

[3]Clarke, *Analytical Studies in the Psalms*, p. 189;
yet, there seems to be a contradictory suggestion on p. 221.

[4]Marco Treves, "The Date of Psalm XXIV," *VT*, X:4
(October, 1960), 433. See also by the same author "The Reign
of God in the 0. T.," *VT*, XIX:2 (April, 1969), 233.

[5]Robert H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*
(New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1948), pp. 373, 630.
R. North, "The Religious Aspects of Hebrew King-
ship," *ZAW*, Neunter Band:l (1932), 26.

[7]G. H. Box, *Judaism in the Greek Period*, Old Testament
Volume V, *The Clarendon Bible*, edited by Thomas Strong, *et al*
(Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1932), p. 182.

[8]John L. McKenzie, "Royal Messianism," *CBQ*, XIX:l
(January, 1957), 29.

[9]Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament: Psalms,*
3 Vols. (Grand.Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950), Vol. II, p.
369.

[10]H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms* (Grand
Rapids: Baker Book House, 1959), p. 632.

". . . psalm 89 may be Israel's reaction to the death of Josiah."[1] And Mowinckel also agrees by noting that the psalm is ". . . in all probability from the later part of the period of the monarchy."[2]

Several other scholars do not commit themselves other than saying it is pre-exilic: Archer,[3] John Gray,[4] Engnell,[5] and Wright.[6] Basing his argument by comparisons to Ugaritic poetry, Hummel avers,

> In general, the upshot is that there is no longer any reason to question the pre-exilic date of many of the psalms--or, for that matter, of the Davidic or even pre-Davidic substance of many of them.[7]

[1]J. L. Crenshaw, "Popular Questioning of the Justice of God in Ancient Israel," *ZAW*, 82:3 (1970), 386.

[2]Mowinckel, "Psalm Criticism Between 1900 and 1935," p. 32. See also John Paterson, review of Psalmen by Hans-Joachim Kraus, *JSS*, V:3 (July, 1960), 291.

[3]Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, p. 425.

[4]John Gray, "The Hebrew Conception of the Kingship of God: Its Origin and Development," *VT*, VI:3 (July, 1956), 277.

[5]Ivan Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*, revised edition (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), p. 176.

[6]G. Ernest Wright, *The Old Testament Against Its Environment, Studies in Biblical Theology*, No. 2 (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1950), pp. 33-34. Other views on psalm dating can be found in Matitiahu Tsevat, *A Study of the Language of the Biblical Psalms,* Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series, Vol. IX (Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Litera-ture, 1955), pp: 61-72.

[7]Horace D. Hummel, "The Influence of Archaeological Evidence on the Reconstruction of Religion in Monarchical

Sarna declares that the psalm ". . . was inspired by the Aramean-Israelite invasion of Judea in 735-34 B.C.E."[1] Eerdmans[2] and Moll[3] claim that it was composed in the days of Rehoboam. And Delitzsch adheres to the time of Rehoboam with explanation.[4] While not mentioning Psalm 89, Wilson concludes,

> Finally, a striking and almost convincing testimony for the early date of most of the psalms lies in the fact that, except in a very few cases, we find no definite allusions in them to events or persons later than the time of Solomon.[5]

Although a few of the late-date scholars are of recent time, Bright comments,

> The fashion of regarding the Psalms as largely postexilic has all but vanished; to date any of them in the Maccabean period seems little short of impossible. The bulk of them are of pre-exilic origin, and some of them are very archaic indeed.[6]

Israel," *A Symposium on Archaeology and Theology* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), p. 43.

[1]Sarna, "Psalm 89: A Study in Inner Biblical Exegesis," p. 45. For arguments against post-exilic dating see Sarna, *et al*, "Psalms, Book of," p. 1312.

[2]B. D. Eerdmans, "The Hebrew Book of Psalms," *Oudtestamentische Studiën*, Deel IV, edited by P. A. H. DeBoer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1947), p. 22.

[3]Moll, "The Psalms," pp. 481-82.

[4]Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, Vol. III, pp. 33-340.

[5]Wilson, *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament*, p. 156.

[6]Bright, "Modern Study of Old Testament Literature," p. 27.

There are at least three reasons why the present author must hold to an early date. One is rather obvious from the discussion on authorship. The psalm was composed by Ethan the Ezrahite. Since he was contemporary with the United Monarchy, it is best to view the origin of the psalm in the days of David or Solomon or Rehoboam.

Secondly, the discoveries at Ras Shamra have greatly influenced the dating of Psalms. The people of Ugarit wrote on clay tablets before 1200 B.C. The writing was done by " . . . using a stylus on soft clay which was subsequently baked and thus rendered hard as stone."[1] These clay tablets ". . . have survived unchanged till our own day."[2] What has been learned is that the Hebrew psalms have much of the same style, poetic imagery, and vocabulary as Ugaritic. This would not likely have occurred if the psalms were of late origin. In Psalm 89, in particular, the features of Ugaritic poetry are very noticeable. As it will be demonstrated in the coming chapters, there is really nothing that compares to Psalm 89 in demonstrably late sources, but there is much from very early sources.

Finally, there is no valid reason to commit this

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[1]Arvid S. Kapelrud, *The Ras Shamra Discoveries and the Old Testament*, translated by G. W. Anderson (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), p. 15.
[2]*Ibid*.

psalm to a late date. Previously it was shown that the major-
ity of those who hold to the late date do so on the grounds
that the psalm is a result of Judah about to go into the
Exile, or as some see it, the Davidic reign has ceased and
the psalm is a product of the Exile. This seems to be a good
case of *eisegesis*. There is nothing in Psalm 89 that indi-
cates a reigning monarch has died or that Judah has ceased to
be.[1] An event such as the destruction of Jerusalem and the
temple was definitely a momentous occasion in the history of
Israel. There is much Scripture to support this. It would
seem to this writer that a vital matter, as this is, would
surely be mentioned specifically by the author, or at least
alluded to in such a way as to leave no doubt. Upon further
consideration, to hold the fall of Jerusalem as the occasion
one would almost have to agree with Albright that Ethan was a
Canaanite, because it is certain that no Jew would pass over
it lightly.

The date is an all-important issue because Psalm 89
refers to some historical situation, which is to be covered
in the next section. An exegesis of the psalm will help to
support the conclusions above.

Sitz im Leben
The historical situation of Psalm 89 is not easily

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[1]For a similar view see Weiser, *The Psalms: A Com-
mentary*, p. 591.

discerned, as the previous discussion indicated. A setting
in the tenth century B.C. seems to fit best.

But before a choice is considered, another problem
must be handled. A number of scholars usually take it for
granted that II Samuel 7:8-16 is the source for Psalm 89:20-
38, but others do not. And the issue should be dealt with,
if this work is to be free from the accusation implied in
McKenzie's remark, "Some writers have quoted it without any
discussion."[1]

Priority of II Samuel 7

The priority and date of II Samuel 7 is important to
the setting of Psalm 89. If the origin of the Davidic Cove-
nant is not established, then the historical situation of
Psalm 89 is open to complete conjecture. A few illustrations
will convey this.

Another passage involved in the problem is I Chron-
icles 17:7-14. After a couple of lengthy paragraphs,
Pfeiffer concludes:

> These facts do not exhaust the evidence, but they
> suffice to prove that II Sam. 7 cannot antedate Ps. 89.
> Since the Psalm is explicitly dated after the Exile of
> 586, and II Sam. 7 comes earlier than about 250, when
> the Chronicler copied it in his book, II Sam. 7 was

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[1]John L. McKenzie , *Myths and Realities: Studies in
Biblical Theology* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company,
1963), p. 205. See his view of the problem in this work just
cited, pp. 205-08.

undoubtedly written somewhere between those dates. The character of the language places it closer to the later than to the earlier period, probably in the late fourth century.[1]

North argues the situation from the Deuteronomists' standpoint.[2] With his position on the disunity of the psalm, Buttenweiser contends:

> The prevailing view to the contrary, II Samuel, chapter 7, cannot be considered as the source of God's promise to David in Ps. 89B:3a, 4-5, 20-38, for, first of all, in these verses God is described as speaking to David directly in a vision and not through the medium of a prophet as in Samuel.[3]

A different interpretation is given by McKenzie:

> The question has not been properly proposed by critics. It is not, which came first, Samuel or the Psalm? I submit that an examination of the passages will show that neither came first; that the original oracle was first; that the divergences of the three recensions can only be some kind of reconstruction of the original oracle. . . .[4]

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[1]Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 373. Later, Pfeiffer calls II Samuel 7 a late midrash, p. 630.

[2]Christopher R. North, *The Old Testament Interpretation of History* (London: The Epworth Press, 1946), p. 99. For other views given on II Samuel 7 or Psalm 89 see Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 Vols., translated by D. M. G. Stakler (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1962), Vol. I, p. 310, Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, Vol. I, p. 63 and Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 341.

[3]Buttenweiser, *The Psalms: Chronologically Treated with a New Translation*, p. 250.

[4]John L. McKenzie, "The Dynastic Oracle: II Samuel 7," *TS*, VIII:2 (June, 1947), 195. Also see his discussion in "Royal Messianism," pp. 27-31.

According to Cooke, "Indeed, both might be seen as drawing upon a source which originated in the united monarchy period."[1] And Weiser's claim is ". . . a common cultic tradition."[2]

Since these scholars deny the objective historicity of the covenant promise to David (II Sam. 7), they enter into all manner of speculation on the date of origin of II Samuel 7. But the present writer fully agrees with Clements:

> The origin of the idea of such a covenant between Yahweh and the house of David is found in the prophecy of Nathan recorded in II Samuel ch. 7. This oracle gives an account of how this covenant originated, and what is promised.[3]

All the judgments prior to this lack evidence to support their assertions; only Clements' view has validity. As Glueck says, "In Ps. 89 the contents of II Sam. 7:14-16 are repeated almost verbatim in poetic form."[4] It is the word almost that some scholars take as a loophole to see no connection. However, it must be realized that Psalm 89 is a poetic version of II Samuel 7. Therefore, some of the

[1]Gerald Cooke, "The Israelite King as Son of God," *ZAW*, 73 (1961), 203.

[2]Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary,* p. 591.

[3]R. E. Clements, *Prophecy and Covenant*, Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 43 (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1965), p. 56.

[4]Nelson Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible*, translated by Alfred Gottschalk (Cincinnati: The Hebrew Union College Press, 1967), p. 76. See also Crim, *The Royal Psalms*, p. 107.

variations are due to style and ". . . many of the differ-
ences reflect the distinct viewpoint of the writer."[1]

There are other opinions that might be considered,[2]
but those who hold to a late date of the original covenant
promise must be answered. The date of II Samuel 7 can be
fairly well established. Thiele has done a remarkable work
on the chronological problem of the Hebrew kings. After
nearly fifty pages of dealing with the problems and facts,
he concludes, ". . . we thus secure the date of 931 B.C. as
the year of Jeroboam's accession and the schism between
Judah and Israel."[3] The recorded fact in I Kings 11:42
would then place the beginning of Solomon's reign at 971 B.C.;
according to II Samuel 5:4-5 and I Kings 2:11, the start of
David's reign would be near 1011 B.C. There is clear indica-
tion that the oracle of Nathan was given after David ruled
over all Israel (II Sam. 5-7), which would place II Samuel 7
shortly after 1004 B.C. or very early in the tenth century.

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[1]Norman Habel, *Literary Criticism of the Old Testa-
ment* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 9.
    [2]George Widengren, "King and Covenant," *JSS*, II:l
(January, 1957), 21-26. Joseph A. Alexander, *The Psalms:
Translated and Explained*, reprint of 1864 edition (Grand
Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, [n.d.], p. 369. Jean-
Bernard DuMortier, "Un Rituel d'Intronisation:' Le Ps.
LXXXIX 2-38,", *VT*, XXII:2 (April, 1972), 193-96.
    3Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the
Hebrew Kings*, revised edition (Grand Rapids: Wm. B.
Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), p. 52.

And Psalm 89 would be subsequent to this date.

Proposed setting

Mowinckel accepts Psalm 89 as one of the Royal Psalms, but then says:

> They contain therefore no realistic description of the individual historical king and his particular situation. They present the royal ideal, the typical king as he exists in religious theory and in the people's mind and imagination, and as he should be when he appears before God in the cult. The psalms presuppose and describe typical, constantly recurring situations, e.g. the situation at the death of the old king who is represented as a universal king. Before the enthronement of his successor, the vassals might be preparing insurrection (Ps. 2) or the enemies have overrun the country (Ps. 89), but the deity arises to save his royal son (Ps. 18), etc.[1]

> Neither does Johnson hold to a historical situation.[2]

These are certainly unwarranted assumptions. Kapelrud observes:

> Aubrey R. Johnson's interpretation of the "nations" in Psalms 2, 18, 89, and 118 as mythological beings is a natural consequence of MOWINCKEL's view. MOWINCKEL's criticism of JOHNSON's opinion is in reality also a criticism of his own interpretation of the mythical combat in the Psalms of Enthronement.[3]

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[1]Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, Vol. I, p. 75. Faw is not certain of his position. See Charles Ernest Faw, "Royal Motifs in the Hebrew Psalter," (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Divinity School, The University of Chicago, 1939), p. 45.

[2]Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967), pp. 103ff.

[3]Arvid Kapelrud, "Scandinavian Research in the Psalms After Mowinckel," *ASTI*, Vol. IV, edited by Hans Kosmala (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), p. 78.

Including II Samuel 7 in his discussion, Sarna's con-
viction is completely contrary to these assumptions:

> Psalm 89, verses 4-5, 20-38, accordingly, do not repre-
> sent a different, independent recension of Nathan's
> oracle to David, and there is no question of deciding
> upon the relationship of the prose to a supposed poetic
> version. These verses constitute, rather, an exegetical
> adaption of the oracle by the psalmist to fit a specific
> historic situation.[1]

The very nature of Psalm 89 points to some particular
historical circumstance. The exegesis will help bear this
out. But the task remains to determine, if possible, that
specific event. It appears that 89:31-46 is referring to a
descendant of David. As a result of the previous discussion
in this dissertation, the late date is out of the question.
Therefore, the following material is narrowed down to those
who adhere to the early date, that is, to a descendant not
too far removed from the united monarchy.

A closer look at verses 39-46 bring out several more
requirements that must match the situation. To name a few,
there is mention of strongholds being brought to ruin,
enemies are involved, the clear indication of an invasion,
etc. In much the same vein, Sarna commences the exposition
of his view:

> Bearing in mind all the foregoing, it is possible to
> reconstruct the nature of the events which produced the
> lament. This latter must reflect an invasion of Judea,

[1]Sarna, "Psalm 89: A Study in Inner Biblical Exe-
gesis," p. 39.

but it must have been one that did not have as its primary goal the conquest of Jerusalem or the Temple. The real target was the reigning monarch, whom the invaders wished to depose and replace by an outsider, not of Davidic descent.[1]

Then Sarna goes on to discuss and argue for the days of Ahaz and the anti-Assyrian coalition which desired to dispose of Ahaz in favor of a non-Davidic king (Isa. 7).[2] Several of his arguments are rather convincing, but there are one or two matters that can be seriously questioned. For instance, there is not a hint in the psalm of an attempt to replace the king; it seems that Sarna read a little too much into it. Also, he makes mention of verse one in the *MT* (i.e. the psalm title) but has to settle for some type of editor-psalmist. Thus the 735-34 B.C. date is no problem to him.

Clarke takes a much earlier date. He says that Ethan

. . . must have known the divine declaration recorded I Kings xi.9-13. This would come as a shock to all who had rejoiced in the covenant which God had made with David, 2 Sam. vii. With that covenant in mind Ethan here utters his impassioned acknowledgment and appeal to Jehovah. It is possible that Ethan outlived Solomon and saw the break-up of the kingdom.[3]

This view does not have enough sufficient evidence to satisfy the psalm passages. In an interesting allusion to 89:11 (Heb.) Moll suggests a different event:

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[1]*Ibid*., p. 43.
[2]*Ibid*.; pp. 44-45.
[3]Clarke, *Analytical Studies in the Psalms*, pp. 220-21.

The occasion of the composition was most probably the defeat of Rehoboam I Kings xiv.25ff. 2 Chron. xii.lff. by Shishak, that is, Sheshonk I. From this is perhaps to be explained the preminence [*sic*] given here to Egypt under the name Rahab . . . in allusion to the former overthrow of this presumptuous and defiant enemy by the judgment of God. At that time the Ezrahite Ethan could have been still living.[1]

Holding the same occasion, Delitzsch has additional remarks of interest:

During this very period Ps. lxxxix. took its rise. The young Davidic king, whom loss and disgrace make prematurely old, is Rehoboam, that man of Jewish appearance whom Pharoah Sheshonk is bringing among other captives before God Anun in the monumental picture of Karnak, and who bears before him in his embattled ring the words *Judhmelek* (King of Judah)--one of the finest and most reliable discoveries of Champollion, and one of the greatest triumphs of his system of hieroglyphics.[2]

The latter view expressed by Moll and Delitzsch seems best to fit the language of Psalm 89. This is not to say the view has no problems. In light of the exegesis in the next chapter, the thoughts here will be brief to prevent needless repetition.

The proposed setting, then, for the composition of Psalm 89 is found in I Kings 14:21-28 and II Chronicles 12:1-12. Comparing these passages with Psalm 89:31-46 (Heb.) and II Samuel 7:12-16 offers the most plausible explanation.

The covenant is unconditional; it rests solely on the

[1]Moll, "The Psalms," p. 482.

[2]Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms,* Vol. III, p. 34.

promises of Yahweh. But, if David and his descendants were to enjoy the promises, they had to be obedient (II Sam. 7:4; Ps. 89:31-33). That Rehoboam sinned is not open to question. "It took place when the kingdom of Rehoboam was established and strong that he and all Israel with him forsook the law of the Lord" (II Chron. 12:1).

The content of 89:41-43 (Heb.) can be understood from the facts in I Kings 14:25-28 and II Chronicles 12:9-11. In his quote above, Delitzsch has given a valid explanation for 89:46 (Heb.). The remaining verses of 89:39-46 are not too difficult to meet the description in the historical passages.

Also, this opinion allows for the direct authorship of Ethan. And he, who was close to the Davidic line and the freshness of the covenant, would be most likely for the petition at the close of the psalm. The date, then, of the composition would be shortly after or in Tishri, 926, to Tishri, 925 B.C. Someone may argue that this would make Ethan too old. The present writer can see no reason why Ethan could not have been eighty to ninety years old. It may be why he considers King Rehoboam as in the days of his youth.

Type of Psalm

Reference to the matter of type has already been mentioned in the first section of this chapter. The task here is to see where Psalm 89 fits best in the classifications. As stated before, Gunkel is responsible for the pioneer work in

this area. Guthrie explains the four basic principles upon which Gunkel erected his work,[1] but they will not be delineated here.

By combining the works of Gunkel[2] and Guthrie,[3] the present writer has attempted to present the classification of types in chart form. The works themselves should be read for a full explanation. "Proceeding from his four principles, Gunkel identified . . . six major types of poetry, six minor types, and two special types."[4]

A.   MAJOR TYPES

    1.   The Hymn
    2.   Songs of Yahweh's Enthronement
    3.   The   Community Lament
    4.   The   Royal Psalm
    5.   The   Individual Lament
    6.   The   Individual Thanksgiving

B. MINOR TYPES

    1.   Pronouncements of Blessing or Curse
    2.   Pilgrimage Songs
    3.   Victory Songs
    4.   Community Thanksgivings
    5.   Sacred Legends
    6.   Torah Songs

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[1]Guthrie, *Israel's Sacred Songs: A Study of Dominant Themes,* pp. 8-9.

[2]Gunkel, *The Psalm A Form-Critical Introduction*, pp. 30-39.

[3]Guthrie, *Israel's' Sacred Songs: A Study of Dominant Themes*, pp. 10-14.

[4]*Ibid*., p. 9.

C. SPECIAL TYPES

    1. Prophetic Psalms
    2. Wisdom Poetry

Of course, no man's work goes without criticism. For example, there are no legends in the psalms. Also, many would point out that Gunkel omitted Messianic Psalms and Imprecatory Psalms. Watts takes Gunkel's "Psalms of Yahweh's Enthronement" and entitles them "Yahweh Malak Psalms." He then establishes his own characteristics or categories and says that Psalm 89 has all five of them.[1] Murphy evaluates Westermann's challenge to Gunkel and expresses his own views.[2]

The psalm is considered a national lamentation by Eissfeldt[3] and Leslie,[4] the former on the basis of a late date and the latter on the basis of the closing verses in the psalm. A reading of these sources reveals that there are obvious reasons for rejecting these views.

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[1]John D. W. Watts, "Yahweh Malak Psalms," *TZ*, 21:4 (Juli-August, 1965), 343-48. Faw says, "Few *melek* psalms have received a wider variety of treatment at the hands of commentators than this one." Faw, "Royal Motifs in the Hebrew Psalter," p. 40.

[2]Roland E. Murphy, "A New Classification of Literary Forms in the Psalms," *CBQ*, XXI:l (January, 1959), 83-87.

[3]Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, translated by Peter R. Ackroyd (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), pp. 111-12. His view of a late date had been referred to earlier in this work.

[4]Leslie, *The Psalms*, pp. 259, 273.

Gunkel[1] and Anderson[2] advocate that the first part of the psalm is a hymn and the second part is a lament, but Gunkel does so on the basis of date and disunity. And Murphy sees it as a mixed composition.[3]

Probably the most widely held position is that Psalm 89 is a royal psalm. But even within this realm, there is no consensus of opinion. Commencing with definitions, differences are revealed. Mowinckel asks and answers:

Now, what do we mean by the expression 'royal psalms'?

These psalms are not a special 'kind' or 'type' (*Gattung*) from the point of view of the history of style or literature or liturgy. They comprise nearly all kinds of psalms, both hymns of praise and lamentations, thanksgivings and prophetic sayings, and several other types. Common to them is the circumstance that the king is in the foreground. He is the one who prays or the one who is spoken of, or who is prayed for. They include Pss. 2; 18; 20; 21; 45; 72; 101; 110; 132; 28; 61; 63; 89; and quite a number of others.[4]

Much of what Mowinckel has said is true of Psalm 89. Yet elsewhere in his work, Mowinckel calls the psalm a national lamentation.[5] Robert and Feuillet have a similar

[1]Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, pp. 24-25.
[2]Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, second edition (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 480.
[3]Murphy, "Psalms," pp. 571, 592.
[4]Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, Vol. I, p. 47.
[5]*Ibid.*, pp. 219, 236.

definition with this emphasis, "But the important place occupied in these psalms by the king gives them a special character which should be noted."[1] Dahood gives a number of ". . . verbal clues that help to identify these psalms as royal. . . ."[2] But prior to this, his statements manifest an added feature to the type:

> Scholars generally classify eleven psalms as royal, that is, psalms sung on festive occasions for or in honor of the king and the royal house. These are ii, xviii, xx, xxi, xlv, lxxii, lxxxix, ci, cx, cxxxii, cxliv.[3]

The festival concept has some serious ramifications. Rowley refers to Psalm 89 in connection with "ritual combat."[4] Weiser relates the psalm to festive occasion,[5] Weaver to ceremonies,[6] and Ward to a national rite and ". . . a ritual setting that bears the marks of a pilgrimage festival."[7] To all of which Leupold would reply:

[1]Robert and Feuillet, *Introduction to the Old Testament,* Vol. II, p. 56.
[2]Dahood, *The Anchor Bible--Psalms III,* p. XXXVIII.
[3]*Ibid*. For further study of the type, scholars, and views see Leopold Sabourin, *The Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning*, 2 Vols. (Staten Island, New York: Alba House, 1969), Vol. 2, pp. 209-12.
[4]Rowley, *Worship in Ancient Israel: Its Form and Meaning*, p. 198.
[5]Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary*, p. 63.
[6]Horace R. Weaver, *The Everlasting Covenant* (Nashville; Graded Press, 1965), p. 186.
[7]Ward, "The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX," p. 328.

But why the "rituals" should be made so prominent is far from obvious, except for the fact that one strong trend of the present is to include everything in the psalms under the category of the liturgical.[1]

After expressing practically the same thought, Robert and Feuillet rightly comment:

With few exceptions (Ps 24 is one) the data of internal criticism, such as allusions to sacrifices and liturgical actions, references to processions and dialogue recitations, are usually vague. These items call for close attention, but they simply do not tell us very much. We have already pointed out that there is no solid reason for imagining the existence of liturgical feasts when tradition tells us nothing about them.[2]

Another problem relative to this is the speaker in the psalm. In connection with his cultic-ritual view, Mowinckel devotes much to an "I" and "We" concept in the royal psalms. By this method he determines the speaker. Thus, he writes, "In Ps. 89 the king laments about the defeat he has suffered in the fight against his enemies . . . ."[3] Dahood also purports that the king is the speaker.[4] In answering Mowinckel's Conviction, Sabourin argues:

It can be recalled here that unless the king is mentioned explicitly or implicitly it is usually difficult to prove that the "I"-speaker is a royal figure, when

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[1]Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms*, p. 228.
[2]Robert and Feuillet, *Introduction to the Old Testament,* Vol. II, p. 61.
[3]Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, Vol. I, p. 48. Another discussion of the problem is found in George W. Anderson, "Enemies and Evildoers in the Book of Psalms, *BJRL,* 48:1 (Autumn, 1965) 18-29.
[4]Dahood, *The Anchor Bible--Psalms II*, p. 311.

the context points to the interests of a private individual.[1]

Bewer just simply states that Psalm 89 is a prayer for the king.[2] There are too many others to quote who plainly see the psalmist as the speaker. Having discussed the related problems, the type can once again be brought to the fore.

The predominant conclusion, even with those who differ in related matters, is that Psalm 89 is a royal psalm. The constant references to king and covenant support this. But there is the lament which cannot be neglected. As Driver says, it is a royal psalm with ". . . a supplication on account of the humbled dynasty of David. . ."[3] Guthrie concurs.[4] But Dentan puts it specifically that ". . . Ps. 89, a royal lament . . . has more to say about God's faithfulness than any other psalm."[5]

If the present writer has a choice, he would combine a couple terms of Gunkel and type Psalm 89 as a Royal Lament.

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[1]Sabourin, *The Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning*, Vol. 2, p. 210.
[2]Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 371.
[3]Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 369.
[4]Guthrie, *Israel's Sacred Songs: A Study of Dominant Themes*, p. 140.
[5]Robert C. Dentan, *The Knowledge of God in Ancient Israel* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1968), p. 176.

The speaker is Ethan, who with no ritualistic aspect, extolls God through it all. This does not say the psalm may not have been used in temple singing later, but it does mean that it was not originated in a cultic setting, nor was it designed primarily for liturgical worship. The exegesis will support as well as highlight this.

The Question of Structure and Meter

Thus far, every division of this chapter has been highly controversial, and the structure and meter of the psalm are no exception. Since the problem is so detailed and involved, the present discussion will be characterized by brevity because of limited space. Therefore, the reader is asked to read all sources cited for details.

The question of structure

According to some scholars the structure of poetry is made up of strophes. Briggs explains:

> The simple strophes are of few lines of one kind of parallelism. The complex strophes have more lines and two or more kinds of parallelism. In this case the connection of thought is usually clear. The strophical divisions may be determined by a more decided separation in the thought of the poem.[1]

In applying his method to Psalm 89, the outcome as given in his work is verses 47-52, a pair of strophes (3 lines each); verses 4-5; 18-46, sixteen strophes (2 lines

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[1]Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, Vol. I, p. xlv.

each); and verses 16-17 are omitted.[1] The conclusion is far too choppy. It seems that Briggs could have applied the separation of thought to a much better advantage.

With no explanation, Kissane declares, "The poem consists of five strophes of eight verses each, with an introduction and a conclusion of six verses each."[2] This is a simple arrangement, but it is forced. The value is lost because it disrupts thought patterns, and, like Briggs, he has employed no grammatical features.

On the basis of an elaborate approach, and the English numbering system, Forbes first divides the psalm into three parts: verses 1-18; verses 19-37; verses 38-51; each having four strophes. Several of his strophes are combined and are viewed as strophe and antistrophe.[3] Some aspects of this arrangement are commendable, but the analysis is so burdensome; and it surely adds nothing to the content. Moreover, there is the danger of causing some students to dwell on the structure and miss the meaning and flow of thought.

The comments of Ward are by far the most realistic:

Is it possible to divide the psalm into strophes? If we define a strophe in terms of the poetic canons of

[1]*Ibid*. p. xlvi.
[2]Kissahe, *The Book of Psalms*, Vol. II, p. 89.
[3]John Forbes, *Studies on the Book of Psalms* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1888), pp. 87-91.

some other literature than that of Israel, the answer is surely no. Attempts have been made to analyze the psalm on the basis of such definitions. They are arbitrary, artificial, and unconvincing. There is no precise, fixed pattern of strophic arrangement in the psalm. There are discernable groups of lines, however, which can be called strophes in a broad sense.[1]

He forms the psalm into quatrains: the introduction (vss. 2-5); the praise portion (vss. 6-19) consisting of three quatrains with verses 18-19 as a climax; the oracle (vss. 20-38) consisting of five quatrains; the judgment (vss. 39-46) made up of two quatrains; and the prayer (vss. 47-52) cast into an eight-stress rhythm of six lines.[2] (Italics mine.)

This approach certainly seems valid. If the term may be used, there are four-line strophes composed of paired couplets. The grammatical features, the thought patterns, the parallelism, and the continuity concur with this type of structure. Although some will disagree, the present writer will follow an indentical structure because of internal evidence, whereas, the other arrangements have little or no internal evidence or are overdone.

The question of meter

The words of Byington are most appropriate for a look at the problem:

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[1]Ward, "The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX," p. 324.

[2]*Ibid*., pp. 324-26.

It would be hard to discover a possible theory of meter that has not been applied to Hebrew poetry. . . . Those who profess the same principles will disagree as to the number of feet per line in a given psalm.[1]

But he offers a very tedious mathematical approach which is not convincing.[2] In an answer to Byington, only a small part of Gottwald's total argument is cited here:

It is a matter of debate whether longer words require or permit a second stress. It is also problematic whether on occasion two short terms may receive a single stress, while terms joined by the "binder" may be permitted separate stresses.[3]

New problems have arisen with the discoveries of Ras Shamra. Young concludes his article on "Ugaritic Prosody" by saying, "That regular meter can be found in such poetry is an illusion."[4] But Albright interprets the facts differently, naming Gordon and Young as his opponents.[5] However, to obtain his regular meter Albright admittedly has to do some reconstruction.[6] While Gordon does not name Albright, he seems to be replying to him directly:

[1]Steven T. Byington, "A Mathematical Approach to Hebrew Meters," *JBL*, LXVI (1947), 63.

[2]*Ibid*., pp. 64-77.

[3]N. K. Gottwald, "Poetry, Hebrew," *The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible,* 4 Vols. (New York: Abingdon Press, Vol. K-Q, p. 834.

[4]G. Douglas Young, "Ugaritic Prosody, *JNES*, 9:3 (July, 1950), 133.

[5]W. F. Albright, "A Catalogue of Early Hebrew Lyric Poems (Psalm LXVIII)," *HUCA*, XXIII: Part I (1950-1951), 6.

[6]*Ibid*., pp. 5ff., 9ff.

Structually different verses and strophes occur constantly within the same poem in Ugaritic. It is therefore unsound to attribute similar variety in the Bible to the blending of different poems. Perhaps the most important fact to bear in mind is that the poets of the ancient Near East (e.g., Acc., Ug., Heb., Eg.) did not know of exact meter. Therefore emendations *metri causa* are pure whimsy. The evidence can be found in G. D. Young's treatment of the subject in JNES 9 1950 124-133. All that is asked of those who maintain metric hypotheses is to state their metric formulae and to demonstrate that the formulae fit the texts. Instead they emend the texts to fit their hypotheses. A sure sign of error is the constant need to prop up a hypothesis with more hypotheses.[1]

Gottwald also states it very plainly:

These Canaanite discoveries in particular, dating from the fourteenth century B.C. and in a tongue dialectically related to biblical Hebrew, argue strongly the futility of seeking metrical exactness in the poetry of the OT. Emendation of the text for metrical reasons and without syntactic or versional support, is a dubious practice.[2]

It is usually agreed that Ugaritic has a 3+3 pattern,[3] ". . . but there are innumerable variations."[4] According to some, the same holds true for Hebrew poetry basically.[5] When

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[1]Cyrus H. Gordon, UT (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1965), p. 131, fn. 2.

[2]Gottwald, "Poetry, Hebrew," p. 834. For further study on the futility of metrical exactness in Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry see S. Gevirtz, *Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel,* SAOC 32 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 12-13 and Wilson, *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament*, pp. 175-76.

[3]John Hasting Patton, *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1944), p. 6.

[4]Gottwald, "Poetry, Hebrew," p. 834.

[5]*Ibid*. Also see Robert G. Boling, "'Synonymous' Parallelism in the Psalms," *JSS*, V:3 (July, 1960), 222.

it comes to Psalm 89, McKenzie points out that Hanel has ob-
tained a 3:3 meter for the psalm on the basis of reconstruc-
tion.[1]

      With some variations, the following scholars see Psalm
89 in a 4:4 and 3:3 meter: Ward,[2] Cheyne,[3] Podechard,[4]
Briggs,[5] McCullough,[6] and Faw.[7] Their arrangements and dis-
cussion are much too lengthy to quote here. Other studies on
meter are available, but also too large for consideration.[8]
Another controversy related to this concerns formulaic
technique. Gevirtz writes:

> . . . the Hebrew poet structured his verses not with
> whole formulaic phrases (though on occasion as we shall
> indicate, this technique also was employed) but with
> fixed pairs of parallel terms. If these pairs were,
> fitted into the lines in accordance with some principle
> of meter, it has yet to be discovered.[9]

[1]McKenzie, "The Dynastic Oracle: II Samuel 7," p. 196.
[2]Ward, "The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of
Psalm LXXXIX," pp. 322-23.
[3]Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms,* Vol. II, pp. 63, 68.
[4]E. Podechard, *Le Psautier*, 2 Vols. (Lyon: Facultes
Catholiques, 1949), pp. 108-11.
[5]Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, Vol. I, pp. xli, xlii;
Vol. II, p. 250.
[6]McCullough, Exegesis of Psalm "89," p. 479.
[7]Faw, "Royal Motifs in the Hebrew Psalter," pp. 41-42.
[8]Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, Vol. 1,
pp. 28-30. Koch, *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition: The
Form-Critical Method*, pp. 91-100.
[9]Gevirtz, *Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel*, p.
12.

His arguments immediately following this quote are rather convincing and should be consulted. But, as always, there must be opposition. Culley has written an entire work on formulaic language. He recognizes that Gevirtz sees meter involved, however, he does not accept Gevirtz's proposal cited above.[1] After some discussion, Culley surmises:

> Then again, while parallelism is dominant in Hebrew poetry, it is not necessary that every line show this characteristic. In other words, there is something more fundamental to Hebrew poetry than parallelism, and this probably has to do with metre, which although we cannot as yet say precisely how, restricts the cola within certain limits.[2]

In the light of evidence, internal and external, Culley is certainly in error in assuming meter to be more fundamental than parallelism. There is just no question about parallelism being the chief characteristic of Hebrew poetry. In conclusion, the present writer solely agrees with the balanced and sound statements of Gevirtz:

> . . . while the existence of meter in biblical Hebrew poetry is highly probable and certainly cannot as yet be categorically denied, it has yet to be convincingly demonstrated. Metrical analysis, still dubious in the extreme, can add little to our understanding of a poem's content.[3]

This controversial chapter has dealt with what the

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[1]Robert C. Culley, *Oral Formulaic Language in the Biblical Psalms* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), pp. 117-19.

[2]*Ibid*., p. 119.

[3]Gevirtz, *Pattern in the Early Poetry of Israel*, p. 2.

writer feels are necessary antecedents to the following exe-
gesis. It must be said that the exegesis will not be forced
to meet the conclusions in this chapter, but rather, it will
be a privilege to allow the Scripture to speak for itself.

CHAPTER III

EXEGESIS OF PSALM 89

In consideration of the psalm's form and content, the
complexity is quite significant when understood properly. As
an integral portion of God's Word, Psalm 89 manifests its own
contribution. The opening words of Ward are very appropriate:

> Ps. lxxxix is in many ways the most interesting and
> important of the royal psalms. Taken as a whole it is
> a lamentation (vss. 39-52) over the frustration of God's
> promises to the Davidic dynasty (vss. 20-38), which were
> made possible by his cosmic sovereignty (6-15). The
> first part of the psalm recalls the hymns of Yahweh's
> enthronement (xlvii, xciii, xcv-c), the second, the
> oracle of Nathan (2 Sam. vii; Ps. cxxxii), and the third,
> the individual lamentations of the Psalter.[1]

Thus, there is the need to exegete this enriching
revelation. Also, the need can be exaggerated, for the aim
later is to judge the ancient Near Eastern *parallels*. The
exegesis will not be as broad and deep as the present author
would like. Though there be limitations, the exegesis will
still be sufficient to see the revealed truth.

The form will be to follow the Hebrew text. Verse
one in the *MT* is verse two in the *NASB*. Since commentators
are not unified, confusion could result and space wasted if

[1]J. M. Ward, "The Literary Form and Liturgical Back-
ground of LXXXIX, '" *VT*, XI (1961), 321.

no definite scheme is employed. Therefore, the present writer must establish a system. Since the Hebrew text is followed here, all verse citations from other sources also following the Hebrew text: will remain as they are. But the liberty will be taken in all other quotes to put the Hebrew verse reference in brackets [].

The pattern for verses 1-19 will be to place the Hebrew verse or verses at the beginning of each main section or subsection. This easy access prevents the flipping of pages to reach an entire presentation.

89:1 Meditation with Insight

מַשְׂכִּיל לְאֵיתָן הָאֶזְרָחִי

The chief concern here is the word מַשְׂכִּיל. It is almost unbelievable that some should tie this word with a ritualistic connotation. Ahlström practically interprets the entire psalm in the light of this one word. He claims that it is a psalm employed in renewal rites.[1] His concept is summarized well by DeVault:

> What, then, is A.'s view of Ps 89? As a *maskil*, the Psalm belongs to those rites in which joy over the re-newal of life is expressed, but to which are to be added also rites which represent suffering and death, drama-

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[1]G. W. Ahlström, *Psalm 89: Eine Liturgie aus dem Ritual des Leidenden Königs*, translated by Hans-Karl Hacker and Rudolf Zeitler (Lund: Hakan Ohlssons Boktryckeri, 1959), pp. 21-26.

tizing the (temporary) victory of the forces of chaos and the humiliation of the king.[1]

In his review, Mowinckel says, ". . . . on the negative side, Ahlström's treatment of *maskil* is good . . . ."[2] However, Mowinckel does not agree totally. A portion of his view is cited by DuMortier, who then expresses his own interpretation:

> Le mot *maskîl* est d'interprétation difficile; on retiendra l'explication de S. MOWINCKEL qui volt dans la racine *skl* "la capacité de comprehension et d'énergie qui permet de réussir quelque chose, d'obtenir un resultat positif". Dans la mesure ou cette racine est bien en rapport avec la notion d'efficacité, de sagesse efficiente, on pourra voir dans le culte le "Sitz im Leben" probable de ces *maskîlîm* (au sens de rites efficaces).[3]

As Engnell construes the word, he states:

> *Maskîl* . . . is undoubtedly the technical term for a particular kind of "Enthronement Psalm" belonging to the central part of the ritual of the annual festival which describes the act of atonement of the king [catchwords *ransom* and *covenant*] both in its negative and especially in its positive aspects, and refers to the result of the atonement and the hymnic motif associated with it.[4]

[1]Joseph J. DeVault, a review of *Psalm 89: Eine Liturgie aus dem Ritual des Leidenden Königs* by G. W. Ahlström, TS, XXI (1960), 281.

[2]Sigmund Mowinckel, a review of *Psalm 89. Eine Liturgie aus den Ritual des Leidenden Königs* by G. W. Ahlström, JSS, V:3 (July, 1960), 295-96.

[3]Jean-Bernard DuMortier, "Un Rituel d'Intronisation: Le Ps. LXXXIX 2-38," *VT*, XXII:2 (April, 1972), 177. A full understanding of Sigmund Mowinckel's view can be observed in *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols., translated by D. R. Ap-Thomas (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), Vol. II, p. 209.

[4]Ivan Engnell, *A Rigid Scrutiny: Critical Essays on the Old Testament*, translated and edited by John T. Willis,

There is absolutely no evidence that the word can be designated as referring to any kind of rites. Data and opinion are offered by another:

> Featured in the headings to 13 psalms, *maskil* never appears without a proper name with a prepositional *lamed* (Ps. 32, 42, 44, 45, 52-55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142).   The LXX understood it to mean "instruction" (cf. Ps. 32:8). It must be assumed to refer to some special skill required in the manner of musical performance (cf. Ps. 47:8). From the context of Amos 5:13 and the contrast between the *maskil* and the mourning rites (5:16-17), the term might well indicate some type of song.[1]

It may be some type of song, but nothing indicates a ritual setting. Another view says:

> *Maskîl* (13 times), on the basis of the vb. *skl*, has been taken to mean a didactic poem, but it is found also with those that are not didactic. Another possibility is "artistic poem," i.e., one executed with art.[2]

But most scholars, too many to mention, agree with a standard lexicon definition, "contemplative poem."[3] To this the present writer concurs and would like to add an additional explanation. Another lexicon places מַשְׂכִּיל as a derivative of שׂכל which in the hiphil can mean "cause to

with the collaboration of Helmer Ringgren (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), p. 89.

[1]Nahum M. Sarna, et al, "Psalms, Book of," *EJ*, 16 Vols. (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, Ltd., 1971), Vol. 13, p. 1320.

[2]Roland E. Murphy, "Psalms," *JBC*, edited by Raymond E. Brown, et al (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Lnc., 1968), p. 570. Several views are noted in A. F. Kirkpatrick, ed., *The Book of Psalms* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1910), pp. xix-xx.

[3]*BDB*, p. 968.

have insight Gn 3, 6 Ps 32, 8 Pr 16, 23 Da 9, 22."[1] Carroll

states:

> The word *maskil* reflects the notion of wisdom or the
> skilful handling of some matter. When used as a title
> for a psalm it indicates a poem displaying insight or
> wisdom about life in general or certain events in par-
> ticular.[2]

In his composition Ethan seems to have had a great

deal of insight concerning God's person, power, and program.

There is no doubt that the poem is artistic and instructive,

but there is something that seems to have preceded those two.

Therefore, the suggestion, at least for Psalm 89, is that

maskil here means meditation with insight.

89:2-5 Introduction: Possession of Reality

חַסְדֵי יְהוָה עוֹלָם אָשִׁירָה לְדֹר וָדֹר אוֹדִיעַ אֱמוּנָתְךָ בְּפִי
כִּי־אָמַרְתִּי עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יִבָּנֶה שָׁמַיִם תָּכִן אֱמוּנָתְךָ בָהֶם
כָּרַתִּי בְרִית לִבְחִירִי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְדָוִד עַבְדִּי
עַד־עוֹלָם אָכִין זַרְעֶךָ וּבָנִיתִי לְדֹר־וָדוֹר כִּסְאֲךָ סֶלָה

This quatrain is a unity within itself and it is a

most ingenious introduction to the entire psalm. The declar-

ative phrases of verses 2-3 are a response to the realization

of the everlasting covenant in verses 4-5. God has worked;

His sovereignty has been made manifest in the behalf of David.

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[1]*KB*, p. 922.
[2]R. P. Carroll, "Psalm LXXVIII: Vestiges of a Tribal
Polemic," *VT*, XXI:2 (April, 1971), 133.

Thus it is that verses 2-3 seem to be an introduction to verses 6-19 because that sovereignty is a reality. And verses 4-5 introduce verses 20-38 because the Sovereign One had established a covenant. The author is in possession of these truths because he is singing even though a recent judgment has taken place (vss. 39-46) and he offers the prayer of faith (vss. 47-52).

If there is any emphasis indicated by word order, then this psalm is a perfect-example. The words given a prominent place are חסדי יהוה. Though not given as the first word in the next clause, אמונתך is a word that parallels חסדי in importance. These three Hebrew words not only help to show the unity of the Psalm, they are foremost in the thinking of the author. The covenant name יהוה, is found in verses 2, 6, 7, 16, 19, 47, 52, 53. The reason it is not employed in verses 20-38 is that Yahweh is the speaker. The root חסד is noted in verses 2, 3, 15, 20, 25, 29, 34, 50. There would be little need to employ the word more because the psalm is replete with Yahweh's חסד. The word אמונה is observed in verses 2, 3, 6, 9, 25, 34, 50.[1]

The latter word presents no problem. Nearly all Hebrew scholars translate it faithfulness. But חסד poses an entirely different problem. The LXX has ἐλέη which is

[1]The basic root אמן appears in verses 29, 38.

usually translated *mercies*.[1] A favorite rendering is *loving-kindness*, while Dahood and Mowinckel employ *love*.[2] The lexicons do not offer a great deal more.[3] One would almost agree with Rowley, "The word *hesed* is always untranslatable. . . ."[4]

But of the many works devoted to a study of the word, Glueck, for one, makes a significant comment: "Wherever *hesed* appears together with *'emeth* or *'emunah* the quality of loyalty inherent in the concept *hesed* is emphasized."[5] From the sources which have given much study to the word and its uses in Scripture, the present writer acknowledges the differ-ent meanings חסד can have. However, Psalm 89 deals primarily

[1]A full discussion can be found in Rudolf Bultmann. "ἔλεος, ἐλεέω," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by Gerhard Kittel, translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Com-pany, 1964), Vol. II, pp. 477-85.

[2]Mitchell Dahood, *The Anchor Bible--Psalms II* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1968), p. 311. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship,* Vol. I, p. 196.

[3]*BDB*, pp. 338-39; *KB*, pp. 318-19.

[4]Harold H. Rowley, "The Unity of the Old Testament," *BJRL*, 29:2 (February, 1946), 344, fn. 2.

[5]Nelson Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible*, translated by Alfred Gottschalk (Cincinnati: The Hebrew Union College Press, 1967), p. 72. One should read his entire work for all usages. A few other sources to be studied are Norman H. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (New York; Shocken Books, 1964), pp. 94-130. Don Rembert Sorg, *Hesed and Hasid in the Psalms* (Saint Louis: Pio Decimo Press, 1953), also note listing on p. 58. Hans Joachim Stoebe, "Die Bedeutung des Wortes Häsäd im Alten Testament," *VT*, II:3 (July, 1952), 244-54.

with the Davidic Covenant. Therefore, it seems, in recognition of different usages elsewhere and with the exception of 89:20, that חסד in the seven other verses would have the meaning of *covenant loyalty*. Eaton translates *hesed*, ". . . his active fidelity which especially fulfills his promises to the dynasty. . . ."[1] The word bears significant relationships to other words.[2]

Ethan had the utmost confidence in the covenant loyalties of Yahweh. The biblical believer sees no problem in Ethan aspiring to sing forever. The *Targum* has a *lamed* prefixed to עלם,[3] but it is not unusual to omit it. Besides some biblical texts, the famous Moabite Stone (c. 850 B.C.) also does not have it.[4] As for the word דר, Patton[5] and

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[1]J. H. Eaton, "The King as God's Witness, *ASTI*, Vol. VII, edited by Hans Kosmala (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), p. 30.

[2]Cf. Robert G. Boling, "'Synonymous' Parallelism in the Psalms," *JSS*, V:3 (July, 1960), 231. This article should be consulted for many words in Psalm 89 and their parallels. Also, one should see Daniel Goldberg, "The Moral Attributes of God in the Psalms," (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, 1971), not only note his total discussion, pp. 108-43, but especially his chart, p. 122.

[3]*Targum*, p. נו.

[4]John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*. Volume I: Hebrew and Moabite Inscriptions (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 74, verse 7; 78, fn. 7.

[5]John Hasting Patton, *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1944), p. 36.

and Tournay[1] are quick to point out its Ugaritic equivalent.

It is the faithfulness of Yahweh he will make known (אודיע)[2]

with his mouth (בכפי)[3] which is another way of expressing

אשירה.[4]

    The expression at the beginning of verse 3 is ex-
plained by Driver:

> At the end of the verse the Hebrew *kî* 'for; indeed',
> like the Ugaritic *k* 'for, indeed', has not causal but
> affirmative force when standing before a verb which is
> not at the head of the clause (e.g. . . . 89:2-3. . .).[5]

In this verse where *hesed* and *'emunah* are repeated,

[1]R. Tournay, "En Marge D'une Traduction des Psaumes,"
RB 63:2 (Avril, 1956), 163.

[2]See a discussion of the *hiphil* form of this word" in
Edward R. Dalglish, *Psalm Fifty-One in the Light of Ancient
Near Eastern Patternism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), pp.
65-66.

[3]Dahood says that "*b^e pī* was falsely attached to vs. 2
when the emphatic nature of *ki* at the beginning of vs. 3 was
forgotten. Of course, *b^e pī*, may also be rendered as an adverb
'explicitly,' much like Prov viii 3, *l^e pī* 'loudly, express-
ly.'" Psalms II, p. 312. There is no evidence that one word
was attached and one forgotten.

[4]G. R. Driver maintains that verse 2 is a gloss; it
is taken from verse 20. "Glosses in the Hebrew Text,"
L'Ancien Testament et L'Orient (Louvain: Publications
Universitaries, 1957), p. 142. The present writer sees no
good reason to hold that view.

[5]G. R. Driver, "Another Little Drink--Isaiah 28:1-22,"
Words and Meanings: Essays Presented to David Winton Thomas
(Cambridge: The University Press, 1968), p. 61. Concerning
the word אמרתי James Kennedy claims that it ought to be read
אמרת to agree with the *LXX* εἶπας, *An Aid to the Textual Amend-
ment of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh:. T. & T. Clark, 1928),
p. 10. In the light of the context and the parallelism this
change seems totally unnecessary.

Kissane, for one, sees corruption.[1] Perhaps it is not smooth.

to some, but the literal content and rendering as it stands

is very clear. "For I have said, forever covenant loyalty

will be built up; Heavens, You will establish your faithful-

ness in them." As DuMortier declares:

> Quelle que soit la lecture exacte du verset 3, le
> psalmiste semble affirmer que la hèsèd divine est
> eternelle (*'ôlâm*) et it met en relation cette fidélité
> avec la stabilité cosmique (*sâmaîm*).[2]

The כי־אמרתי to the present writer simply means that

Ethan has come to a deliberate conclusion. The comment of

Mowinckel is both right and wrong:

> The poet will certainly not sing about how and when
> God's חסד and אמונה came into existence ("were built
> up"); of course they have existed just as long as Yahweh
> himself. What was "built up" is of course the universe.[3]

It is not the world, but the חסד which is "built up"

according to the text. The remarks of the Midrash on verse 3

are most interesting, although they should be understood with

discernment:

> Not the heavens alone, but the throne, too, is estab-
> lished on nothing other than mercy, as is said *And in*
> *mercy shall the throne be established* (Isa. 16:5). With
> what is the throne to be compared? With a throne that
> had four legs, one of which was short so that he who sat
> upon the throne was shaken. Therefore, he took a pebble

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[1]Edward J. Kissane, *The Book of Psalms*, 2 Vols. (Dub-
Browne and Nolan Limited., 1954), Vol. II, pp. 94-95.

[2]DuMortier, "Un Rituel d'Intronisation: Le Ps.
LXXXIX 2-38," p. 178.

[3]Sigmund Mowinckel, "Notes on the Psalms," *Studia*
*Theologica Cura Ordinum Theologorum Scandinavorum Edit*a, XIII
(1959), 157.

and propped up the throne. Thus also the throne in heaven was shaken--if one dare say such a thing--until the Holy One, blessed be He, propped it up. And where-with did God prop it? With mercy. . . . On what, then, do the heavens stand? On mercy. . . . And this refrain runs throughout the whole Psalm.[1]

Plainly, the חסד of Yahweh will be forever built up ". . . rising ever greater and fairer . . . before the wonder-ing eyes of men, knowing no decay, never destined to fall into ruin."[2]

Verses 4-5 are also two parallel lines, which are closely connected to verses 2-3. Ward urges:

Note the parallels: בנה and כון in both 3 and 5; עולם and לדר ודר in both 2 and 5 (and עולם again in 3); חסד (4) // נשׁבעתי (3) // אמרתי (vs. 2) // אודיע and אשׁירה; and אמונה (2) // ברית (4)[3]

The synthetic parallelism of 4-5 is none other than the words of Yahweh Himself, which had caused the poet to sing in the first place. The covenant loyalty concerns the covenant made with His chosen servant.[4] David's descendants

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[1]"Psalm Eighty-Nine," *The Midrash on Psalms*, 2 Vols. translated by William G. Braude, *Yale Judaica Series*, Vol. XIII, edited by Leon Nemoy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), Vol. II, p. 82.

[2]J. J. Stewart Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2 Vols., revised edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), Vol. II, p. 148. Also, observe the good comments of Carl Bernard Moll, "The Psalms," translated with additions by Charles A. Briggs, *et al, Langes Commentary on the Holy Scriptures,* 12 Vols. revised edition (Grand Rapids: Zonder-van Publishing House, 1960), Vol. 5, p. 482.

[3]Ward, "The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX," pp. 324-25.

[4]Cf. H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1959), p. 174.

and throne[1] are described with permanence which has far-reach-
ing implications. This summary of the unconditional promise
in II Samuel 7 will be discussed inverses 20-38. It must
be said that the message of this introduction demonstrates
the author had possession of reality.

At the conclusion of verses 5, 38, 46, 49 there is
the word סלה, the meaning of which is very dubious. Lipinski
comments on the first two instances, ". . . au Ps. 89, 5 et
38, ce mot marque la fin des passages appartenant au poeme
royal primitif (Ps. 89, 2-5. 20-38)."[2] This says nothing about
the last two usages, and, moreover, if Lipinski's emphasis is
on "primitif" to make the distinction, he has not taken into
account that parts of verses 6-19 are more primitive.

An entire article on the word by Snaith adds nothing
new to Psalm 89.[3] After much discussion, he concludes:

> The tradition is strong that the word selah has some-
> thing to do with 'always, everlasting'. . . .

> The word selah therefore is a relic of the days when
> psalms were sung in three sections. It indicates the
> place where the choir sang the couplet "Give thanks unto
> the Lord for He is good, For His mercy endureth for

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[1]Maxmilian Ellenbogen gives an interesting background
to kb'), see *Foreign Words in the Old Testament: Their Origin
and Etymology* (London: Luzae and Company, 1962), p. 89.
[2]E. Lipinski, *La Royauté De Yahwé Dans La Poésie Et
Le Culte De L'Ancien Israël* (Brussels: Palies der Academiën-
Hertogsstreaat I, 1965), p. 394.
[3]Norman H. Snaith, "Selah," *VT*, 11:1 (January, 1952),
43-56.

ever", and the insertion of the word into the various psalms dates from the beginning of the fourth century B.C.[1]

The connotation of "always, everlasting" would be strange for the meaning of סלה at the conclusion of verses 46, 49. The statements of Murphy paint the true picture:

> *Selah*, which occurs 71 times in 39 Pss, is completely unknown, despite desperate efforts to give it meaning. It might indicate a lifting up of the tone or of the eyes; others think it is a sign for repetition or that it means bowing.[2]

No further discussion would improve the subject. The most that can be said is that it was probably a musical term.

89:6-19 God's Characteristics: Basis for Praise

This portion of Scripture extols the unique character of Yahweh. Delitzsch avers:

> In vers. 6-19 there follows a hymnic description of the exalted majesty of God, more especially of His omnipotence and faithfulness, because the value of the promise is measured by the character of the person who promises.[3]

Every verse in the section holds Yahweh's person and work as the main thought. Even when benefactors are mentioned, glory is still attributed to Yahweh. Nevertheless, the passage has been twisted and perverted by many. While

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[1]*Ibid*., p. 56.

[2]Murphy, "Psalms," p. 570.

[3]Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms,* 3 Vols., translated by Francis Bolton, reprint (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, [n.d.], III, 36.

power is ascribed to God, some have interpreted the passage
erroneously. Gray comments:

> . . . Psalm lxxxix, 6-18, definitely suggests an eschato-
> logical victory which will repeat the triumph of Cosmos
> over Chaos in the beginning, which has been sacramentally
> experienced in the cult. . . . especially in Psalm
> lxxxix, 6-18, it is possible to see a connection with
> creation, which is the result of the triumph of God over
> the forces of Chaos.[1]

Later, he adds, "The theme of God's conflict with the
unruly waters resulting in his establishment as King recurs
in certain of the Psalms . . . lxxxix, 8-18. . . ."[2] But the
present writer agrees with Kaufmann that none of ". . . the
ancient battles of YHWH . . . mark the beginning of his
rule."[3] The answer to the first interpretation will be han-
dled in the exegesis.

The approach will be to treat this section in qua-
trains which will facilitate the bulk of material. Since
verses 18-19 do not form a quatrain, this parallelism will
be separate.

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[1]John Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan: The Ras Shamra Texts and Their Relevance to the Old Testament,* revised edition, *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. V (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), p. 32.

[2]*Ibid*., p. 33.

[3]Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel: From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, translated and abridged by Moshe Greenberg (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 118.

Verses 6-9

וְיוֹדוּ שָׁמַיִם פִּלְאֲךָ יְהוָה אַף־אֱמוּנָתְךָ בִּקְהַל קְדֹשִׁים
כִּי מִי בַשַּׁחַק יַעֲרֹךְ לַיהוָה יִדְמֶה לַיהוָה בִּבְנֵי אֵלִים
אֵל נַעֲרָץ בְּסוֹד־קְדֹשִׁים רַבָּה וְנוֹרָא עַל־כָּל־סְבִיבָיו
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת מִי־כָמוֹךָ חֲסִין יָהּ וֶאֱמוּנָתְךָ סְבִיבוֹתֶיךָ

First of all, the unity of this quatrain is set forth

by Ward:

> *Heavens* (6a)// *skies* (7a); and this repeated *round about
> thee* (8b, 9b), tying the lines together from beginning
> to end. Again, *holy ones* (6b)// *sons of God* (7b)// *holy
> ones* (8a)// *hosts* (9a). *Who is like Yahweh* (7a, b)//
> *who is like thee* (9a). These four lines give a unified
> picture of the heavenly assembly praising God, and they
> close with the climactic reference to the *faithfulness*
> of the Lord.[1]

In verse 6 the word שמים is employed to designate the

inhabitants of heaven. But the following word פלאך poses a

little problem. Most of the scholars and translations treat

this word as plural, including the *LXX* and *Targum*. Usually

it is done on the basis of verses 10 and following. Kirk-

patrick has it singular and says it is ". . . His wonderful

course of action regarded as a whole. . . ."[2] Attributing it

more to God's person, Briggs translates it *Thy wonderfulness*.[3]

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[1]Ward, "The Literary Form and Liturgical Background
of Psalm LXXXIX," p. 325.

[2]Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 533.

[3]Charles A. Briggs and Emilie G. Briggs, *The Book of
Psalms,* 2 Vol., *International Critical Commentary*, 47 Vols.,
edited by Samuel R. Driver and Alfred Plummer, reprint (Edin-
burgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906), II, 255.

And Moll claims the word "'does not here denote a work or a
deed, but the nature of God as distinct from that of all
created beings, or separated from their sphere of action.
. . . "[1] Also, the word is parallel to אמונתך.[2] it seems
best to keep the MT reading as singular because the nature of
God is foremost in this quatrain. Since קדשים occurs in
verse 8, it will be treated there.

Lipinski goes to great length in discussing the כִּי
that introduces verse 7.[3] It is much too lengthy for review
here. His basic concern is the switch of persons in verses
6-8, which does not contribute to the purpose of this disser-
tation. With מִי it introduces a rhetorical question that
expresses the unique character of God. It reminds one imme-
diately of Exodus 15:11 in its entirety and the first part
of Micah 7:18, מִי־אֵל כָּמוֹךָ נֹשֵׂא עָוֹן.

שחק occurs both in verse 7 and verse 38. It means
clouds or clouds of fine dust and so has the meaning of

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[1]Moll, "The Psalms," p. 483.

[2]Cf. B. D. Eerdmans, "The Hebrew Book of Psalms,"
Oudtestamentische Studiën, Deel IV, edited by P. A. H.
DeBoer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1947), p. 422.

[3]Lipinski, *La Royauté De Yahwé Dans La Poésie Et Le
Culte De L'Ancien Israël,* pp. 235-37. For other discussions
see Walter Brueggemann, "Amos' Intercessory Formula," *VT*,
XIX:4 (October, 1969), 394 and C. J. Labuschagne, *The Incom-
parability of Yahweh in the Old Testament*, Vol. V, *Pretoria
Oriental Series*, edited by A. Van Selms (Leiden: E. J.
Brill, 1966), pp. 81, 85-86.

sky.[1] Innes[2] and Stadelmann[3] point out that this word designates the abode of celestial beings. The thought being emphasized is that God is above the שָׁמַיִם and שַׁחַק in verses 6-7. Thus, His superiority to all creatures is the thrust here. The verbs עֲרֹךְ and דָּמָה are employed together also in Isaiah 40:18.[4]

The construct בִּבְנֵי אֵלִים is a matter of debate among the scholars. Space can only permit a brief treatment. The present writer sees no relationship to Genesis 6; other sources can be observed for the problem.[5] For the use of

[1]Robert Baker Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, second edition, reprint (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1897), p. 265. *BDB*, p. 1007. KB, p. 961. The *LXX* has νεφέλιας. E. W. Hengstenberg says the word ". . . is employed poetically for the heavens, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 3 Vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1860), III, 100. Jastrow states it is the "name of one of the seven heavens," II, 1551.

[2]D. K. Innes, "Heaven and Sky in the Old Testament," *The Evangelical Quarterly*, XLIII:3 (July-September, 1971), 146-47.

[3]Luis I. J. Stadelmann, *The Hebrew Conception of the World*, Analecta Biblica, 39 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), p. 55. See also pp. 93, 100.

[4]Hillers wants to see the same usage in Lamentations 2:13, but he amends the text to do so. See Delbert R. Hillers, *The Anchor Bible: Lamentations* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1972), p. 39.

5Leroy Birney, "An Exegetical Study of Genesis 6:1-4," *JETS*, XIII:I (Winter, 1970), 45. Meredith G. Kline, "Divine Kingship and Genesis 6:1-4, *WTJ*, XXIV:2 (May, 1962), 187-204.

the phrase in apocalyptic see Russell,[1] and for the use in

Ugaritic see Held.[2] The *Targum* has אוכלוסי מלאכיא, "army of

angels,"[3] while the *LXX* has υἱοῖς θεοῦ. Most scholars view

the construct as "angels" and/or "sons of God."[4] However,

Gesenius and Jouon hold that the expression does not mean

"sons of god(s)" but "beings of a class," that is, "an indi-

vidual being part of a divine being."[5] It seems that *KB*

carries the same thought by translating it "(individual)

gods."[6] One receives the impression that the last three

sources are speaking of false gods. Girdlestone concurs,

[1]D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), pp. 168, 202, 236.

[2]Moshe Held, "The Action-Result (Factitive-Passive Sequence of Identical Verbs in Biblical Hebrew and Ugaritic," *JBL*, LXXXIX:III (September, 1965), 280, fn. 37. Also see *UT*, pp. 357-58.

[3]See *Jastrow*, Vol. I, p. 25; Vol. II, p. 786. See the view expressed in P. S. Alexander, "The Targumin and Early Exegesis of 'Sons of God' in Genesis 6, *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 23:1 (Spring, 1972), 65-66.

[4]*BDB*, p. 42. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 534. Moll, "The Psalms," p. 483. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms*, p. 250. Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 2 Vols., translated by J. A. Baker (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), II, 194. Paul van Imschoot, *Theology of the Old Testament*. Vol. I: God, translated by Kathryn Sullivan and Fidelis Buck (New York: Desclee Company, 1954), pp. 12, 48, 108.

[5]*GKC*, pp. 401, 418. P. Paul Joüon, *Grammaire de l'Hebreu Biblique,* second edition (Rome: Pontificium Insti tutum Bibli,cum, 1947), unpublished English translation by Bruce K. Waltke, Dallas, Texas, p. 117.

[6]*KB*, p. 46.

"*Elim* is never used of the true God."[1] And Allis writes:

> *El* has two plurals in Hebrew *Elim* and *Elohim*. The former, which we may call the normal plural, is very rare, occurring only four times in the Old Testament (Exod. 15:11; Ps. 29:1; 89:7; Dan. 11:36) and whether in any of the four it is used of God is not certain.[2]

Then he goes on to demonstrate that in Psalm 29:1 they are "sons of God."[3] But DeQueker, who parallels Psalm 29 with 89:6-15, claims that 89:7 is speaking of the angels of Yahweh, and the expression בבני אלים is a direct parallel to קדשׁים in verses 6, 8.[4] Cross also states they are parallel terms and indicates the *LXX* and *Peshitta* agree.[5]

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[1]Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, p. 31.

[2]Oswald T. Allis, *The Old Testament: Its Claims and Its Critics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), p. 334. Cf. Frank M. Cross, Jr. and David Noel Freedman, "The Song of Miriam," *JNES*, XIV:4 (October, 1955), 242, 247 and Labuschagne, *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament*, pp. 77-80. In his discussion on these pages Labuschagne attempts to solve the issue by emendations, but he admits, ". . . this method of solving problems is undesirable." p. 80.

[3]Allis, *The Old Testament: Its Claims and Its Critics,* pp. 334-35.

[4]L. DeQueker, "Les Qedôsîm du Ps. lxxxix a la Lumiere des Croyances Semitiques," *ETL*, 39 (1963), 476, 480. Also see I. L. Seeligmann, "A Psalm From Pre-regal Times," *VT*, XIV:l (January, 1964), 81.

[5]Frank Moore Cross, Jr., *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1950), pp. 205-06.

DuMortier,[1] U. S. Leupold,[2] and Pope[3] view the creatures in verses 6, 7, 8 as all one group. The construct may be expressed as "sons of the mighty" which would still be a reference to Yahweh. Although there are differences among those cited, the present writer feels it is designating angels because of the parallelism and the general sense of the context. One cannot say for sure, but the poet may also have had in mind the כְּרֻבִים. Indeed, the fact is that Yahweh is far superior (incomparable) to angels, whether good or bad.

The incomparable superiority of Yahweh is carried on in verse 8. Here the קדשים have reverential awe for His unapproachable majesty. Rankin believes the concept here was emphasized after second Isaiah.[4] This view of Rankin is without evidence. Girdlestone seems to apply the term to earthly persons.[5] As already stated, the קדשים are celestial beings, preferably angels. DeQueker, who has written an

[1]DuMortier, "Un Rituel d'Intronisation: Le Ps. LXXXIX 2-38," p. 180.

[2]Ulrich S. Leupold, "Worship Music in Ancient Israel: Its Meaning and Purpose," *Canadian Journal of Theology,* XV:3-4 (1969), 177.

[3]Marvin H. Pope, *The Anchor Bible--Job* (Garden City, New York; Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), pp. 9, 41, 109.

[4]0. S. Rankin, *Israel's Wisdom Literature: Its Bearing on Theology and the History of Religion* (New York: Shocken Books, 1969), pp. 222-23.

[5]Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament,* p. 176.

entire article on the subject, states strongly, ". . . Ps. LXXXIX vise manifestement les anges. . . ."[1]

For some reason Driver says that רבה ונורא is abbreviated and should have הוא inserted between the two words.[2] The present author fails to see the necessity. This second part of verse 8 is a pattern that compares with several other portions of Scripture. See Culley for the total picture.[3] Snijders states that סביביו is peculiar and ". . . means those who are within his sphere of authority."[4] This is really not the sense of the context, and, besides, Yahweh's authority is universal.

The initial expression of verse 9 seems to be a repeat in concept of verse 7 and also Exodus 11:15. Culley has pointed out the parallels to portions of other psalm passages:

[1]DeQueker, "Les Qedôsîm du Ps. lxxxix à la Lumière des Croyances Semitiques," p. 469. See also Lipinski, *La Royauté De Yahwe Dans La Poésie Et Le Culte De L'Anciën-Israel*, pp. 281-82.
[2]G. R. Driver, "Abbreviations in the Massoretic Text," *Textus: Annual of the Hebrew University Bible Project, Vol. I,* edited by C. Rabin (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1960), p. 123.
[3]Robert C. Culley, *Oral Formulaic Language in the Biblical Psalms* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 63.
[4]L. A. Snijders, "The Adjective זו in the Ketubim," *Oudtestamentische Studiën*, edited by P. A. H. DeBoer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), p. 63, fn. 8. For another discussion on the word סביביו see M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, "Theory -and Practice of Textual Criticism, *Textus: Annual of the Hebrew University Bible Project, Vol. III*, edited by C. Rabin (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1963), p. 143, fn. 43.

Ps. 35:10 יהוה מי כמוך

Ps. 71:19 אלהים מי כמוך

Ps. 89:9[1] יהוה (אלהי צבאות) מי כמוך

For the different views on אלהי צבאות see Jacob.[2]

In this context the צבאות seems to refer to the קדשים and
בני אלים.

The form חסין is found only here in the Old Testament.[3]
Briggs[4] and Kennedy[5] want to change the word to חסדך, and in
doing so, Briggs keeps יה and Kennedy appears to drop it. The
basis of their thinking has some validity, since חסד is often
used with אמונה. Most keep the form in the text and translate
it "strength," "strong," "might," or "mighty."[6] A closer
examination of the word and the context seem to retain the
latter view. Besides the form in the text, *KB* gives another

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[1]Culley, *Oral Formulaic Language in the Biblical Psalms*, p. 54.

[2]Edmond Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament*, translated by A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allock (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1958), pp. 54-55.

[3]*BDB*, p. 340.

[4]Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, II, 255-56.

[5]Kennedy, *An Aid to the Textual Amendment of the Old Testament,* p. 57.

[6]The LXX has δυνατòς. The *Targum* has חסינא. Cf. *Jastrow*, I, 437, 488-89.

word and assigns it to 89:9, חֹסֶן.[1] The lexicon also places

a root above (חסן) with the meaning of "strength."[2] Delitzsch

claims it ". . . is a Syriasm; for the verbal stem   is

native to the Aramaic, in which   =שַׁדָּי."[3] Although

Gordon is not exactly sure of the meaning, there is a Ugaritic

word of comparative interest,   . He says that *ḥsn* is

". . . a kind of (military?) personnel. . . ."[4] If it were

so, then חסין יה would be an expression parallel to אלהי

צבאות in meaning at least.

Contextually, the present writer believes that Ethan

employed this word deliberately. This will be emphasized in

the exegesis of verses 10-13, at the end of which the rela-

tionship of verses 6-9, especially verse 9, will be handled.

יה is another word that merits brief discussion.[5] it

is found thirty-five times in the Psalms.[6] There is no doubt

that it is a shortened form of יהוה. The question revolves

[1]*KB*, p. 319.
[2]*Ibid*.
[3]Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, III,
36. Cf. *BDB*, p. 340.
[4]*UT,* p. 403.
[5]For an interesting discussion see Christian D.
Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition
of the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc.
1966), pp. 374-94.
[6]Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament,* p. 36.

around whether it is a superlative or not. Some have claimed it is a superlative, others deny it.[1] Thomas lists 89:9 with other passages and declares that the examples ". . . are too unsound textually to permit any view to be based upon them."[2] While it cannot be dogmatically stated, the present writer can see a superlative force here. This also will be emphasized at the conclusion of the next quatrain.

The 'Athnah and the *waw* are important to the translation. With the 'Athnah in its present position, the *waw* has to be translated something like *also* because of the plural form סביבותיך. It is possible that חסין is an adjective used as a substantive in juxtaposition to יה and translated, "strong or mighty is Jah." If the 'Athnah remains where it is, this expression belongs to the first part of the verse. But if the 'Athnah were moved to כמוך, the expression makes good sense with the second part. It could be an exclamatory sentence, "Mighty is Jah, also your faithfulness surrounds you!" This is only a suggestion of the possibility as the construction is difficult.[3]

[1]D. Winton Thomas, "A Consideration of Some Unusual Ways of Expressing the Superlative in Hebrew, *VT*, 111:3 (July, 1953) , 214.
[2]*Ibid*.
[3]A slightly different rendering can be seen in Labuschagne, *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament*, p. 105

Thus, two attributes of Yahweh that are so pertinent to the following verses are set forth, *might* and *faithfulness*. Though Briggs does not agree on one point with the present writer, his words are appropriate, "The divine attributes are here personified, as often, and are regarded as constantly in His company, attending upon Him and ready to execute His pleasure."[1] It is just as Podechard writes, "Sans rival et tout-puisant, it pent tenir toutes ses promesses."[2]

Verses 10-13

אַתָּה מוֹשֵׁל בְּגֵאוּת הַיָּם בְּשׂוֹא גַלָּיו אַתָּה תְשַׁבְּחֵם

אַתָּה דִכִּאתָ כֶחָלָל רָהַב בִּזְרוֹעַ עֻזְּךָ פִּזַּרְתָּ אוֹיְבֶיךָ

לְךָ שָׁמַיִם אַף־לְךָ אָרֶץ תֵּבֵל וּמְלֹאָהּ אַתָּה יְסַדְתָּם

צָפוֹן וְיָמִין אַתָּה בְרָאתָם תָּבוֹר וְחֶרְמוֹן בְּשִׁמְךָ יְרַנֵּנוּ

In this quatrain it is Yahweh again who is preeminent. Ward explains:

> . . . vss. 10-13, also treat a single theme. . . . They are bound together by the constant repetition of the second person pronoun. The recurring אתה (10a, 10b, 11a, 12b, 13a) and ך (twice in 11b, twice in 12a, once in 13b) produce a staccato that sounds consistently through the whole unit.[3]

[1]Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, II, 256.

2E. Podechard, *Le Psautier*, 2 Vols. (Lyons: Facultes Catholicques, 1949), II, 113.

[3]Ward, "The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX," p. 325. Cf. Pius Drijvers, *The Psalms: Their Structure and Meaning* (Frieburg, West Germany: Herder KG, 1965), pp. 62-63.

The emphasis here is different. In verses 6-9 the
stress was upon the utmost supremacy of Yahweh in His person
in the heavenly realm. Verses 10-13 now reveal His unpar-
alleled work in the earthly realm. It is not as Gaster pur-
ports, ". . . this action is taken to evince the supremacy of
Yahweh over the *b^{e}nê elim* and the *qedoshim*. . . ."[1] Yahweh's
supremacy was already noted in verses 6-9; Gaster has grossly
misunderstood the poet here.

Probably more than any other portion of this psalm,
verses 10-13 have been perverted to a great extent by many
scholars.[2] Even more so than verses 6-9, this present qua-
train is compared to the findings of the ancient Near East by
scholars. Thus, a deliberate discussion of length is enter-
tained here in order that the context and the issues may be
ascertained clearly. There will be allusions to some matters
which will be fully dealt with in the next two chapters.

Verses 10-11 are a synthetic parallelism. God's
absolute control of the sea is declared in verse 10. The

[1]Theodore H. Gaster, *Thespis: Ritual, Myth and Drama in the Ancient Near East*, revised edition, Harper Torchbooks (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966), p. 447. For an evaluation see R. T. O'Callaghan, "Ritual, Myth and Drama in Ancient Literature," *Orientalia*, 22 (Nova Series, 1953), 418-25.

[2]Cf. Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967), p. 108. Johnson assigns vss. 6-13 to a cultic festival, a matter which will be treated in chapter five.

main problem is the word בְּשׂוֹא. Gesenius says that it is

"perhaps only a scribal error."[1] Driver changes it to שְׁאוּן.[2]

But Hengstenberg plainly views it as ". . . a noun abbreviated

from the infinitive of נשׂא. . . ."[3] And Delitzsch postulates,

". . . שׂוֹא is . . . so far as language is concerned, either

as an infinitive . . . or as an infinitival noun, like שְׂיא,

loftiness, Job xx.6, with a likewise rejected *Nun*."[4] The

form is best construed as an infinitive.

Kennedy wants to alter תְּשַׁבְּחֵם to תַּשְׁבִּיתֵם.[5] Dahood ren-

ders the word as "muzzle"; he takes it from the Ugaritic root

sbh.[6]

Verse 11 is treated in the most abused manner. Re-

search bears out that most of it revolves around three words

that are combined together some way or another, הַיָּם (vs. 10),

רָהַב (vs. 11), בְּרָאתָם (vs. 13). All of the following quotes

are said in reference to verses 10-13. According to

Mowinckel, "רהב is another name for the primeval monster

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[1]*GKC*, p. 217.

[2]Driver, "Abbreviations in the Massoretic Text," p. 124.

[3]Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, III, 102.

[4]Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, III, 37. Cf. *BDB*, p. 670 and *KB*, p. 635. For the *LXX* and *Peshitta* see Ahlström, *Psalm* 89, p. 67.

[5]Kennedy, *An Aid to the Textual Amendment of the Old Testament*, p. 76.

[6]Dahood, *The Anchor Bible--Psalms II*, pp. 314, 112-13.

of the sea, which Yahweh conquered before the creation.
. . . "[1] Ruprecht claims, "Ps. lxxiv 13 f. and lxxxix 11
liegt dieser Kampf von der Weltschöpfung. . . "[2] Clay puts
it a little differently, "In this conflict the hostile crea-
ture and its helpers are overthrown, after which the heavens
and earth are created."[3] And Dahood concurs, "Having dis-
posed of his foes Rahab, Leviathan, et al., Yahweh set about
fashioning and arranging heaven and earth."[4] Pedersen plainly
affirms, "And the creation he performed by defeating the
dragon, *tannīn*, Rahab or Leviathan and his helpers. . . ."[5]
And Weiser admits similar thoughts.[6]

While the above place a battle before creation, others
place it at creation. For example, Stuhlmueller writes,

[1]Sigmund Mowinckel, "שַׁחַל," *Hebrew and Semitic Studies Presented to Godfrey Rolles Driver*, edited by D. Winton Thomas and W. D. McHardy (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 97.

[2]Eberhard Ruprecht, "Das Nilpferd im Hiobbuch," *VT*, XXI:2 (April, 1971), 228.

[3]Albert T. Clay, *Light on the Old Testament from Babel* (Philadelphia: The Sunday School Times Company, 1907), pp. 69-70.

[4]Dahood, *The Anchor Bible--Psalms I,* p. 51.

[5]Johs Pedersen, "Canaanite and Israelite Cultus," *Acta Orientalia*, 18:1 (1939), 9. Also see his discussion in *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), III, 443-44.

[6]Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary*, translated by Herbert Hartwell, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 592.

"Present in some biblical texts is the Semitic notion that creation was a struggle against the forces of chaos."[1] Those with corresponding views are Brandon,[2] Crim,[3] Imschoot,[4] Kidner,[5] Lipinski,[6] and Podechard.[7] One answer to all these misinterpretations might simply be that the biblical account of creation is silent on the matter. Hasel states, "The battle myth which is a key motif in Enuma elish is completely absent in Gn l."[8] Another answer will be given below in a positive way.

[1]Carroll Stuhlmueller, "The Theology of Creation in Second Isaiah, *CBQ*, XXI:4 (October, 1959), 432.

[2]S. G. F. Brandon, *Creation Legends of the Ancient Near East* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963), pp. 154-55.

3Keith R. Crim, *The Royal Psalms* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1962), p. 106.

[4]Imschoot, *Theology of the Old Testament*. Vol. I: God, p. 91.

[5]Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, edited by D. J. Wiseman (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1967), p. 45.

[6]Edward Lipinski, "Yahweh Malak, *Biblica*, 44:4 (1963), 434-35.

[7]Podechard, *Le Psautier*, II, 113. Cf. DuMortier, "Un Rituel d'Intronisation: Le Ps. LXXXIX 2-38, 180-81. Though W. F. Albright does not refer to psalm 89, his view is in *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, second edition, Anchor Books edition, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957), p. 271.

[8]Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Significance of the Cosmology in Genesis I in Relation to Ancient Near Eastern Parallels," *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, X:l (January, 1972), 19.

Returning to. verse 11, Yahweh utterly subdued the opposition with telling force.[1] Shunary points out how the *Targum* omits זרוע in order to avoid anthropomorphism.[2] But the big question remains, who or what is רהב?[3] The two opposing camps are clearly identified by Robinson:

> The ancient enemy is identified with the sea--always an element of mystery and fear to the Hebrew--and has a name of its own--Rahab, identified by older commentators with Egypt, but by the newer school of students of comparative religion shown to be the analogue of Tiamat.[4]

Many, many scholars advocate that Rahab of 89:11 is a "monster," "evil monster," "abyss monster," "dragon," etc. Besides those mentioned above, a few others holding this view

[1]Nicholas J. Tromp has a very interesting study on destruction which involves 89:10-11, but it is much too lengthy to employ here. Cf. *Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament*, Biblica et Orientalia, N. 21 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), pp. 80-83.

[2]Jonathan Shunary, "Avoidance of Anthropomorphism in the Targum of Psalms," *Textus: Annual of the Hebrew University Bible Project,* Vol. V, edited by S. Talmon (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1966), p. 141. For some usages of the word see Anton Jirku, "Kana 'anaische Psalmenfragmente im der Vorisraelitischen Zeit Palastinas und Syriens," *JBL*, LII (1933), 118.

[3]For Greek and Syriac variants see J. Frederic Berg, *The Influence of the Septuagint upon the Pe Sitta Psalter* (Leipzig: W. Drugulin, 1895), p. 120.

[4]Theodore H. Robinson, "The God of the Psalmists," *The Psalmists*, edited by D. C. Simpson (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), p. 28. Robinson also belongs to the group that connects a battle with creation, pp. 28-29.

are Barr,[1] Barth,[2] Childs,[3] Fishbane,[4] Herbert,[5] Kiessling,[6] Kline,[7] and Pritchard.[8] Almost all of them relate 89:11 to Psalm 74:14. There are many passages that other scholars with the "sea monster" concept relate to 89:11. A few selected ones will be cited: Pope connects Job 9:13 with verse eleven,[9] Ginsburg--Isaiah 51:9,[10] May--Habakkuk 3:13-15,[11]

[1]Wayne E. Barr, "A Comparison and Contrast of the Canaanite World View and the Old Testament World View" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Divinity School, University of Chicago, 1963), p. 175.

[2]Christoph F. Barth, *Introduction to the Psalms*, translated by R. A. Wilson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), p. 54.

[3]Brevard S. Childs, "A Traditio-Historical Study of the Reed Sea Tradition," *VT*, XX:4 (October, 1970), 413.

[4]Michael Fishbane, "Jeremiah IV 23-26 and Job III 3-13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern," *VT*, XXI:2 (April, 1971), 159.

[5]A. S. Herbert, *Worship in Ancient Israel*, Ecumenical Studies in Worship, No. 5 (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1959), p. 25.

[6]Nicolas K. Kiessling, "Antecedents of the Medieval Dragon in Sacred History," *JBL*, LXXXIX:II (June, 1970), 168.

[7]Meredith G. Kline, *By Oath Consigned* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1968), p. 60.

[8]James B. Pritchard, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), pp. 189-90.

[9]Pope, *The Anchor Bible--Job*, p. 70.

[10]H. L. Ginsburg, "The Arm of Yhwh in Isaiah 51-63 and the Text of Isaiah 53:10-11," *JBL*, LXXXVII:II (June, 1958), 152-53.

[11]Herbert G. May, "Some Cosmic Connotations of *Mayim Rabbîm*, 'Many Waters,'" *JBL*, LXXIV:I (March, 1955), 9-11.

Vriezen--Amos 9:3,[1] Graham and May--Isaiah 27:1.[2] In con-
trast Gordon[3] and Wakeman[4] discuss these and other verses and
concepts and never mention 89:11. Gray dogmatically asserts:

> In the Hymn of Praise which precedes the royal plaint
> in Ps. lxxxix the supremacy of God among the gods (vv.
> 6-7), and his victory over the waters, and over the
> monster of the deep, Rahab (vv. 9-10 [10-11]), are com-
> bined with the motif of God's covenant with David (vv.
> 3, 4, 19 ff. 14-5, 20 ff.]). Here, however, there is
> no reference to the Exodus. . . .[5]

A direct conflict takes place on the same page in The
Interpreter's Bible. McCullough states that Rahab is not a
name for Egypt, Poteat says it is.[6] In agreement with Poteat

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[1]Th. C. Vriezen, *The Religion of Ancient Israel*
(Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), pp. 44, 165.

[2]William Creighton Graham and Herbert Gordon May,
*Culture and Conscience: An Archaeological Study of the New
Religious Past in Ancient Israel* (Chicago: The University
of Chicago Press, 1936), p. 135.

[3]Cyrus H. Gordon, "Leviathan: Symbol of Evil,"
Biblical Motifs, Origins and Transformations, P. W. Lown
Institute of Advanced Jewish Studies, Brandeis University,
Studies and Texts: Vol. III (Cambridge, Massachusetts:
Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 1-9.

[4]Mary K. Wakeman, "The Biblical Earth Monster in the
Cosmogonic Combat Myth," *JBL*, LXXXVIII:III (September, 1969),
313-20.

[5]John Gray, "The Kingship of God in the Prophets and
Psalms, *VT*, IV (1954), 9.

[6]W. Stewart McCullough, Edwin McNeill Poteat, "89,"
The Interpreter's Bible, 12 Vols. (New York: Abingdon Press,
1955), IV, 481.

are Bruce[1] and Clarke[2] and a score of others.

Considering the words in the text, the context itself, and analogies, the exodus and Egypt are the emphasis of Ethan. גאות in verse 10 refers to the "swelling of the sea," but it also has the connotation of "smoke rising up" (Isa. 9:17) and "pride" (Ps. 17:10).[3] In the same verse שוא speaks of the "rising or roaring of the waves," but it (נשא) too has a meaning of "exalting oneself in arrogance" (Prov. 30:13; Num. 16:3; I Kings 1:5).[4] And the word רהב (vs. 11) has a similar meaning, "proud," "defiant," "arrogance."[5] It appears that the poet's words and parallelism were well-chosen, and their significance will enter the discussion below.

The context of verses 10-11 matches the revelation in song in Exodus 15. Verse 10 summarizes perfectly the expressions in Exodus 15:7-8; verse 11 does the same with Exodus 15:4-6, 9-10.[6] How does רהב fit in? The present writer

[1]F. F. Bruce, "Rahab," *The New Bible Dictionary*, edited by J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1962), p. 1074.

[2]Arthur G. Clarke, *Analytical Studies in the Psalms* (Kansas City, Kansas; Walterick Publishers, 1949), p. 222.

[3]*BDB*, p. 145. *KB*, p. 162.

[4]*BDB*, p. 672. *KB*, p. 637.

[5]*BDB*, p. 923. *KB*, p. 876.

[6]For a discussion of the word עזך see Samuel E'. Loewenstamm, "The Lord is My Strength and My Glory," *VT*, XIX:4 (October, 1969), 466-68.

concurs with Habel that "In Ps. 87:4 and Isa. 30:7 Rahab is clearly identified with Egypt which would support the identi-fication of the same in Ps. 89:11."[1] This quote from a foot-note stems from a large discussion of which a small portion is taken:

> Tannin, for example, is used as a metaphor to describe Pharaoh who is given the "scattering treatment" applied to Yam (Ezek. 29:3-5) and made a torrent of blood. . . . Not only is the "battle for kingship" imagery applied to the exodus event, but Pharaoh, the foe *par excellence,* is described in terms of the mythological dragons enu-merated among the mighty acts in Baal's rise to king-ship. Yet the enemy of Yahweh is still Pharaoh! This fact becomes even clearer in Isa. 51:9-11 where the same victorious arm of Yahweh, who once divided the sea, hewed Rahab, and pierced Tannin for the redeemed to pass over. . . In the context Tannin and Rahab logically refer to Pharaoh, the mightiest of Yahweh's historical foes.[2]

Habel moves on to point out that Tannin and Leviathan in Ps. 74:12-14 are Pharaoh.[3] A similar thought is expressed differently by Eerdmans. In commenting on 89:11, he writes:

> Ps. lxxxvii4 and Is. xxx7 Rahab was a name for Egypt where the yearly inundations made the land like a great sea, and the Pharao life a Tannin living in the water (Ezek.. xxix3, xxxii2).[4]

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[1]Norman C. Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal: A Conflict of Religious Cultures* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1964), p. 70, fn. 59.

[2]*Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 65. Cf. pp. 83-84. Though Habel holds these views, he seems to relate 89:6-11 to the creation ac-counts in Scripture. See Norman C. Habel, "'Yahweh, Maker of Heaven and Earth': A Study in Tradition Criticism," *JBL,* XCI:III (September, 1972), 334-35.

[4]Eerdmans, "The Hebrew Book of Psalms," p. 423.

Harrelson plainly says, "The real monster slain by Yahweh was the Pharaoh and his forces."[1] Therefore, Pharaoh the monarch of Egypt is Rahab. But is there an enemy behind an enemy? Pharaoh is called תַּנִּין which means "serpent," "dragon," "sea-monster,"[2] and is called רהב meaning "proud," "defiant," "arrogant."[3] May suggests:

> The enemy defeated by Yahweh is something more than just the enemy of Israel or of an individual Israelite; he is the enemy of Yahweh and identified with the corporate whole of Yahweh's antagonists.[4]

All of this can only point in one direction; Satan is the enemy behind the enemy. It is obvious that Satan is not a dragon, but the meaning of the imagery leaves no doubt as to the significance of the symbol. Genesis 3 notes the first instance in the Bible; Satan here is the subtle serpent. The last mention of Satan in Revelation 20 removes any question

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[1]Walter Harrelson, "The Significance of Cosmology in the Ancient Near East," *Translating and Understanding the Old Testament: Essays in Honor of Herbert Gordon May*, edited by Harry Thomas Frank and William L. Reed (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 248.

[2]*BDB*, p. 1072. *KB*, p. 1034.

[3]The meaning from the Hebrew lexicons had been given earlier. The *LXX* has ὑπερήφανον which has the same meaning. Cf. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, revised by Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie, Supplement edited by E. A. Barber (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 1864.

[4]May, "Some Cosmic Connotations of *Mayim Rabbîm*, 'Many Waters'," p. 11. Cf. p.-20.--Allusions are made to the same concept by Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, pp. 62-63.

of identification. Verse two reads:

> And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a-thousand years.

A study of the names reveals much more. In Revelation 12, Satan is associated with water. In Isaiah 14 and I Timothy 3 the arrogance and pride of Satan are recorded. Other passages and thoughts could be mentioned, but the present writer believes the point has been made. The evidence is multiplied in extra-Biblical material. Wallace avers, "The dragon theme may be classed as almost universal in mythology."[1] A great number of occasions are listed by Gaster in *Thespis*.[2]

Thus Satan is the power behind. Pharaoh in emblematic form. Similar instances are found in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. Pharaoh received the appellations of a sea monster or dragon in poetic language. And this seems to be most appropriate. The exodus was by far the focal point in Israel's

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[1]Howard Wallace, "Leviathan and the Beast in Revelation," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, XI:3 (September, 1948), 61. Besides the instances enumerated by Wallace, see Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, pp. 123-24 and Donald W. Fatten, *The Biblical Flood and the Ice Epoch*. (Seattle: Pacific Meridian Publishing Company, 1966), p. 191.
[2]Gaster, *Thespis*, pp. 137-42, 148-49. Cf. Edward Ulback, "The Serpent in Myth and Scripture," *BS*, XC:360 (October, 1933), 449-55.

faith and history[1] as the bulk of the Old Testament does testify. Future events were even measured by it. The covenant name of Yahweh was revealed as to its meaning just prior to the memorable event. Israel was redeemed with blood and with power. Statan has been Israel's enemey ever since because he is the enemey of all God's purposes. But as Yahweh's power Delitzsch comments on כחלל, ". . . in its fall the proudly defiant kingdom is like one fatally smitten."[2] Isaiah 30:7 denotes it so clearly with irony that Egypt is an inoperative monster. Pope's translation of Job 26:12-14 corresponds extrememly well with Psalm 89:11:

> By his power he quelled the Sea,
> By his cunning he smote Rahab.
> By his wind he bagged the Sea,
> His hand pierced the fleeting serpent.
> Lo, these are but bits of his power;
> What a faint whisper we hear of him!
> Who could attend his mighty roar?[3]

Many of the scholars mentioned above were correct in interpreting Rahab as a monster, but they had failed to see Ethan's direct reference to the exodus. A question might remain on whether Israel borrowed רהב from mythology as

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[1]Cf. G. Ernest Wright, *The Old Testament Against Its Environment*, Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 2 (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1950), pp. 49-50.

[2]Delitzsfch, *Commentary on the Psalms,* III, 37.

[3]Pope, *The Anchor Bible—Job*, pp. 163-64.

von Rad indicates they did.[1] As shown above, the imagery was common in the ancient Near East, so that it is possible that Israel borrowed imagery, but not mythology.[2] The problem will be handled fully in a later chapter.

Verses 12-13 do not present quite the involution of interpretations as the previous parallelism did. At once, the poet asserts that שמים and ארץ are owned solely by Yahweh.[3] The word תבל defines the next group of words specifically. According to Stadelmann:

> The number of terms used to designate "earth" illustrates the view held by the ancient Hebrews regarding the spatio-physical world. Their notion of the world which basically is the concrete sphere of the ground and gradually widens its scope toward the concept of inhabited world as a whole. The same thought pattern is observed, although less explicitly, in the use of the word *tbl* "world," which occurs almost exclusively in poetry. We may compare it with its Akkadian equivalent *tābalu* which occurs in the expression *eli tabali* "by land," which is parallel to *eli nāru* "by water (river)." A survey of all the passage [*sic*] where *tbl*

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[1]Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols., translated by D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1962), I, 151.

[2]For a rather balanced statement see Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, II, 114 and Kyle M. Yates, Jr., "Psalm 89," *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, edited by Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), p. 528. But F. F. Bruce seems to confuse the issue. Cf. *The New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes* (Grand Rapids; Will. B. Eerdmans, 1968), p. 43.

[3]Marco Treves takes these words alone and claims that Psalm 24:1 imitates 89:12 and, thus, is later because 24:1 begins with the earth. This appears to be an extreme use of analogy. Cf. "The Date of Psalm XXIV," *VT*, X:4 (October, 1960), 432-33.

is mentioned shows that this word is used synonymously with 'rs. But what distinguishes the term *tbl* from *'rs* is a concrete intuition of its more particular designation as the habitable part of the world.[1]

יסדתם shows that תבל was established firmly as only Yahweh could do.[2] In his discussion of 89:10-12 Labuschagne states:

> In Ps. 89:10f., where mythological terms are employed to describe the deliverance from Egypt, the idea of Yahweh's creative activity is likewise used as an additional argument to illustrate His power.[3]

Verse 13 commences and continues as a problem to many scholars. It is attested by several of them that צפון וימין and תבור וחרמון are four sacred or cultic mountains.[4] But this is a view that is not only unnecessary, but unfounded.[5] Both Patton and Savignac see this verse as a difficult text.

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[1]Stadelmann, *The Hebrew Conception of the World*, pp. 129-30. Cf. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, p. 264 and Podechard, *Le Psautier*, II, 120. The *LXX* has the word οἰκουμενην, not κόσμος. Cf. *BDB*, p. 385 and *KB*, pp. 1018, 6-7, 359.

[2]Cf. Pope, *The Anchor Bible--Job*, p. 250.

[3]Labuschagne, *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament*, p. 110.

[4]The following two works have views of others as well as their own: Dahood, *The Anchor Bible--Psalms II,* p. 314 and Oswaldus Mowan, "Quatuor Montes Sacri in Ps. lxxxix, 13?" *Verbum Domini*, 41 (1963), 11-20. A less extreme view is held by Crim, *The Royal Psalms*, pp. 106-07. Cf. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 2. vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), Vol. 2, p. 281. Most of these views are based on *spn*, Baal's habitat. See *UT*, p. 475.

[5]Cf. Podechard, *Le Psautier, II*, 113. Many other works deny a sacred or cultic connotation.

Patton follows the *LXX* (θαλάσσας) and translates the first
two words, "Sapon and the sea. . . ."[1] After a brief dis-
cussion, Savignac's conclusion is "Tu as créé le ciel nuageux
(sâphôn) et la mer . . . "[2] Actually, there is no need for
"cloudy skies" and "sea" here. The "north and "south" fit
the context extremely well. It is true that שׁמים is in the
context, but that is only natural when creation is in view.
However, the thrust appears to be in the earthly realm. Be-
sides, this is in a larger context referring to the exodus.
Even so, the meaning is not clear. Delitzsch[3] and Scroggie[4]
are among many who say that Mount Tabor and Mount Hermon
refer to west and east, which is very unlikely. Kirkpatrick
does not agree with the above scholars, ". . . because they
are the grandest and most conspicuous natural features in
Palestine."[5]

The point seems to be much simpler than all the
efforts offered above. Other passages of Scripture tell of
God's creation rejoicing or praising Him because of His

[1]Patton, *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms*,
p. 19.

[2]J. de Savignac, "Note Sur le Sens du Terme *SAPHON*
dans Quelques Passages de la Bible,'" *VT*, III:1 (January,
1953), 96.

[3]Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, III, 37.

[4]W. Graham Scroggie, *The Psalms*, 4 viols., revised edi-
tion (London: Pickering and Inglis, Ltd., 1948), II, 231.

[5]Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 535.

glorious person and work. And so it is here, בשמך ירננו.

> Indeed the whole earth, from one end to the other (*the north and the south*), is His and the most noticeable features of Palestine, *Mts. Tabor and Hermon*, are testimonies and monuments to His greatness.[1]

His greatness was displayed at the exodus, therefore, the whole earth and Mts. Tabor and Hermon possibly representing all mountains,[2] ". . . are happy to acclaim his right, by act of creation, to rule."[3] As the creation acknowledges its Creator, the earthly realm sings to praise Yahweh as the heavenly realm did in verses 6-9. In observing this, Kissane rightly connects the passage to the exodus, "Canaan is God's 'inheritance' (Exod. 15:17), of which He disposes as He wills."[4] While the limits of north and south are a matter of debate to some, and while the significance of the geographical positions of the named mountains are argued by others, the context leaves no doubt that an earlier work of Yahweh (creation) is joyous over a later work of Yahweh (exodus).

Yet some scholars have the audacity to unite this

[1]Leslie S. M'Caw and J. A. Motyer, "The Psalms," *NBCR*, edited by D. Guthrie, *et al* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970), p. 506.

[2]Cf. Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, II, 257.

[3]Poteat, Exposition of Psalm "89," p. 481.

[4]Kissane, *The Book of Psalms*, II, 96.

portion of Scripture with mythology.[1] Ringgren does so, yet his work is entitled *The Faith of the Psalmists*.[2] Certainly, the ramifications of this need no explanation.

Verses 14-17

<div dir="rtl">

לְךָ זְרוֹעַ עִם־גְּבוּרָה תָּעֹז יָדְךָ תָּרוּם יְמִינֶךָ

צֶדֶק וּמִשְׁפָּט מְכוֹן כִּסְאֶךָ חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת יְקַדְּמוּ פָנֶיךָ

אַשְׁרֵי הָעָם יוֹדְעֵי תְרוּעָה יְהוָה בְּאוֹר־פָּנֶיךָ יְהַלֵּכוּן

בְּשִׁמְךָ יְגִילוּן כָּל־הַיּוֹם וּבְצִדְקָתְךָ יָרוּמוּ

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The context now moves back to the historical realm. Unity is described by Ward:

> Vss. 14-17 can also be distinguished as a quatrain. The oft repeated ךָ carries over here from the previous quatrain. *Thine arm* (14a) and *thy name* (17a) are balanced in the first and last lines. The repeated פניך (15b, l6b) joins the middle lines together. And the decisive stress upon צדק in the last stichos (17b) echoes the חסד ואמת and צדק ומשפע of the second line, binding up the whole.[3]

Ward has hinted at the incomparable power noted in these verses. Every single word in verse 14 is replete with the strength of an unconquerable warrior, Yahweh Himself.

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[1] Langdon Gilkey, *Maker of Heaven and Earth: A Study of the Christian Doctrine of Creation*, Anchor Books edition (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), p. 316. Paul Humbert, "La Relation de Genese 1 et du Psaume 104 avec la Liturgie du Nouvel--An Israëlite," *Revue d'Historie et de Philosophie Religieuses*, 15:1-2 (Janvier-Avril, 1935), 1-27. Especially see p. 23.

[2] Helmer Ringgren, *The Faith of the Psalmists* (Philadelphia; Fortress Press, 1963), pp. 94-96.

[3] Ward, "The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX," p. 325.

כסאך and פניך in verse 15 also denote power. Also, words in verses 16-17 do the same.

This only proves that the exodus is foremost in the mind of the poet. Thoughts and words in these four verses run parallel to Exodus 15 in a most convincing manner. Space will not be given here to draw the parallels, but the study is enriching. That is why the present writer believes Ethan had chosen his words well in verse 9, חסין יה. It served as a perfect introduction to the exodus power in verses 10-11, 14-15, to creation power in verses 12-13, and to enabling power in verses 16-17. Moreover, that expression in verse 9 is quite close to Exodus 15:2 ff. And it seems quite possible that the author began his song in 89:2 based upon the commencing of song in Exodus 15:1. Labuschagne says, ". . . vs. 10 contains a description of the event at the Reed Sea, and vss. 14 f. allude to the Exodus events."[1]

Returning to verse 14 in particular, the latter portion of the verse provides an interesting study. Muilenberg has a comparison on anthropomorphism in the psalms and the ancient Near East,[2] while Shunary gives the view of the

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[1]Labuschagne, *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament*, p. 105.

[2]James Muilenburg, "A Liturgy on the Triumphs of Yahweh," *Studia Biblica et Semitica* (Wageningen: H. Veenman en Zonen, 1966), pp. 241-42.

Targum, not only for verse 14, but also for verses 15-16.[1]
And Soffer relates the instances in the *LXX* for verses 11,
14, 15, 16.[2]

Except for one letter, the first part of 89:15 and
the last of Psalm 97:2 are identical. Culley has shown the
parallel:

89:15 צדק ומשפט מכון כסאך

97:2[3] צדק ומשפט מכון כדאו

With righteousness[4] and justice as the foundation of
Yahweh's throne, His administrative government of sovereignty
really needs no further comment. In reference to מכון,
Gaster says "This metaphor is admirably illustrated by the
fact that the Egyptian hieroglyphic sign for "right, nor-
malcy" (*mu'at*), viz.,   originally meant *the base of a
throne*."[5]

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[1]Shunary, "Avoidance of Anthropomorphism in the
Targum of Psalms," pp. 135, 139, 141.

[2]Arthur Soffer, "The Treatment of Anthropomorphisms
and Anthropopathisms in the Septuagint of Psalms," *HUCA*,
XXVIII (1957), 86, 95-96.

[3]Culley, *Oral Formulaic Language in the Biblical
Psalms,* p. 81.

[4]For views of צדק with which the present writer does
not concur see C. F. Whitley, "Deutero-Isaiah's Interpreta-
tion of *Sedeq*," *VT*, XXII:4 (October, 1972), 471.

[5]Theodor H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the
Old Testament* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1969),
p. 769. For -a verification of *mu'at* see Alan Gardiner,
Egyptian Grammar, third edition, revised (London: Oxford

genii of sacred history . . . stand before His face like waiting servants watching upon His nod.[1]

What a basis this is for His people to experience enabling power in verses 16-17. אשרי reminds one of Psalm 1:1. But in this context, it applies to the העם "who know the joyful sound" (or "blast of the horn"). They are of the redeemed; a realization of those in Exodus 15:13. The poet seems to have moved on in time. These redeemed are experiencing the *shouts of joy* at the festive occasions in Numbers 23:21 and many of those following. This is not a dogmatic interpretation, but it appears to be the best. Of course, this was when Israel was obedient as the latter portion of verse 16 signifies. On such occasions Yahweh showered His favor upon them. Vermes gives a translation of the Targum:

> Blessed are the people . . . who walk, 0 Lord, in the light of the splendour of thy countenance and are found pure in the Judgment.[2]

Judgment is not implied in the passage. Verse 17 needs no explanation. The people respond to Yahweh's person and they are the recipients of His work. At the close of this quatrain, one can go back and note the conceptual tern. The incomparable person of Yahweh in the heavens is extolled in Verses 6-9 with heavenly beings rejoicing in Him.

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[1]Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, III, 38.

[2]G. Vermes, "The Torah is a Light," *VT*, VIII:4 (October, 1958), 437.

Verse 9 leads to the following verses. The incomparable work of Yahweh in the earth is exalted in verses 10-13 with all natural creation rejoicing in Him. Verse 14 returns to the historical event followed by the facts of heaven. Verses 16-17 go back to earth with His redeemed people rejoicing in His person and work. If there is anything the poet understands, it is Yahweh and His sovereignty, the great demonstration of His power at the exodus, and the joy His people can know because of His covenant loyalty and all its provisions. Verses 18-19

כִּי־תִפְאֶרֶת עֻזָּמוֹ אָתָּה וּבִרְצֹנְךָ תָּרִים קַרְנֵנוּ.
כִּי לַיהוָה מָגִנֵּנוּ וְלִקְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל מַלְכֵּנוּ

These verses form a parallelism that makes a perfect conclusion to verses 6-19, and at the same time seems to be preparation for verses 20-38.[1] The climax is set off by

כִּי . . . . כִּי . . . .. Verse 18 is directly related to verse 17 and yet it encompasses all the truth of verses 6-17. Although it is only noted by few scholars, there is a significant change of persons within the verse. It is significant because it aids the correct interpretation in the ensuing argument. The suffix on עֻזָּמוֹ is singular because its antecedent is הֶעָם, and can be rightly translated *their*. But the suffix on קַרְנֵנוּ is *our*. The *waw* ties the two together. If a paraphrase be

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[1]Gf. Ward, "The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX, p. 325.

permitted, the poet is saying that You (Yahweh) are the glory
of their strength, and by that same token, that is, You have
done something for them (the people years ago of verses 16-
17), so now Your favor does exalt[1] our horn. In other words,
what favor Yahweh had shown in time past, He is showing now
in the poet's day, even though the purposes are different.
As Kirkpatrick states, "By the change of person, the poet
claims his share in this glorious inheritance."[2]

A variety of interpretations can be listed for verse
19, but not by any means will all of them be entertained here.
Gray surmises that the word מגננו could be changed from "our
shield" to "our intercession" because "*mgn* is found in paral-
lelism with *gzy*" in a Ugaritic text.[3] The change, "our inter-
cession," does not fit the context nor the parallelism. There
is a word in Hebrew, *mgn*, that compares to the Ugaritic *mgn*,
but it is not the meaning in verse 19.[4] However, מגננו is

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[1]Either the *Kethiv* or *Qere* reading here is acceptable.
The *LXX* agrees with the *Qere* and the *Targum* agrees with the
Kethiv. The present writer prefers the *Kethiv* (*hiphil* form).

[2]Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 536.

[3]Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan*, p. 272. In another work,
Gray cites more support for his position. Cf. John Gray, The
Krt Text in the Literature of Ras Shamra, second edition
(Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), p. 69. Concurring are Patton,
Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms, p. 41 and Francis
D. Nichol, ed., "Psalm 89," *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible
Commentary*, 7 vols. (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald
Publishing Association, 1954), III, 838.

[4]Cf. *KB*, p. 493 and *UT*, p. 430.

only part of a larger problem.

Several scholars concur with Moran's conclusion:

From Ugaritic, too, we learn of the particle *l* (vocalization uncertain) with different uses. The first and commonest is the asseverative *l* (probably *la*), found also in Amorite. . . . Thus, in Psalms 89:19 we have "For truly is Yahweh (*l-YHWH*) our shield, truly the Holy One (*l-qedôs*) of Israel our king."[1]

Holladay, whose work is based upon *KB*, agrees with Moran's translation, but tends to disagree with *KB*.[2] Others hold that the *lamed* denotes possession and that מגננו and מלכנו do not refer to Yahweh.[3] Perowne says, "The rendering 'Jehovah is our shield' is against grammar."[4] Clarke concurs

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[1]William L. Moran, "The Hebrew Language in its Northwest Semitic Background," *The Bible and the Ancient Near East. Essays in honor of William Foxwell Albright*, edited by G. Ernest Wright (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961), p. 60. In agreement are C. F. Whitley, "Some Functions of the Hebrew Particles Beth and Lamedh," *JQR*, LXII:3 (January, 1972), 201; Ronald. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 53; and P. J. van Zijl, "A Possible Interpretation of Zech. 9:1 and the Function of 'the Eye' ('Ayin) in Zechariah," *JNSL*, I (1971), 66.

[2]Cf. William L. Holladay, ed., *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, based on the lexical work of L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971), p. 170. The expressions in *KB* indicate the opposite view, p. 494.

[3]C,f. Moll, "The Psalms," p. 483 and C. R. North, "The Religious Aspects of Hebrew Kingship," *ZAW*, Neuter Band: 1 01932), 22.

[4]Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, II, 150. Cf. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, III, 104-05 and Podechard, *Le Psautier*, II, 114-15, 121. The latter discusses the views of others.

with *KB* and views "shield" as a "metaphor for the king as protector of the people."[1] There is no doubt that Yahweh is protector and King, and most certainly He is the Holy One of Israel.[2] However, the change of persons, the present context, and the continuity of thought seem to demonstrate that "Israel's king . . . is Jahve's. . . ."[3] The word קרן appears again in verse 25 and refers to David. Since the word denotes strength, it parallels עז in verse 18. Thus, our horn, our shield, our king, all refer to David and his dynasty.[4] Barnes comments, ". . . their very protectors were themselves protected by Jehovah."[5]

The significance of the poet's present day has now come to the fore. He had already stated it in verses 4-5. The incomparable Yahweh has made a covenant that is permeated with covenant-loyalty. And, on the basis of this fact, He is the possessor and sustainer of that which He has established. It is Yahweh's covenant with David that is the thrust of his composition now. Therefore with verses 18-19, Ethan has

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[1]Clarke, *Analytical Studies in the Psalms*, pp. 211, 222.

[2]Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament*, 52-54.

[3]Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms,* III, 39. Cf. *JFB*, III, 294.

[4]Cf. Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, II, 258.

[5]Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament Psalms*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950), II, 375.

masterfully brought together the composite parts.

89:20-38 God's Covenant: Basis for Confidence

With the transition made and verse 20 picking up and continuing the thought, the poet now comes to the covenant he explicitly mentioned in verses 4-5. The exegetical treatment of verses 20-38 will be even less detailed than the previous. There are several reasons for this. Many of the verses and thoughts are directly from II Samuel 7 as indicated earlier. An in-depth exegesis would call for a handling of both passages. Also, there are not as many problems involved; most of the material is quite clear and self-explanatory. Serious grammatical problems are at a minimum. And the last reason, for a minimal exegesis is the treatment of those who draw ancient Near East comparisons and parallels. Much of the entire section is dealt with on a conceptual basis rather than a verse by verse basis.

Thus, the verses in Hebrew will be omitted at the commencement of each quatrain, and only employed when necessary. The present writer is not shirking a full exegesis of this rich passage; he is attempting to facilitate space and combine the purposes of the dissertation.

As for the structure, Ward explains, "The oracle (vss. 20-38) consists of five quatrains: (1) 20a, 20b, 21,

22; (2) 23-26; (3) 27-30; (4) 31-34; and (5) 35-38."[1] The expressions of thought, parallelisms, and repetitions more than demonstrate this intelligible arrangement.

Verses 20-22

The poet referred to the king of Israel in verses 18-19, which seems to be David according to that context and the one that follows. Verse 20 now commences the thought and, at the same time, introduces the specifics. The word אז, "then, at that time" points to the time or occasion.[2] But the latter of the following words presents a problem, דברת־בחזון

לחסידך.[3] Many of the manuscripts have the singular, לחסידך

On the question whether it is singular or plural, the scholars are about equally divided; and they are too abundant to cite here. Those who hold that the word is singular usually say it is applied to Nathan. And those who advocate the plural generally apply it to Samuel and Nathan. All agree that the vision is a reference to II Samuel 7, but verses 20-21 could also refer to I Samuel 16. The word is translated

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[1]Ward, "The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX," p. 326.

[2]Cf. John R. Wilch, *Time and Event* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), p. 88.

[3]William Emery Barnes shows how דברת is treated in the various mss. of the *Peshitta in The Peshitta Psalter According to the West Syrian Text: Edited with an Apparatus Criticus* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1904), pp. xvii, xxv, xxv i, , 138.

various ways from the basic meaning of *uprightness, loyalty, piety*.[1]

Ugaritic has influenced some scholars to emend a part of the expression שִׁוִּיתִי עֵזֶר עַל גִּבּוֹר, particularly the word עֵזֶר.[2] Albright argues:

> In Psalm lxxxix, 19[20], where the Authorized Version renders 'I have laid help upon one that is mighty . . .', Ugaritic evidence proves that we must translate 'I have placed a youth above the mighty man. . . The context shows that David is meant.[3]

What Albright has done is to exchange the Hebrew word עֵזֶר for the Ugaritic word *gzr*.[4] A few others have done the

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[1]Cf. *BDB*, p. 339; *KB*, p. 319; Glueck, *HESED in the Bible,* pp. 7-8; and David Baron, *Types, Psalms and Prophecies* (New York: American Board of Missions to the Jews, Inc., 1948), p. 211. For a different view see Mitchell Dahood, "Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography VII," *Biblica*, 50:3 (1969), 345.

[2]Note the views cited by Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, pp. 29-30 and A. S. van der Woude, "Zwei Alte Cruces im Psalter," *Studies on Psalms*, Deel XIII, *Oudtestamentische Studiën*, edited by P. A. H. DeBoer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), pp. 135-36.

[3]William Foxwell Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine* (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1971), p. 234. Cf. H. G. Jefferson, "Canaanite Literature and the Psalms," *The Personalist*, 39 (Los Angeles, 1958), 358 and Arnold A. Wieder, "Ugarit'ic-Hebrew Lexicographical Notes, *JBL*, LXXXIV: II (June, 1965) , 162.

[4]For *gzr* see *UT*, p. 463. Cf. Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan*, pp. 263-64 and Habel, "'Yahweh, Maker of Heaven and Earth'; A Study in Tradition Criticism," p. 331, fn. 40.

same.[1] In expressing his support for the view, Held accuses

KB for completely ignoring the matter in Hebrew lexicography.[2]

The entire problem is amply discussed by Allis who disagrees

with all the above and says:

> But the burden of proof would clearly rest with the one
> who proposed the new and exceptional meaning, and it
> would only be acceptable if the context clearly required
> it. Such is not the case here.[3]

The *RSV* has changed the word to נזר[4] and Allis has a

very significant reply to this conjectural emending:

> The RSV Old Testament Committee of which Dr. Albright
> was a member apparently disregarded the "must." For it
> preferred a rendering, "I have set the crown upon,"
> despite the fact that "crown" involved a conjectural
> emendation (changing *'ezer* into *nezer*), to the one which
> Dr. Albright regarded as a "must." The only warrant for
> the "must" is the desire to discover a Ugaritic word in
> this psalm-verse.[5]

Therefore, it is best to leave it as עזר and trans-

late it normally as *help*. Aid was conferred on David as a

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[1]Cf. James Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 139-41, but note especially Driver's view on p. 139. Cf. Ginsberg's view in Theodor H. Gaster, "An Ancient Eulogy on Israel: Deuteronomy 33:3-5, 26-29," *JBL*, LXVI (1947), 60.

[2]Held, "The Action-Result (Factitive-Passive) Sequence of Identical Verbs in Biblical Hebrew and Ugaritic," p. 278, fn. 31. See *KB*, 695-96; his attack is also directed at *Supplementum*, pp. 11776-220.

[3]Allis, *The Old Testament: Its Claims and Its Critics*, p. 330. But see his discussion prior to this on p. 329.

[4]Cf. A. R. Hulst, *The Old Testament Translation Problems* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), p. 110.

[5]Allis, *The Old Testament: Its Claims and Its Critics*, p. 330.

Divine gift. Kirkpatrick states that Yahweh "endowed him with the power and assigned to him the office of helping My people in their need."[1] David had been called a גבור in Samuel 16:18 and II Samuel 17:10.

The following expression parallels the former, הרימותי בחור מעם. The election of David did not haply come about. Yahweh had deliberately chosen him at His own volition.[2] See verse 4.

Verse 21 continues the thought and undoubtedly refers to I Samuel 16 as well as 89:4 and II Samuel 7. Sanders refers to 89:21 and I Samuel 16 in his comparison of the *LXX* and a Qumran text.[3] The quatrain is completed with guaranteed strength for David. ידי and זרועי of verse 22 speak of the same power that attended the exodus and after in verse 14.

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[1]Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 537.

[2]David recognized this choice by his last words in II Samuel 23:1-7. C. H. Spurgeon preached one of his famous sermons based on this portion, "The People's Christ," The *New Park Street Pulpit,* Vol. I, American edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963), pp. 77-84.

[3]Cf. J. A. Sanders, "Nos. I, II, and III of the Five Syriac Apocryphal Psalms," *Discoveries in the Judean Desert of Jordan IV: The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11 (11QPsᵃ)* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 58 with p. 55. For a discussion of the *LXX* reading ἐλαίῳ in verse 211 see Peter Walters (formerly Katz), *The Text of the Septuagint: Its Corruptions and Their Emendations*, edited by D. W. Gooding (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), p. 59.

Verses 23-26

David was promised not only guaranteed strength, but also Divine support for external matters.[1] The parallelism of verses 23-24 demonstrates that David would have very little trouble with oppression or distress, as far as Yahweh is concerned. The phrase בן־עולה is taken directly from II Samuel 7:10. Allegro shows the relationship of this phrase in 89:23, II Samuel 7:10, I Chronicles 17:9, *LXX*, and a Qumran fragment.[2]

At the same time Yahweh's אמונה and חסד will be with him. The שם of Yahweh has been brought up for the third time in this psalm, denoting ownership, power, reputation, and enablement. The strength of David and the strength of his kingdom were guaranteed glory and success. Verse 26 especially refers to the extent, power and influence of David's kingdom, generally held to be from the Mediterranean to the

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[1]For comparison of some verses from this point to verse 38 with II Samuel 7 see S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel*, second edition, revised and enlarged, reprint (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 275-76 and Glueck, *HESED in the Bible*, pp. 76-78.

[2]Cf. John M. Allegro, "Florilegium," *Discoveries in the Judean Desert of Jordon V Qumran Cave 4:1 (4Q158-4Q186)* (Qxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 55 with p. 53 and "Fragments of a Qumran Scroll of Eschatological Midrasim," *JBL*, LXXXVII:IV (December, 1958), 351. For עול see Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, p. 79; *BDB*, p. 732; and *KB*, pp. 687-88.

Tigris-Euphrates area.[1] The יד and ימין are those of David,[2] but they are empowered by the יד and ימין of verse 14 and the יד and זרוע of verse 22. Because of Yahweh, David's military and political endeavors were fulfilled.

Verses 27-30

In the first quatrain there was choice by election, in the second there was conquest by enablement, and now in the third there is a climax by exhibition. As DuMortier states:

> Ce lien intime entre Yahvé et son Oint, dont les manifestations viennent ainsi d'être enumerees, trouve son expression la plus profonde au verset 27: "Il m'appellera: Toi, mon père, mon Dieu et le rocher de mon salut!"; cette expression du lien filial entre Yahvé et le roi n'est pas isolee dans la Bible; les parallels les plus eclairants sont le Ps. ii7 et 2 Sam. viil4. . . . [3]

The personal pronouns are significant: הוא יקראני אבי אתה אלי וצור ישועתי. Every word is fraught with tremendous import. The first half recalls II Samuel 7:14 and the last reminds one of many Psalm expressions. The אבי אתה would show utter dependence, respect, and confidence. In his

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[1]For example, see Podechard, *Le Psautier*, II, 115. For additional and strange views see Dahood, *The Anchor Bible --Psalms* II, p. 317; Frederick Houk Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History* (Philadelphia: TheWestminster Press, 1967), p. 118; and Lipinski, *La Royauté De Yahwé Dans La Poésie Et Le Culte De L'Ancien Israël*, pp. 133-34.

[2]For different views on the words, יד and ימין see Jan Holman, "Analysis of the Text of Ps. 139, *Biblische Zeitschrift*, 14 (Neue Folge, 1970), 53-54.

[3]DuMortier, "Un Rituel d'Intronisation: Le Ps. LXXXIX 2-38," p. 188.

discussion of the relationship, Fensham says, "It is thus
clear that the biblical reference in Ps. 89 is used to illus-
trate the fidelity of the Israelite king and his willingness
to stay in the covenant relationship with the Lord."[1]

Verse 28 is just as profound, אף־אני בכור אתנהו עליון
למלכי־ארץ. But Dentan indicates that the king is a semi-
divine ruler or some kind of god in his view of these two
verses (27-28):

> Instead of the simple figure of the charismatic judge or
> leader who stood at the head of the community in war, or
> on the rare occasions when the tribes met together for
> consultation or worship, there now stood permanently at
> the head of the nation a king who owed his office to
> inheritance and divine right, who was separated from
> the sphere of common life by the sacred oil of his con-
> secration, and was considered to be a semidivine figure,
> a "son" of Yahweh (2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2:7; 89:26f.), if not
> some kind of "god" himself (Ps. 45:6, RSV margin?).[2]

> Kaufmann answers this conjecture quite sufficiently:

> The Bible knows of no worship of kings or heroes,
> nor is ancestor worship evidenced for biblical Israel.
> To be sure the king has sanctity; to curse him is on a
> par with cursing God (Exod. 22:27; I Kings 21:10, 13).
> Poetry styles him a "son" of God (Ps. 2:7). Metaphori-
> cally God is his father (II Sam. 7:14) and he is God's
> "firstborn" (Ps. 89:28), meaning that God is his espe-
> cial guardian and help. But deification of kings is

[1]F. Charles Fensham, "Father and Son as Terminology
for Treaty and Covenant," *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of
William Foxwell Albright*, edited by Hans Goedicke (Baltimore:
The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 130. Cf. also references
to similar expressions in Labuschagne, *The Incomparability
of Yahweh in the Old Testament*, p. 120, fn. 3.

[2]Robert C. Dentan, *The Knowledge of God in Ancient
Israel* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1968), p. 22. See also
Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History*, p. 112.

mentioned only as a heathen custom. Had it existed in Israel the prophets would certainly not have failed to denounce it.[1]

And later, after a considerable number of pages, Kaufmann adds:

> The Israelite conception rejected all the divine aspects of kingship and based itself exclusively on the idea of divine election (I Sam. 10:24; 16:1 ff.; II Sam. 6:21; Deut. 17:15; etc.). There are linguistic vestiges of the idea that the king is a "son" of God (Pss. 2:7; 89:27 f.). But that these are purely figurative (cf. II Sam. 7:14) is evident from the absence of any mythological motifs. There is no allusion to the divine origin of the reigning dynasty. No Israelite king is condemned for having vaunted himself a god or for instituting a cult celebrated in his honor.[2]

Cooke cites the views of others, and he too very adequately replies, while advocating the adoption view at the same time.[3] Eaton puts it, "In a way he is like 'elyon, the Most High (Ps. 89:28), supreme over the waters in the image of the Creator (v. 26)."[4]

Several scholars point to Exodus 4:22 and Deuteronomy 26:19 for Israel being the first recipient (בכור) of the privileged blessing. Thus, David was heir to the same promise and privilege. Also, the Lord Jesus Christ is entitled

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[1]Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel: From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, p. 77.
[2]*Ibid*., p. 266. Cf. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, I, 112.
[3]Gerald Cooke, "The Israelite King as Son of God," *ZAW*, 73 (1961), 209-212.
[4]Eaton, "The King as God's Witness," p. 35.

such in the New Testament. But the tenor of the biblical corpus in the Old Testament and 89:23 seem to more than point in that direction of King of kings before the New Testament was written. Phillips sees Messianic overtones in these verses, and rightly so.[1] However, the interpretation here concerning firstborn is as Kissane avers, "As such, David was to be above all the kings of the earth."[2] And with Yahweh's exhibition of grace, David fulfilled the privileged position. For the last half of the verse, Culley observes a formulaic pattern:

Ps. 89:28 עליון למלכי ארץ

Ps. 76:13[3] נורא למלכי ארץ

This exhibition of covenant loyalty has eternal value according to verses 29-30. The word אשמור is a *Kethiv* form and it is to be translated as a *Qal* imperfect.[4] חסדי and

בריתי parallel each other as do זרעו and כסאו in the next

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[1]0. E. Phillips, *Exploring the Messianic Psalms* (Philadelphia: Hebrew Christian Fellowship, Inc., 1967), p. 182. Cf. R. B. Y. Scott who also notes the same in "Wisdom in Creation: The Amon of Proverbs VIII 30," *VT*, X:2 (April, 1960), 218. Cf. W. D. Davies for the Messianic concept and the Book of Enoch in *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*, Harper Torchbooks (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1948), p. 279.

[2]Kissane, *The Book of Psalms*, II, 97.

[3]Culley, *Oral Formulaic Language in the Biblical Psalms*, p. 79.

[4]Werner Weinberg treats the word as an imperfect hyphenated, "The Qamās Qātān Structures,'" *JBL*, LXXXVII:II (June, 1968), 160.

verse. עד can mean "eternal, everlasting" as in Exodus 15:18 and Isaiah 9:5. Although נאמנת does mean "confirmed," it can carry the significance of lasting duration. Thus, it seems that לעולם parallels נאמנת and לעד parallels כימי שמים. The two verbs can denote the connotation of something being established, and when Yahweh does it, it is permanent.

According to Sanders, there are some reflections of these verses in the Qumran texts.[1] But there is no reflection of Ethan's part. With the reference to David's descendants and throne, he makes an introduction and transition to the following portion of his composition.

Verses 31-34

The last two quatrains deal primarily with David's descendants. The covenant is made by One Who is holy, therefore He expects obedience.[2] The first quatrain relates that He chastises because He is holy; the second relates that He changes not for the same reason.

The parallelism in verses 31-32 is quite noticeable. Both commence with אם‎ ⁻. The verbs יעזבו and יחללו parallel as do לא ישמרו and לא ילכון. Each noun referring to Yahweh

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[1]J. A. Sanders, "Pre-Masoretic Psalter Texts," *CBQ*, XXVII:2 (April 1965), 122-23.

[2]Cf. James Muilenburg, *The Way of Israel* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1961), p. 21. The same concept is found in Psalm 132:12.

is very meaningful, and also in parallel, תורתי,[1] במשפטי,

חקתי, and מצותי.

Of course, disobedience or rebellion is met with Divine chastisement (vs. 33), but covenant loyalty is not disturbed (vs. 34).[2] Obedience was required if the blessings of the covenant were to be enjoyed. The thoughts of these four verses are taken directly from II Samuel 7:12-15.[3] Verse 34 is not only a confirmation to climax this quatrain, but it also serves as an introduction to the next.

Verses 35-38

The suffix on בריתי again makes it clear as to the

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[1]For a few brief studies involving תורה see Barnabas Lindars, "Torah in Deuteronomy," *Words and Meanings: Essays Presented to David Winton Thomas* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1968), pp. 132-33; George Widengren, "King and Covenant," *JSS*, II:1 (January, 1957), 24-25; and Perry B. Yoder, "A-B Pairs and Oral Composition in Hebrew Poetry, *VT*, XXI:4 (October, 1971), 476.

[2]Cf. Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), p. 121 and Hillers, *The Anchor Bible: Lamentations*, p. 66. For the *LXX* and פקד see Henry Snyder Gehman, "Ἐπισκεπομαι, ἐπισκεψις, ἐπισκοπος, and ἐπισκοπή in the Septuagint in Relation to פקד and other Hebrew Roots--a Case of Semantic Development Similar to that of Hebrew, *VT*, XXII:2 (April, 1972), 201. Interesting views related to 89:33 are given by Leah Bonner, "The Rechabites," *De Fructu Oris Sui; Essays in Honour of Adrianus van Selms*, edited by I. H. Eybers, *et al* (Leiden: E. J. Bill, 1971), p. 14.

[3]For studies relating to the covenant aspect see James Muilenburg, "The Form and Structure of the Covenantal Formulations, *VT*, IX:4 (October, 1959), 355-56.

covenant's Author, recalling verses 4 and 29.[1] Yahweh will
not profane nor alter that which He has spoken; His word is
irrevocable. Concerning שׁקתי, Soffers relates the view of
the *LXX*[2] and Shunary the view of the *Targum*.[3] As for מוצא
a Qumran text has a similar expression.[4]

For Yahweh to swear "by His holiness" simply means
that He swears by Himself (cf. Amos 4:2 and 6:8). נשׁבעתי is
the only positive verb of the four employed in verses 35-36;
all of which pertain to Yahweh's word. The אם following
נשׁבעתי is an emphatic negative.[5] Commenting on Psalm 72,
Samuel writes, "On more than one occasion has God given David
the promise that it would be accomplished, and he knew that
no one word of it would fail (see Psa. 89.35 [36]."[6]

As verses 29-30 did, so verses 37-38 speak of the

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[1]For various views of ברית see J. Barton Payne, "The
B'rith of Yahweh," *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*,
edited by J. Barton Payne (Waco, Texas: Word Books, Pub-
lisher, 1970), pp. 243-44.
    [2]Soffer, "The Treatment of Anthropomorphisms and
Anthropopathisms in the Septuagint of Psalms," p. 93.
    [3]Shunary, "Avoidance of Anthropomorphism in the Targum
of Psalms," p. 138.
    [4]Cf. P. Wernberg-Moller, *The Manual of Discipline*,
Vol. 1, *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah*, edited
by J. Van Der Ploeg (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1957), pp. 37, 145.
    [5]Cf. *BDB*, p. 50 *KB*, p. 58.
    [6]Bendor Samuel, *The Prophetic Character of the Psalms*
(London: Pickering and Inglis, [n.d.], p. 171.

eternal duration of the covenant. Verse 37 has great pro-
phetic significance but it cannot be discussed here.[1] Yahweh
compares the duration of the covenant to the durability of
something that all men can see and recognize--the heavens,
His own creation. Many of the *sun-moon* parallelisms in
Scripture are cited by Gevirtz.[2]

Dahood[3] and several others[4] want to change עד from
witness to *throne* on the basis of Ugaritic readings. Eaton
says that the word refers to the king.[5] For this context
these views are unnecessary. שחק has the same meaning here
as it did in verse 7. Verse 38 is saying that the "testimony
in the sky is faithful (confirmed or established)." עד may
even include the stars. It is not a question with Jacob, who
avers, "The stars move according to laws of which God himself
guarantees the fixity (Ps. 89.38; 104.19; Eccl. 1.5). . . ."[6]

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[1]Cf. J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Findlay,
Ohio: Dunham Publishing Company, 1958), pp. 102, 485, 491;
and Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (Grand
Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), pp. 156, 215-16,
282. McClain states, ". . . 89th Psalm, perhaps the greatest
of all the Kingdom songs. . . .", p. 171.

[2]S. Gevirtz, *Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel,*
SAOC 32 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 49.

[3]Dahood, *The Anchor Bible-Psalm II*, p. 318.

[4]Cf. J. D. Shenkel, "An Interpretation of Psalm 93,
5," *Biblica*, 46 (1965), 406-07.

[5]Eaton, "The King as God's Witness," pp. 35-36.

[6]Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 145.

If it refers only to the moon, the thought may be that when the sun sets, the moon still reflects its light; therefore, it is a witness as proof that God's covenant will last forever. Regardless, עד here should retain its ordinary meaning of *witness*.[1]

Thus ends a long poetic section in which Yahweh's covenant with David and his seed has been reviewed in unquestionable language. While the whole of it is in the poet's mind, it seems that the last quatrain (35-38) in particular is foremost. It serves as an introduction, or, better yet, as a basis for the great contrast that follows in the next section.

89:39-46 God's Chastisement: Basis for Petition

Having referred to other historical events in his composition thus far, the author now comes to one that recently occurred. In the light of verses 2-38, this event brought a severe problem in the mind of Ethan.

The eight verses seem to break down well into two quatrains. Ward explains, "The *crown* of the lst parallels the *scepter-throne* of the 2nd. The *reproach* of the lst is

[1]Patrick W. Skehan sees a similar meaning for the word in a Masada fragment in *Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom,* The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series I (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1971), p. 131.

balanced by the *shame* of the 2nd."[1]

Verses 39-42

The abrupt change in the composition is remarkably clear. As Allis claims, "*Psalm 89* is a striking example of sudden contrast."[2] The very first word is most significant. After a brief discussion of the previous verses, Ridderbos states:

> Then comes the crucial juncture: "And thou, thou hast cast off and rejected", v. 39. וְאַתָּה: again and again this term, as it is used in the psalms, is laden with meaning--but nowhere is it more heavily laden than here: And thou, thou God of omnipotence; thou God of faithfulness; thou who hast given such glorious and firm promises; thou who hast sworn under oath not to annul thy covenant--thou hast cast off and rejected.[3]

The strong language continues. The *Hitpa'el* form, התעברת, is translated both reflexive and intensive. The *NASB* has "Thou hast been full of wrath." *KB* says that it means "show oneself infuriated."[4] And Barnes postulates, "Literally, 'Thou has suffered [thine anger] to overflow,'

[1]Ward, "The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX," p. 326.

[2]Allis, *The Old Testament: Its Claims and Its Critics*, p. 93.

[3]N. H. Ridderbos, "The Psalms: Style-Figures and Structure," *Studies on Psalms*, Deel XIII, *Oudtestamentische Studiën*, edited by P. A. H. De Boer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), p. 58.

[4]*KB*, p. 676.

or to pour itself forth."[1] This is directed at מֹשִׁיחֶך.

Klausner claims, ". . . this word designates the whole peo-
ple, Israel."[2] The context seems to refer to David's seed,
not to the people as a whole. However, since the king was
Yahweh's representative, the people were included. The fol-
lowing verses along with verse 37 indicate a particular king
of the Davidic dynasty. The words in verse 40 help to sup-
port this: עבדך and נזרו.

The exact meaning of נאר (vs. 40) is uncertain. *KB*
suggests *abandon* with a question mark.[3] *BDB*[4] and most trans-
lators translate it as *abhor* or *spurn*. There is no direct
help from Ugaritic. The following verb, חללת is the same
word as in verse 35. The very thing Yahweh said He would not
do seems to have occurred as a result of this historical in-
cident. An answer to this will be considered later. Kennedy
wants to emend the text to read חטלת,[5] which does not help

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[1]Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament: Psalms, II*, 380.
Engnell has misinterpreted 89:39 in *A Rigid Scrutiny*, p. 227.
    [2]Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel: From
Its Beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah* (London:
George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1956), p. 7.
    [3]*KB*, p. 586. With this root an Akkadian root (*nāru*)
is given which means kill, but that cannot be the meaning
here.
    [4]*BDB*, p. 611. An Arabic root (   ) is listed which
means abhor.
    [5]Kennedy, *An Aid to the Textual Amendment of the Old
Testament*, p. 77.

the situation at all. The worse conjecture of all is that cited by Widengren, "At the same time, however, even in the same psalm the covenant may be seen as an agreement that can be annulled by both partners; cf. Ps. lxxxix.40."[1] Even sin cannot annul an unconditional covenant by Yahweh. Widengren has misunderstood the import of the passage.

It was suggested in the previous chapter that these verses apply to King Rehoboam. Yahweh had said about His covenant with David, אם־יעזבו בניו תורתי (vs. 31a). And it was said of Rehoboam in II Chronicles 12:1, עזב את־תורת יהוה. By comparing verse 5, the truth is emphasized that to forsake His law is to forsake Him. All of this is supported by the context of I Kings 14:21-24.

As a result, Divine judgment followed in the form of an invasion. Punishment was due because of Rehoboam's treacherous acts. But how can one account for the poet's severe language in verses 39-40? Certainly Ethan knew of Rehoboam's sin, and he also knew of Yahweh's holiness. More-over, Ethan knew full well that Yahweh had dealt with the sin of David and Solomon. But, for some reason, the author looks upon Yahweh's punishment here quite seriously. A ready an-swer for this is not simple. The solution suggested for verses 39 and following is that a foreign invasion to Ethan was the most devastating punishment, so much so that on the

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[1]Widengren, "King and Covenant," p. 24.

surface it seemed the covenant was in jeopardy. In his life-
time, the author had not known of a foreign invasion; he had
not known of his king being treated as such, as the following
verses would add to the argument. Even the dividing of the
kingdom five or six years earlier did not present the picture
of affecting the covenant and crown. But to Ethan, who had
seen the blessings of Yahweh on Rehoboam's father and grand-
father, the punishment here was extremely severe. He had
glorious praise for and deep faith in Yahweh, but he was also
jealous for his king. For a foreigner to subdue the king was
looked upon as chastisement that had covenant and crown im-
plications.

Verses 41-42 speak of the invasion in particular.
The parallelism of verse 41 could refer to II Chronicles
12:4. The *fortresses* were those that Rehoboam himself had
strengthened (II Chron. 11:5-12). King Shishak of Egypt had
not only captured these,[1] but he had approached Jerusalem.
This city's walls were not destroyed, nor was the city cap-
tured in the sense of those around it. The reasons are given
in II Chronicles 12:6-8. Verse 42 sets forth the natural
results when one's defenses are broken down. According to
Ethan's expression, plundering the land is the same as

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[1]For a discussion of מחתה and *LXX* renderings in
Scripture see Walters (formerly Katz), *The Text of the
Septuagint: Its Corruptions and Their Emendation,* p. 257.

plundering the king.[1] But being a *reproach to his neighbors* would disturb the poet greatly. Rehoboam's predecessors had control and influence over Israel's neighbors, and were receiving tribute from them. Of course, with these taken away, Rehoboam's neighbors would be taking every kind of advantage conceivable, and thus, the reproach. Culley sees a formulaic system here with Psalms 44:14 and 79:4.[2]

Verses 43-46

As mentioned, the first quatrain closed with reproach, and the second closes with shame. The poetic form is very articulate. The poet had spoken of Yahweh and the king alone in verses 39-41. Then in verse 42 he specifically refers to a third party. The reverse is true in the following quatrain. A third party is spoken of in verse 43, while 44-46 refer back to Yahweh and the king alone.

Another matter that would be strange in the eyes of the poet is Yahweh exalting the hand of a foreign enemy. Ethan had never seen that before, but now he recognizes the

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[1]In an almost devastating review of Ahlström's work, Sigmund Mowinckel says, "What capers he cuts in order to interpret 'all that pass by the way' in v. 42 as a 'cultic term'. . . " Review of *Psalm 89. Eine Liturgie aus dem Ritual des leidenden Königs*, *JSS*, V:3 (July, 1960), 295. See another view involving 89;42 in Hillers, *The Anchor Bible: Lamentations*, p. 103.

2Culley, *Oral Formulaic Language in the Biblical Psalms,* p. 76.

Divine chastisement. If the present interpretation is held, verses 43-44 would refer to II Chronicles 12:2-3. The sequence of the parallel pair, צריו and אויביו, is discussed by Gevirtz in relation to a Biblical text and a Ugaritic text.[1] Verse 44 makes it quite clear that Shishak did not achieve anything on his own. Neither the I Kings nor the II Chronicles passages indicate any strong effort on the part of Rehoboam to stop Shishak. In unison with verse 43, one can see that Yahweh's punishment of sin can have a two-fold prong. For a lexical study of תשיב see Holladay.[2]

Other matters of interest cannot be discussed here. Wilensky has some manuscript studies involving verses 44-45.[3] Sanders claims there is a Qumran manuscript that includes verses 44-46.[4]

The last two parallel verses, 45-46, include problems according to some. The major problem is the word מעהרו. McCullough, for one, sees an emended text that would have

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[1]Gevirtz, P*atterns in the Early Poetry of Israel*, pp. 37-38.

[2]William L. Holladay, *The Root SUBH in the Old Testament* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958), p. 91 f.

[3]Michael Wilensky, "About Manuscripts I: A Psalm--MS. and Its Entries," *HUCA*, XII-XIII (1937-1938), p. 565. Verses 11, 14, 23 are found on p. 562.

[4]Sanders, "Pre-Masoretic Psalter Texts," pp. 115-120. Verses 50-53 are listed also, pp. 115-120.

מטה, *sceptre*.[1] Kissane[2] and Podechard[3] cite similar views of

others. That it would fit the context and the word כסאו in

the same verse is part of the argument. But the text does

not need emended at all to read *sceptre*. The problem revolves

around two other meanings. These are elucidated by Dahood:

> The hapax legomenon *mithār* (cf. Ugar. *thr*, "gem") expresses the radiance that enveloped the king in battle and struck terror into his opponents, a theme discussed at Ps xlv4. Cf. also Ps xxi6 and Num xxiii2l, *tōraʿat melek*, "royal majesty," as rightly pointed and explained by Albright in JBL 63 (1944), 215, n.43; 224.

> There remains, however, the possibility that the text should read *hisbattā-m* (enclitic mem) *toh^orō*; in this case the substantive would be *tōhar*, "splendor, purity," that occurs in other texts.[4]

All of the discussions of the scholars and lexicons

cannot be viewed here. Since there is very little agreement

and a whole lot of conjecture, the present writer would sug-

gest the following. The form is either a participial form

that became a noun in use and thus the suffix; or, it is

simply a noun form with the preposition מן prefixed to it.

The latter seems best. As for meaning, *purity* does not fit

the context well. *Splendor* seems appropriate if seen as *regal*

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[1]McCullough, Exegesis of Psalm "89," p. 485.
[2]Kissane, *The Book of Psalms*, II, 98. Cf. John Edgar McFadyen, *The Messages of the Psalmists* (London: James Clarke and Company, 1904), p. 276.
[3]Podechard, *Le Psautier*, II, 123.
[4]Dahood, *The Anchor Bible--Psalms II*, p. 319. Cf. *BDB*, p. 372; *KB*, p. 348; *UT*, p. 406.

splendor or some similar meaning. Dahood's first view above seems most fitting. Keeping with the context, the present writer prefers the explanation of Barnes, "The allusion is to the splendor, the glory, the magnificence connected with his rank as king. This had been destroyed, or had come to nought."[1] The second half of verse 45 agrees with this thoroughly. But caution is noted by Eerdmans:

> The verses tell us that the king was beaten by his enemies and that the glory of his throne was humiliated. Yet the throne still existed, be it in a shameful state. They do not justify a conclusion of complete rejection.[2]

Many scholars view 46a as meaning the king has become prematurely old because of the circumstances.[3] It could be an idiom with the meaning that the king had not attained the glory and power, especially as Yahweh's anointed servant. This would be significantly true with Rehoboam following the reigns of David and Solomon. The last half of verse 46 would concur readily. Fohrer explains:

> בושה is on the one hand 'the shame' which, like the feeling of terror that can fill a man, is visible in the expression of his face (Ezek. 7:18). The consequence of

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[1]Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament: Psalms, II*, 381. For other biblical verses that relate to 89:46ff. see Muilenburg, *The Way of Israel*, p. 24.

[2]Eerdmans, "The Hebrew Book of Psalms," p. 425.

[3]To name a few: *JFB*, III, 296; Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms,* III, 44; Hengstenberg, *Commentary, on the Psalms*, III, 113. For a relationship to another biblical passage see A. Schoors, "Two Notes on Isaiah XL-LV," *VT*, XXI:4 (October, 1971), 503.

being thus put to shame (which indeed follows certain wrong doing) is on the other hand the 'disgrace' which covers a man or a people, or clings to them (Obad. 10; Mic. 7:10; Ps. 89:46).[1]

The poet has clearly defined Yahweh's chastisement. Verses 45-46 could refer to I Kings 14:26-28 and II Chronicles 12:9-12. The present writer is not at all dogmatic about this specific historic situation. It just seems to fit best, even with its problems. Some of the problems may be explained by poetic expressions of the results of the event. As it is, these two quatrains lay the foundation for the verses that follow.

89:47-52 Conclusion: Prayer for Restoration

The conclusion is a very vital part of the composition. As for the structure, Ward says:

> Vs. 47, with its reference to Yahweh's wrath, is an apt connective between the preceding group of quatrains and the final six-line prayer. The prayer in turn comprises two triplets. In each of these the third line (vss. 48, 52) is a synonymous parallel to the second (vss. 47, 51); while the middle line of each begins with the injunction *Remember*![2]

The initial expression of verse 47, עד־מה יהוה, is

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[1]Georg Fohrer, "Twofold Aspects of Hebrew Words," *Words and Meanings: Essays Presented to David Winton Thomas* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1968), p. 100.

[2]Ward, "The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX," p. 326.

a cry noted elsewhere in Scripture.[1] Culley lists a close

parallel to Psalm 79:5.[2] Contrary to the apparent sense, the

expression is not a cry of despair. Reich states:

> Many of the Psalms are the outcome of perplexity. The heart of the seeker after God, baffled with the mysteries of life and death, often gave way before the unexplained and the inscrutable. Hence the repeated "Why," "Wherefore," and "How long" cry of the Psalmist. The latter has been called "Faith's mighty question," as it is really a confession that wrong cannot be permanent in a universe presided over by one whose throne is based on Justice and Right.[3]

The next two words, תסתר לנצח,[4] do not mean that

Yahweh had withdrawn completely nor permanently. As Wolver-

ton explains, "There was a tendency to believe that when God

hid himself, i.e., withheld his grace or favour, the individ-

ual or the community became prey to inimical forces."[5] And

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[1]Cf. James Muilenburg, "The Terminology of Adversity in Jeremiah," *Translating and Understanding the Old Testament: Essays in Honor of Herbert Gordon May,* edited by Harry Thomas Frank and William L. Reed (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 56. Also see Hillers, *The Anchor Bible: Lamentations*, p. 102.

[2]Culley, *Oral Formulaic Language in the Biblical Psalms*, p. 76.

[3]Max Isaac Reich, *Studies in the Psalms of Israel,* second edition (Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1942), p. 17.

[4]For the *LXX* rendering see Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*, p. 253. For the carelessness and variants of the *Peshitta* on vs. 47 see Berg, *The Influence of the Septuagint upon the Pe Sitta Psalter*, pp. 31-32.

[5]Wallace I. Wolverton, "The Psalmists' Belief in God's Presence," *CJT*, IX:l (January, 1963), 87.

for the latter half of the verse, "The nearness of God was felt in a wrath which burnt like fire."[1] These views fit the context well. Yahweh had punished; it appeared that since the former glory was not reinstated, Yahweh's wrath seemed intensified. The *forever* and the *burn like fire* indicates a duration of the judgment.

Verse 48 sets off the contrast. Whitlock writes, "In Hebrew psychology, the weakness of the flesh (creature) is set off in contrast to the power of God. In this context, the person is shorn of any undue confidence in self."[2] Gesenius,[3] Podechard,[4] Eerdmans,[5] and McCullough[6] want to alter the text to read זכר־אדני instead of זכר־אני in order to parallel verse 51. But many of the scholars agree with Delitzsch, "The conjecture of Houbigant and modern exposi-ters, זכר אדני (cf. ver. 51) , is not needed, since the in-verted position of the words is just the same as in xxxix.5."[7]

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[1]*Ibid*. For the *LXX* and its treatment of חמתך see Soffer, "The Treatment of Anthropomorphisms and Anthropo-pathisms in the Septuagint of Psalms," p. 104.

[2]Glenn E. Whitlock, "The Structure of Personality in Hebrew Psychology," *Interpretation*, XIV:l (January, 1960), 13.

[3]*GKC*, p. 438.

[4]Podechard, *Le Psautier*, II, 123.

[5]Eerdmans, "The Hebrew Book of Psalms," p. 425.

[6]McCullough, Exegesis of Psalm "89," p. 485.

[7]Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, III, 44.

Davidson avers, "Ps. 89.48 אני stands for emphasis first:

remember, *I, what transitoriness*."[1] These are abrupt ex-

pressions that denote earnestness in the midst of prayer.

The present writer admits that the exact translation and

meaning of this verse is difficult. על־מה שוא alone presents

problems. With the following words it may be translated,

"for (על) what nothingness hast thou created man?"[2] Or, an-

other may be "wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?"[3]

Many other different translations could be given. The mean-

ing will be considered with the following verse.

While the root form of גבר in verse 49 does denote

power or strength, Barr cites this verse with others and says

that these are ". . . cases where man as an earthly and mor-

tal creature is being contrasted with God or where the weak-

ness and mortality of man is otherwise being involved."[4] The

remainder of the verse is clear and self-explanatory. There

are theological considerations, but they are not in the pur-

poses of the dissertation.

A clear interpretation is somewhat difficult. Verse

[1]A. B. Davidson, *Hebrew Syntax*, third edition (Edin-burgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901), p. 2.
[2]*BDB*, p. 996.
[3]*JFB*, III, 297.
[4]James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 146.

47 relates the problem in the poet's thinking on whether the present state of conditions were to continue to exist. An interpretation of verses 48-49 is conveniently omitted or treated lightly by many scholars. But one source avers:

> It seems that God has made men for a mere nothing; all must die and that comparatively quickly. Unless God reaffirms the covenant speedily the Davidic dynasty, the trusting psalmist and all men will come together to the grave and deliverance will be too late.[1]

Another view postulates:

> In relation to Israel, which is the main reference, the sense is, If God's covenant with David's house and people were to fail, the blessings to the world at large which depend on the covenant with David, would not be realized, and man would have been created in vain.[2]

Both of these interpretations seem to add a little too much, and, in light of the following verses, they do not present the clearest picture. Probably Kirkpatrick has the simplest and best thoughts:

> . . . the shortness and uncertainty of life are pleaded as a ground for the speedy restoration of God's favour. The Psalmist desires to see the solution of the riddle with his own eyes. . . .

Must life end thus in unsatisfied longing?[3]

He who had seen God's favor showered on David and Solomon wanted a restoration of the same. The present writer

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[1]*NBCR*, p. 507.
[2]*JFB*, III, 297.
[3]Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 542.

does not feel that the covenant was in jeopardy, but it was the blessings of that covenant that needed to be restored; that is, the king would be reinstated in all his regal splendor, power and influence. This the poet yearned to see.

Verses 50-52 not only complete the six-line prayer, but also provide a most fitting conclusion to the entire psalm. With חסדיך and אמונתך the author now returns to verse 2 and following in particular and 2-38 as a whole. Except for the change of suffix, the נשבעת לדוד of verse 50 is the same as נשבעתי לדוד, of verse 4. With the commencement of the word איה the psalmist is now ready to express his faith more explicitly.

Ethan again calls on the Lord to remember. In verse 42 the king had become the object of reproach to his neighbors; in verse 51 the poet wants the Lord to remember the scorn being directed toward His servants. Dahood argues:

> "your servant". The dispute concerning the plural form $‘^abadek\bar{a}$ in Ps 89,51 must take into account similar plurals of majesty designating the king in other passages. Thus Ps 89,20, $h^as\hat{\imath}dek\bar{a}$ may likewise be explained as a plural of majesty referring to King David, the devoted one par excellence . . . [1]

> And Podechard remarks:

> Au lieu du plur. אבדיך [*sic*], 24 mss. et P attestent אַבְדְךָ [*sic*] qui est plus conforme soit aux pronoms de la première personne du sing. dans le vers soivant, soit a "ton oint" du v. 52.[2]

[1]Dahood, "Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography VII," p. 345.
[2]Podechard, *Le Psautier*, II, 123.

Dahood's plural of majesty may help a dispute elsewhere, but it does not help here. As for Podechard, his position that it should agree with verse 52 has overlooked the parallelism within verse 51. עבדיך could be a parallel to עמים. With the king subdued, the people of Israel, also His servants, would be open to the scorn of all unfriendly peoples. Kirkpatrick states, "The taunts which they have to bear as the servants of God Who, say their enemies, cannot or will not help them."[1] שאתי בחיקי signifies that the psalmist himself bore the reproach of the people. The total situation pressed upon his heart like an extremely heavy burden.

The last words of verse 51, כל־רבים עמים are called by Gesenius a corrupted text.[2] The main problem is the word רבים. One suggestion is given by Hulst:

> The RSV has accepted a reading k^elimmot 'ammīm 'the insults of the peoples', in place of the MT *kol rabbīm 'ammīm*. The Hebr could be rendered 'all great peoples', but the construction is somewhat strange. In any case, a fitting word such as 'insult' (AV 'reproach') needs to be supplied.[3]

Hummel states, "MT רבים is impossible, but we can easily translate רְבָ־ים עמים as 'the controversies of the

[1]Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 542.
[2]*GKC*, p. 428.
[3]Hulst, *Old Testament Translation Problems*, p. 110.

peoples.'"[1] Kitchen attempts to solve the problem by employ-

ing Hummel's view:

> In other cases, recognition of an enclitic *mêm* can clarify not only the grammatical form but also the meaning of the text. Thus, in Psalm 89:50 (Heb. 89:51), in parallel with: 'Remember, 0 Lord, the reproach of (i.e., on) thy servants', for he unhappy [*sic*], '(How) I bear . . . all the mighty, peoples', one may substitute: '(How) I bear in my bosom all the contenttions [*sic*] (*rîbē-mi* for *rabbîm*) of (the) peoples.'[2]

This view has yet to be proven. Gordon says ". . .

the complex origins of Ugar. *-m* require further investigation."[3]

The problem is that רבים stands before the noun. However, it

does not require a change, nor is there a need to supply an

additional word.

> The position of רבים before the principal word may be explained in two ways. It is either due to the conception of the adjective as an indefinite numeral (Ps. xxxii.10. Prov. xxxi.29; I Chron. xxviii.5; Nahum ix.28). Or it is to be regarded as a substantive and explained, according to Jer. xvi.16, as many, that is, people.[4]

Either view is quite acceptable. As a great inter-

cessor, Ethan feels a personal responsibility to all his

people. The burden is carried to the final verse of the

[1]Horace D. Hummel, "Enclitic *MEM* in Early Northwest Semitic, Especially Hebrew," *JBL*, LXXVI:II (June, 1957), 98.
[2]K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1966), pp. 161-62.
[3]*UT*, p. 103.
[4]Moll, "The Psalms," p. 484. Cf. also Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms,* III, 45.

psalm.

The two parts of verse 52 begin with אשר חרפו. The first half really needs no explanation. The plea at once points out that the enemies of David, his descendants, and the people are also Yahweh's enemies. The sense is expressed well by Barnes: "Have reproached thee and me. Wherewith they reproach thy character and cause, and reproach me for having trusted to promises which seem not to be fulfilled."[1]

Again, as intercessor, he was a representative of the people. But the very last matter the psalmist will mention is that which no doubt is closest to his heart: אשר חרפו עקבות משיחך. Here Ethan concludes his prayer by claiming restoration for another representative of Yahweh's people, *Thine anointed* or the king himself. Eerdmans explains the word עקבות. "The expression is rooted in the conception that all things belonging to a person are associated with him, his shade, his portrait, his footsteps."[2] In other words, the king's position, authority, actions, movements, and endeavors were all reproached.

Much more could be said, but these words suffice.

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[1]Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament: Psalms,* II, 383.

[2]Eerdmans, "The Hebrew Book of Psalms," p. 425. Cf. also J. B. Rotherham, *Studies in the Psalms Bible Study Textbook Series*, 2 vols. (Joplin, Missouri: College Press, 1970), II, 109, fn. 22.

Other studies such as those in the *LXX*,[1] *Targum*,[2] and other sources[3] provide great interest, but will not be considered here.

Although the composition seemingly concludes with a dark note, the element of faith is always there. McKenzie says:

> The psalm expresses the faith of the devout Israelite that the promise of Yahweh cannot be frustrated, whatever may be the conditions, at the moment, of Israel and its dynasty. If it should fall, a restoration must be expected. No such limitation, however, is present on the horizon of the oracle of Nathan except the vague condition that: if David's successors sin, they will be punished as other men; but the dynasty must endure.[4]

A simple statement is made by Yates, "While no hope is expressed, the enthusiasm of the former sections would suggest a positive expectation of hope."[5] This is all emphasized by verses 2 and 52. The song could not be taken away because of the reality of election, *Thine anointed*.

[1]Sidney Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 121-22.

[2]Cf. *Targum*, p. נח; Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, II, 155; and Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 543.

[3]John Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature: An Introduction to Jewish Interpretations of Scripture* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1969), pp. 281-82.

[4]John L. McKenzie, *Myths and Realities: Studies in Biblical Theology* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, pp. 206-07.

[5]Yates, "Psalm 89," p. 528. Cf. also Hillers, *The Anchor Bible: Lamentations*, p. 105.

89:53 Benediction of Book III

It is generally held that the Psalter is divided into five books with Psalms 73-89 comprising the third book. In reference to Psalm 89:53 and other passages, Murtonen states, . . . there are quite a number of passages in which no cause of the praise is indicated or at least not clearly connected with it."[1] The present writer believes he understands what Murtonen is saying, but, on the other hand, there is great deal in Psalms 73-89 to warrant a benediction of praise. Psalm 89 alone could merit a benediction of ברוך יהוה לעולם אמן אמן.

[1]A. Murtonen, "The Use and Meaning of the Words LeBAREK and BeRAKA" in the Old Testament," *VT*, IX:2 (April, 1959), 169.

CHAPTER IV

SOME COMPARISONS FROM THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

With the exegesis of Psalm 89 clearly in mind, the purpose now is to demonstrate some comparisons from the ancient Near East. For one to say that there are no comparisons would be foolish. Evidence is abundant. The task of manifesting the comparisons is rather difficult. Some writers state explicitly that this or that is a comparison, similarity, affinity, or a parallel, and the present writer has no right to alter their designations. However, the difference between this chapter and the next is to some purely a question of semantics. But others are very vague in revealing their intentions. Therefore the present writer reveals the subjectivity involved in classifying some writers and their quotes. But some facts are so obvious that it does not matter who has written. Included in the study are refutations because some comparisons are not valid. By no means will this chapter be exhaustive.

Philological Similarities

While some materials from the ancient Near East are recognized as psalms, "Psalms as such have not yet been

unearthed at Ras Shamra. . . ."[1] Nevertheless, Ras Shamra

has produced records which contain poetry with striking simi-

larities. Actually, several dissertations could be written

in pointing out philological similarities in the psalms. Time

and space cannot be given here to relate the similarities of

ancient Near Eastern consonants, phonology, morphology,

tenses, prepositions, grammar and syntax to Psalm 89.[2] A

few were mentioned in the exegesis. The main purpose is to

consider lexicography and poetic structure.

      Studies have been made to note the number of common

roots in related languages. Most of the research has Ugaritic

compared to Hebrew. One such study was done by Tsevat, who

states:

> Turning back to the comparison of actual psalm words,
> forms, and phrases with Canaanite, Ugaritic, and "Amor-
> ite", we have found: 16/20 items have been paired with

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[1]Mitchell Dahood, *The Anchor Bible--Psalms* I (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966), p. XVII.

[2]Cf. K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1966), pp. 160-66; Sabatino Moscati, *et al, An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages: Phonology and Morphology* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1969), pp. 1-185; Wilfred Watson, "Shared Consonants in Northwest Semitic," *Biblica*, 50:4 (1969), 525-33; UT, pp. 11-158; Frank Moore Cross, Jr. and David Noel Freedman, *Early Hebrew Orthography: A Study of the Epigraphic Evidence*, American Oriental Series, Volume 36, edited by James B. Pritchard (New Haven, Connecticut: American Oriental Society, 1952), pp. 1-77; and Jean Ouellette, "Variants qumraniennes du Livre des Psaumes," *Revue de Qumran*, 25:7, fascicule 1 (December, 1969), pp. 107, 110. Horace D. Hummel, "Enclitic *MEM* in Early Northwest Semitic, Especially Hebrew," *JBL*, LXXXVI:II (June, 1957), 85-107.

corresponding words and forms from Canaanite sources, 21/22 with analogues from Ugarit, and 5 with pertinent words culled from the Old Babylonian texts.[1]

After including six other items, Tsevat continues:

This means: Out of 166 elements of the language of the psalms, i.e. elements which in classical Hebrew are known solely or overwhelmingly from the psalms, 35/40 are known from closely related languages of Israel's precursors or contemporaries.

. . . Psalm *hapax* and *dis legomena* as well as relatively frequent, yet substandard words and forms are not included in this study. . . . According to Albright, the number of words, preserved in the Ugaritic poetic texts, is little more than half the number of the words of the Psalter.[2]

The present writer has undertaken the task of comparing the similarities to Psalm 89. Several resources were combined to achieve the endeavor.[3] There is no attempt to be exhaustive, but the study will reveal that some words have no comparative roots. The effort was limited to Akkadian and Ugaritic words. One reason for this is to demonstrate a point in the next chapter.

There are approximately 192 basic roots, prepositions, and pronouns in Psalm 89. In this number there are about 90

[1]Matitiahu Tsevat, *A Study of the Language of the Biblical Psalms*, Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series, Volume IX (Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1955), p. 55. Psalm 89 is well represented in this work by Tsevat.

[2]*Ibid.*, 55-56.

[3]*Ibid.*, pp. 1-153; *KB*, pp. 1-1138; *UT*, pp. 347-507.

Ugaritic comparisons and 82 of the Akkadian. In no way does
this imply vocabulary comparisons. Some of the cognate words
have similar meanings, others do not. As for usage, the
total words that are common come to 122. These are composed
of basic roots, prepositions, and pronouns that are common
to all three literatures, plus those which are common alone
between Ugaritic and Hebrew and Akkadian and Hebrew. In
other words, there are approximately 70 Hebrew roots of which
there are no known cognates at the present time. It is pos-
sible that some of these may be of Hebrew origin. Perhaps
other Semitic languages will yield cognates of these 70, with
the result that there will be no native Hebrew words. The
treatment of parallels and the question of borrowing will be
viewed in the following chapter.

Another area of comparison is poetic structure.
Gordon postulates:

> At the outset it should be stated that unit-lengths,
> types of parallelism, strophic structures etc. can be
> duplicated in the literatures of Mesopotamia, Asia
> Minor, Phoenicia, Egypt and especially in the poetic
> books of the Old Testament. The poetic structure of
> Ugaritic corrects some of the current misconceptions
> regarding Heb. poetry.[1]

Unit-lengths, types of parallelism, and strophic
structure of Psalm 89 were identified in the exegesis. "De-
grees of parallelism can be illustrated by comparing some

[1]*UT,* p. 131.

pre-biblical samples. . . ."[1] The following material is taken from Werner and *ANET*:

An Egyptian example is:

The Lord of truth and father of all gods
Who made all mankind and created the beasts,
Lord of what is, who created the fruit tree
Made herbage and gave life to cattle.[2]

A Sumero-Akkadian example is:

Who--to her greatness, who can be equal?
Strong, exalted, splendid are her decrees.
Istar--to her greatness who can be equal?
Strong, exalted, splendid are her decrees.[3]

A Sumerian example is:

Let the weapons of battle return to your side,
Let them produce fear and terror.
As for him, when he come, verily my great fear will fall
    upon him,
Verily his judgment will be confounded, his counsel will
    be dissipated.[4]

An Akkadian example is:

I will show Gilgamesh, the joyful man!
Look thou at him, regard his face.
He is radiant with manhood, vigor he has.
With ripeness gorgeous is the whole of his body,
Mightier strength has he than thou,
Never resting by day or by night.[5]

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[1]Eric Werner, "The Origin of Psalmody," *HUCA*, XXV (1954), 330-31.

[2]*Ibid*., p. 331; *ANET*, p. 365.

[3]*Ibid.*; *ANET*, p. 383.

[4]*Ibid.*; *ANET*, p. 46.

[5]*Ibid*.; *ANET*, p. 75.

A Ugaritic example:

> Thy decree, El, is wise: Wisdom with ever-life thy
> portion.
> Thy decree is: our King's Puissant Baal, Our sovereign
> second to none;
> All of us must bear this gift, all of us must bear this
> purse.[1]

Gordon lists examples of a particular type of structure and claims, "There is a host of common and occasional ballast variants in Ugaritic. The phenomenon is also attested in Heb. (and other ancient Near East) poetry . . . Ps . . . 89:26. . . . "[2] Many other comparisons could be given, but these suffice to illustrate the point. Some comparisons of poetic parallelisms and lexicography can be identified in the remainder of this chapter and the next.

Modes of Expression

This is such a vast subject that only a hint will be entertained here. A few that relate to Psalm 89 can be seen in the ancient Near Eastern material cited above. Concerning the expression, ואתה, in verse 39 and the abrupt change, Ridderbos states:

> This phenomenon of a hymn which functions as the
> basis for making a plea is not peculiar to the O.T.
> The same device played an important role already: in

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[1]Werner, "The Origin of Psalmody," p. 331; *ANET,* p. 133.

[2]*UT,* pp. 136-37. For the total picture include p. 135.

Assyrian-Babylonian and Egyptian literature. ANET gives several examples of this.[1]

Much of the material that could be listed here appears also under the next heading. In order to avoid overlapping, modes of expression will continue in the following.

Concepts and Institutions

Many aspects of the treatment here are obvious and others are not. Some concepts or ideas fit rather general categories, while others are quite specific. But the material cannot be divided so easily. Comparisons will commence with the simple thoughts.

Many of the following Qumran quotations are derived from biblical antecedents, so they are not comparisons in the same sense as the other materials. But they are included here because some scholars treat them as comparisons.

The idea in a Qumran scroll, "from with Thee is the might," is comparable to 89:14.[2] The word *perhaps* is employed by Yadin in seeing a relation of "to raise up by judgment" to 89:17.[3] For thoughts of certain expressions in verses 10 and

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[1]N. H. Ridderbos, "The Psalms: Style-Figures and Structure," *Studies on Psalms,* Deel XIII, *Oudtestamentische Studiën,* edited by P. A. H. DeBoer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), p. 59.

[2]Yigael Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness,* translated by Batya and Chaim Rabin (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 310.

[3]*Ibid.,* p. 326.

45, Mansoor sees similarities in another Qumran text.[1] Ideas as they occur in pairs are compared to Ugaritic texts by Gevirtz. The verses are 2, 5, and 43 with a question on verses 23-24.[2]

A striking similarity of thought occurs in an apocryphal composition and 89:15. The verse of the Psalm reads:

צדק ומשפט מכון כסאך

חסד ואמת יקדמו פניך

And the Qumran portion reads:

חסד ואמת סביב פניו

אמת ומשפט וצדק מכון כסאו[3]

Sanders remarks on the entire Qumran composition: "The metre is highly irregular and the language is forced and pedestrian. The imagery and vocabulary are late, in biblical terms."[4] Other views on the comparisons of extrabiblical literature with verse 15 are not conservative. Widengren is especially extreme. After a brief discussion

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[1]Menahem Mansoor, *The Thanksgiving Hymns*, Vol. III, *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah*, edited by J. Van Der Ploeg (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1961), p. 109, fn. 6; p. 156, fn. 9.

[2]Stanley Gevirtz, "The Ugaritic Parallel to Jeremiah 8:23," *JNES*, 20:1 (January, 1961), 43-44-

[3]J. A. Sanders, "Hymn to the Creator," *Discoveries in the Judean Desert of Jordon IV: The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave II (llQPs^a)* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 89.

[4]*Ibid*.

of Babylonian concepts, he claims, "The Israelitic psalms, however, also indicate the existence of a pantheon."[1] Then he purports that Sedek was an ". . . old Canaanitic deity. Sedek is also mentioned as an independent deity, though belonging to Jahve's retinue and subordinate to him."[2] Following this he cites 89:15, "Sedek and Mispat are the habitation of Thy throne."[3] Shortly thereafter he concludes with a statement that is not agreeable to the present writer, "I think the above will suffice to prove that there is no conclusive difference between the ideas of god of the Accadian and Israelitic psalms of lamentation. . . . "[4] His comparative studies on 89:6 also show polytheistic tendencies.[5] Following his comments on the "epiphany of v. 2-5," Lipinski says of 89:15:

> En effet, la phrase "justice et droit sont le support de son trône" ne relève pas de la terminologie epiphanique. Elle appartient à un groupe de textes bibliques qui

[1]George Widengren, *The Accadian and Hebrew Psalms of Lamentation as Religious Documents: A Comparative Study* (Stockholm: Bokforlags Aktiebolaget Thule, 1937), p. 71.

[2]*Ibid*.

[3]*Ibid*.

[4]*Ibid*. p. 72.

[5]*Ibid*., p. 69. Also, see his comparison of 89:39 ff. to a portion of *Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts* and a portion of "Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets, in the British Museum," p. 106.

considerent la, justice comme le soutien du trône et reflètent 1'idéologie royale de l'ancien Proche-Orient.[1]

Then he compares the second half of verse 15 with an Akkadian expression:

> Les hendiadys sedeq ûmispāt et, dans une moindre mesure, *hesed* w[e]'emet ont certainement un rapport avec l'expression akkadienne *kittu u mēsaru*, "droit et justice", personnifiés sous la figure de deux génies protecteurs se tenant de part et d'autre du souvenain juge.[2]

Lipinski then goes on to discuss comparative studies of the word מכון with Egyptian concepts,[3] but later he disagrees with Kraus on comparing צדק ומשפט to the festival of the Tabernacles.[4] Some of the comparisons are not clear-cut issues; it appears that a few authors mix in subjectivism.

The contents of verses 6-9 have some similarities to the ancient Near East. Yadin avers:

> *Holy ones* (*qĕdhoshim*).--The scrolls frequently use 'holy ones' as a synonym for angels. The expression appears in various combinations, e.g. 'Realm of Holy Ones' (xi, 8-9; DST, xi, 12), 'a Host of Holy Ones' (DST, iii, 22; x, 34), 'a council (*sodh*) of Holy Ones' (DST, iv, 25; frg. 63; I QDM iv, I). These phrases indicate the organization and tasks of the angels as advisors, messengers and fighters. Compare with the above combinations: . . . Ps. lxxxix, 6-9).[5]

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[1]E. Lipinski, *La Royauté De Yahwé Duns La Poésie Et Le Culte De L'Ancien Israël* (Brussels: Paleis der Academien-Hertogsstraat I, 1965), p. 211.

[2]*Ibid*., p. 212.

[3]*Ibid*., pp. 212-13.

[4]*Ibid*., p. 214.

[5]Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness*, p. 231.

A little earlier he had given a number of comparisons to אלים (vs. 7) from Qumran texts.[1] Mansoor points to nearly the same similarities in other expressions of Qumran angelology.[2] In still another Dead Sea composition there is the קדוש קדושים that is similar to verses 6, 8, and לדור ודור of verse 5.[3]

From his translation of *Enuma Elish* (vi, 143), Gaster has "The congregation of the holy ones. . . ."[4] Then in his footnote he states, "For this expression, cf. Ps. 89:6. It corresponds to the 'Assembly of the Holy Ones (*mphrt qdsm*)' in the inscription of Yehimilk of Byblos (tr. Rosenthal, ANET, 499)."[5] Vriezen has a very extreme view:

> Since then, Yahweh has been the God who causes the pastures to 'drop fatness' and the fields to rejoice, as the psalms say (Psalms 65:10ff.; 104). Canaanite psalms, such as Psalm 29, were taken over and used to enhance the honour and glory of Yahweh.
>
> In that way the struggle with Baalism actually contributed to enrich men's picture of Yahweh, by making him Lord over the powers of living nature.

[1]*Ibid*., p. 230.

[2]Mansoor, *The Thanksgiving Hymns*, p. 80; p. 81, fn. 3; p. 82, fn. 5; p. 127, fn. 9.

[3]Sanders, "Hymn to the Creator," p. 89.

[4]Theodor H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1969), p. 750.

[5]*Ibid*., p. 843, fn. 24. Cf. *ANET*, p. 653. On page xxviii, Gaster speaks of verse 6 in terms of mythology. For a direct answer to this see Elmer B. Smick, "Mythology and the Book of Job."' *JETS*, XIII:II (Spring, 1970), 107.

Thus Yahweh gradually assumed a number of the characteristics of El and of Baal; but he also acquired a variety of titles under which those gods were venerated: the title of Melek, king, which had belonged first of all to El, was now employed as an epithet for Yahweh, who was thereby honoured as Lord of all gods in heaven and on earth. . . .

Thus Yahweh turns out to be the winner in this competition of the gods; and as a result of the struggle with El and Baal for the soul of the people of Israel he acquires the rank of king and comes to be seen as head of the divine world. Other gods become his servants; and messengers come at his command. The idea emerges of a divine 'royal household', with Yahweh as absolute ruler. This notion is in many respects not unlike that of the Canaanite pantheon. The difference is that, as the Israelites conceived it, Yahweh is the *absolute* ruler; and none of the gods around him is to be likened with him (see Psalms 29:1; 82; 89:6-8), none of them even has a name.[1]

Albright says, "In Psalms 82 and 89 we have references to the divine assembly in which Canaanite terminology is transparent."[2] While it is not specifically stated, Albright's reference must include בני אלים, to which Allis replies, "The claim that it is 'Canaanite' cannot be established."[3]

In his work, *The Assyrian and Hebrew Hymns of Praise*, Cumming asserts:

[1]Th. C. Vriezen, *The Religion of Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), p. 170.
[2]William Foxwell Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1968), pp. 191-92. Cf. also C. F. Whitley, *The Genius of Ancient Israel* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1969), pp. 95, 155.
[3]Oswald T. Allis, *The Old Testament: Its Claims and Its Critics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), p. 334.

It may be said at the outset, that there are practically
no specific cases where literary dependence can be dem-
onstrated, but, what is more important, there is a very
striking similarity of phraseology, implying similar re-
ligious ideas. . . .

In comparing the phraseology of the Assyrian and the
Hebrew hymns, the most obvious difference is that the
Assyrian hymns are addressed to many different deities,
each with its own proper name, Shamash, Sin, Marduk,
Ninib, and many others. The existence of other gods is
implied in some Hebrew hymns, but the Hebrew hymnist
never concedes to them an individual independent exis-
tence, much less a name.[1]

With this understanding, Cumming moves on to demon-

strate the similarities of ideas. The comparisons are as

follows:

The question is followed by the answer in the following
examples:

Who is exalted in heaven, Thou alone art exalted;
Who is exalted on earth, Thou alone art exalted.
--Hymn to Sin No. 5.

What god in heaven or earth can be compared to thee,
Thou art high over all of them
Among the gods superior is thy counsel.
--Hymn to Marduk No. 3.

Biblical examples of such rhetorical questions are:

For who in the skies can be compared unto Yahwe,
Who is like Yahwe among the gods?
--Psalm 89:7

Yahwe god of hosts who is like thee?
Strong art thou Yahwe and thy faithfulness is round
about thee.
--Psalm 89:9[2]

[1]Charles Gordon Cumming, *The Assyrian and Hebrew Hymns of Praise* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), pp. 100-101.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 103.

Moreover there is, for Assyrian, as for Hebrew, the
council of the gods, in which one god is the supreme
judge.

0 mighty god to whom there is no rival in the assembly
      of the great gods.   --Hymn to Marduk No. 3.

Then come the great gods for trial before thee.
                        --Hymn to Shamash No. 3.

Yahwe takes his stand in the council of gods:
In the midst of gods he judgeth.
                        --Psalm 82:1.

A God very terrible in the council of the holy ones,
And to be feared above all them that are round about
      Him.   --Psalm 89:8.1

There is an expression in the "Psalm to Marduk" that
may be compared to 89:47: "How long," . . . In a footnote
Stephens says:

> The refrain is now augmented by the words, "How long?"
> and continues in this form through line 28, although in
> its written form it appears only represented by the first
> word. "How long?" is an abbreviated exclamation, meaning,
> "How long will you remain in your present state? Is it
> not time for a change?"[2]

Gray cites the entire portion of 89:6-18. Then he
affirms:

> Here all the essential features of the Canaanite myth
> contained in the text GORDON, *UH* 68 are expressed, name-
> ly God's victory over the unruly waters (vv. 10-11), His
> establishment of order in nature, and His kingship (im-
> plicit in the above and explicit in v. 19). Not only

[1]*Ibid.*, pp. 103-04. For a comparison to verse 11 see
p. 138, and for a comparison to verse 14, see p. 136.
    [2]Ferris J. Stephens, translator, "Psalm to Marduk,"
Ancient Near Eastern Texts, edited by James B. Pritchard
(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 390, fn.
7. Third edition.

so, but the theme of the other fragment of the same Canaanite myth (GORDON, *UH*, 137), God's championship of thi divine assembly, is also included (vv. 6-B). . . .[1]

It may be said that there are similar expressions or the same essential features, but one must be careful not to imply that similarities prove derivation. Engnell says that 89:21 ff. is "substantially akin" to a Krt text in Ugaritic literature.[2]

In discussing the servant aspect of 89:4, de Vaux observes, "Il n'y a rien dans tout cela qui distingue vraiment Israël de ses voisins de 1'Orient Ancien."[3] He then moves on to draw comparisons from Sumerian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Hittite, and Aramaic texts. Before continuing he affirms, "Les rois orientaux, comme ceux d'Israel, sont en effet les 'serviteurs' de leur dieu."[4] Following this are more comparisons taken from an inscription of Karatepe and from Alalakh. A large discussion ensues in which de Vaux rightly concludes:

[1]John Gray, "The Hebrew Conception of the Kingship of God: Its Origin and Development, *VT*, VI:3 (July, 1956), 276.

[2]Ivan Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*, revised edition (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), p. 147.

[3]R. de Vaux, *Bible et Orient* (Paris: Les Éditions Du Cerf, 1967) , p. 289.

[4]*Ibid*., p. 290.

La comparaison peut être poussée plus loin. Les grands rois de l'Orient imposaient un traité à leurs vassaux: ceux-ci devaient a leur suzerain l'obeissance, le tribut et certains services, mais ils pouvaient compter sur sa protection, aussi longtemps qu'ils restraient fidèles. . . . En effet, cette alliance avec David et sa descendance ne peut pas être brisée. . . .[1]

Later he shows that certain Hittite treaties contain a promise similar to that which Yahweh had made for David's descendants.[2] On the matter of "anointing" (vs. 21) and "anointed" (vs. 39) de Vaux discusses comparative instances in the ancient Near East.[3]

In reference to 89:4-5 Tucker asserts, "Close similarities between the OT covenant pattern and the Near Eastern treaties have been noted and generally accepted."[4] Examples are taken from Akkadian records, Mari Letters, Alalah tablets, and several other extra-biblical materials, especially Hittite.

[1]*Ibid*., p. 292.
[2]*Ibid*., pp. 292-93.
[3]*Ibid*., pp. 297-99.
[4]Gene M. Tucker, "Covenant Forms and Contract Forms," *VT*, XV:4 (October, 1965), 489. For a further reference to Psalm 89 in Tucker's work, see pp. 494-95. Other sources that may be used for further research are D. J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament,* Analecta Biblica, no. 21 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963) and George E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955).

Greenfield,[1] Margulis,[2] and O'Callaghan[3] point out the comparison of a Ugaritic text, a Karatepe inscription, and 89:37-38. A strange comparison and interpretation are cited by Jones:

> Many scholars take the 'decree' to be God's act of adoption and renewal of the Covenant with the king on his ascension. References have been made to the Egyptian custom of giving the king a new name and it has been maintained that a similar custom existed in Israel. The decree given to the king is, therefore, interpreted as a charter, declaring the adoption, and containing his new name. This interpretation is again followed in explaining עֵדוֹת in 2 Kgs. xi 12 and בְּרִית in Ps. lxxxix 40.[4]

The present writer concurs with Jones that neither the comparison nor the interpretation is valid. Concerning the בכור of 89:28, Widengren says:

> Now, certain hints in both Ugaritic and Old Testament texts would seem to indicate that the ruler as son of the godhead was given the special designation of 'first-born', cf. Ps. lxxxix.28. . . .
>
> This proclamation assumes that it is possible to elevate a person to the position of the firstborn. . . . Actually in the Ugaritic Krt text the same institution

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[1]Jonas C. Greenfield, "Scripture and Inspiration: The Literary and Rhetorical Element in Some Early Phoenician Inscriptions," *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright*, edited by Hans Goedicke (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 267.

[2]B. Margulis, "A Ugaritic Psalm (RS24.252)," *JBL*, LXXXIX:III (September, 1970), 298.

[3]R. T. O'Callaghan, "Echoes of Canaanite Literature in the Psalms," *VT*, IV (1954), 165.

[4]G. H. Jones, "The Decree of Yahweh (Ps. II 7)," *VT*, XV:3 (July, 1965), 340-41.

appears in a context which shows a remarkable coincidence with Ps. lxxxix.28.[1]

The Ugaritic text is given in a footnote:

Krt. iii. 13-19:

> Be most exalted, oh Krt!
> In the midst of the Rephaim of the earth,
> in the assembly of the gathering of Datan,
> I shall make the youngest of them the firstborn.[2]

But this view of Widengren must be seen in conjunction with another of his views. He evidently believes the king represents a dying and rising deity.[3] But Mowinckel argues:

> In Israel, as in Babylonia, the sources afford no evidence for the idea (found in Egypt) that the king is one with the dead god, and that he was represented in the cult as suffering, dying, and rising again, or that in enacting this role he ever represented Yahweh.[4]

There are other comparisons that could be noted, but these will suffice to demonstrate some common concepts and institutions. The evaluation below will be brief since some evaluation was given above.

Evaluation

Common form and lexicography may indicate common

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[1]George Widengren, "Early Hebrew Myths and Their Interpretation," *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, edited by S. H. Hooke (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1958), pp. 174-75.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 175, fn. 1.
[3]Cf. Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, translated by G. W. Anderson (New York: Abingdon Press, In.d.), p. 86, fn. 5.
[4]*Ibid.*, p. 86.

ideas, but not common content and meaning. Again, the revelation of Yahweh is such that there is a great gulf fixed, and content and meaning are distinctly different from that of the ancient Near East. It may be said that a differing *Weltanschauung* makes Israel's religious concepts quite different, even though they use similar vocabulary, idioms, imagery, etc. Indications to this effect were given above.

While other nations had a god or gods, it is unthinkable to draw any comparisons to Yahweh; He is incomparable. Even on the lower scale, the manner in which the ancient Near Eastern gods conducted themselves removes any possibility for direct analogies to the קדשים or the בני אלים in in 89:6-8. Thus, the approach of a comparative-religionist is detrimental, not contributory.

Also, while there are resemblances of treaties and covenants, there are marked differences. As already implied the Source of Israel's covenant is unquestionably different. The making or renewal of a covenant was unlike the pagan nations and gods because of the connected fertility rites of the latter. There are other disagreements, but a major one is that the Davidic Covenant was eternal due to its Maker. The next chapter will carry some related facts into further detail.

Finally, the kingship was distinctly different. The ancient Near Eastern kings were gods or servants of gods. In the previous chapter it was observed that David was a servant

of Yahweh (89:4, 21), but this in no way implied that David was a god or deity. Neither was the king of David's line deified, and there was no hint in the psalm that his God had indicated any ritual ceremonies.[1] Fertility rites were absolutely forbidden. While some further distinctions were made earlier in this chapter, other distinctions related to the king will be developed more fully in the next chapter.

The present writer commenced the evaluation by inferring that common form and lexicography *may* indicate common ideas. This will be handled in the following chapter, but a few brief comments are necessary here. The present chapter began with what appeared to be valid comparisons in lexicography and poetic structure. Now the question remains, *What value or contribution do these have in studying the text of Psalm 89 or in the exegesis?*

The material from Ras Shamra will be taken as an example. As a way of reminder, Dahood had employed Ugaritic to aid the understanding of Psalm 89.[2] Verses of particular note are 2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 11, 13, 15, 20, 23, 26, 30, 37, 43,

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[1]Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship,* 2 vols., translated by D. R. Ap-Thomas (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), Vol. II, pp. 61, 63, 68. Several other scholars were cited in this present work who held that ritual occurred in this psalm, especially in reference to the king.

[2]Dahood, *Psalms II*, pp. 311-20.

45, and 47. A few are helpful, some are questionable, and
other so-called comparisons are absolutely wrong as pointed
out in the last chapter of exegesis. It should be noted
that Dahood at times will freely handle the text to achieve
lexicographical, structural, and interpretive patterns. Some
evidence of these emendations was observed in the exegesis.
These verses are 13, 15, 20, 30, and 43.[1] In each one of
these cases the Ugaritic was of no special help, in fact,
the results were mostly misinterpretations. The present
writer cannot find any special instance where Ugaritic con-
tributed significantly.

There has been some very recent criticism of Dahood's
approach to the text. Nicholas writes:

> In *Psalms II* he wishes to distance himself from terms
> he formerly used to describe the relationships between
> Ugaritic and biblical Hebrew, such as 'influence' and
> 'dependence,' and now wishes to use such terms as 'elu-
> cidation.' This is a commendable step in the right
> direction. It is still true, however, that Dahood must
> be judged guilty of the charge of virtually equating
> Ugaritic, Phoenician, and Hebrew--as has unceasingly
> been pointed out by his critics.[2]

Precisely what is meant by Nicholas is disclosed in
a later statement, "The greatest problem faced by the philo-
logical approach today is not that it makes use of cognate

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[1]*Ibid*., pp. 314-18.
[2]Thomas A. Nicholas, "The Current Quest For the Mean-
ing of the Text of the Old Testament," *WTJ*, XXXIV:2 (May,
1972), 133-34. His reference to Dahood's statements are
found in *Psalms II*, pp. XV-XVII.

languages, but rather that it uses them in such an undisciplined manner."[1] This is followed by pertinent quotes from Barr and Smith, as well as his own views.[2] The conclusions of Fensham are especially worth noting:

> It is thus clear that a more rigid linguistic method must be followed to escape from preconceived ideas about meanings of words. Our task is to determine the meaning of a word as precisely as possible with all the aid we can muster. It seems to me that philology is important to determine the sphere of meaning because if one has a different word in the source language, one has to start somewhere with the meaning of a difficult word. Philology must then not be used as an end *in itself,* but always in combination with syntax and semotaxis. We must listen to what the Bible wants to say to us, and not correct the Bible by either forcing a preconceived meaning on it or by a clever discovery which is based on bad linguistics or on an even more slender basis.[3]

Thus, in the whole realm of comparisons one must be extremely aware of the distinctions which are unalterable facts. To approach such a study calls for principled methods and biblical presuppositions.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 134-35.

[3] F. C. Fensham, "Problems in Connection with Translation of Ancient Texts," *De Fructu Oris Sui: Essays in Honour of Adrianus van Selms,* edited by I. H. Eybers, et al (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), pp. 56-57.

CHAPTER V

SOME PARALLELS FROM THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

At some point controversy usually reaches a climax. In many ways this chapter constitutes just that. As the problem was cited in the first chapter of this dissertation, the purpose now is to bring to the fore the application of parallels from the ancient Near East to Psalm 89.

The discussion could be extremely long and involved.[1] Extra effort has been taken to make it concise, yet significant. Reflections on many of the assertions will not be made individually or immediately. The reason is twofold: many have been set forth in the preceding three chapters, and others are covered in an evaluation within this chapter.

The Application of Parallels
in the Hermeneutical Method

Scholars see parallels everywhere with no specific guidelines, which is hardly a sign of scholarship. As this chapter will illustrate, some parallels are drawn to Psalm 89 with the result that the uniqueness of Scripture is

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[1]For example, see the many references for Ugaritic parallels in Loren R. Fisher, ed., "Indices: Texts," *Ras Shamra Parallels: The Texts from Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible*, Vol. I, Analecta Orientalia 49, edited (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1972), pp. 470-71.

reduced. Therefore, it seems absolutely mandatory that some thought be given to the appropriate uses of parallels for the biblical hermeneutic.

There is a wealth of documentation from the ancient Near East which makes the task of drawing parallels not difficult. But are they all valid? Much depends on the material and the *modus operandi* by which it is done, as well as presuppositions. The attempt will be to approach the issue with specific direction.

For a bona-fide parallel there would have to be a common cultural milieu. This is not hard to demonstrate. Psalm 89 mentions a covenant, kings, crown, throne, heavenly holy ones, anointing, vision, firstborn, battle, plunder, etc. All of these and more are found in the culture of the ancient Near East. The concept of a God or god as ruling is part and parcel of both cultures. The literary expressions from the ancient Near East leave no question concerning common cultural parallels to the thoughts expressed in the psalm.

Along with this would be a common geographical setting. It is generally recognized by all that Israel was within what is commonly known as the Fertile Crescent.

Also, there should be some linguistic similarities in order to have common religious expressions. This was demonstrated in the previous chapters and will be done even more so in this chapter.

Thus, numerous literary parallels reveal almost

identical thought structures between Psalm 89 and the ancient Near East. But these close affinities need some specific guidelines. Do these thought structures agree in every respect?

In other words, what was the concept of two different peoples concerning a supernatural Being or beings? Was He or they transcendent and free, etc.? Or their concept of nature, was it deified or not? How were morals conceived or not conceived? Questions could persist; however, the issue is clear with these.

When applying parallels, it must be realized that Israel's religious or theological and/or philosophical concepts are distinctly different. Ullendorff's statement is most vital here:

> No longer need we look for a few isolated parallels but we can now observe a long tradition which expresses itself in common idioms, common poetic structure, similar collocations, and a basic identity of form. Identity of form--but not of content or of spirit[1]

But some scholars are guilty of doing what Allis accuses some archaeologists of doing:

> We are often told today that the life of ancient Israel was not lived in a vacuum; and one of the chief aims of the archaeologist is to fill in that vacuum and

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[1]Edward Ullendorff, "Ugaritic Studies Within Their Semitic and Eastern Mediterranean Setting," *BJRL*, 46:1 (September, 1963), 239. Another true statement given by Ullendorff is that ". . . many emendations proposed for the text of the Old Testament can, in fact, be shown to be superfluous. . . ." p. 239.

to discover not only the background or context but also the sources of the religious beliefs of Israel.[1]

Later in his work Allis annotates nine distinctive features which set apart Israel's religion ". . . from the religions of the peoples with which Israel was more or less closely related or associated."[2] Therefore, when it comes to any consideration of applying parallels from the ancient Near East to Psalm 89, that consideration must recognize that Israel had a distinct *Weltanschauung*.

To apply the principle more specifically, now do the literary parallels relate, in as much as Psalm 89 as a portion of the biblical corpus has qualities that are unique, especially in theological concepts? Certainly the matter of Divine revelation and inspiration must enter the discussion when referring to any biblical material. The content or spirit of any piece of literature would reflect the thinking of its composer and any or all external influences upon him. For example, when Ethan speaks of Yahweh's retinue in the sky, can it possibly have the same spirit or meaning as when another ancient writer of another people speaks of Baal and his retinue? Yes, the same form or structure, but not the same spirit of religious belief, nor does it have the same meaning. Further developments of this will be acknowledged

[1]Oswald T. Allis, *The Old Testament: Its Claims and Critics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), p. 346.
[2]*Ibid*., p. 371. See full discussion on pp. 372-78.

throughout the chapter.

In Terms of Vocabulary

Under a chapter entitled, "Word Parallels," Patton claims:

> When the vocabulary of the Psalms is compared with the vocabulary of all the Ugaritic literature extant, it is found that approximately 46 percent of all roots appearing in the Psalms are common to both, while 54 percent of the roots appearing in Ugaritic are common to both.[1]

Yet, he cites only five cases related to Psalm 89. The one is דור ודור in verses 2 and 5.[2] Several Ugaritic texts have words that parallel יד and ימין in verse 14.[3] He parallels מגן in verse 19 to some texts and thus translates it *supplication*.[4] In the exegesis it was argued that the word should be translated shield which is correct. Therefore Patton is in error here. And finally he notes parallels to צר in verse 43.[5] In his review of Patton's work, Ginsberg says:

> However, Patton's study also includes a number of comparisons between Ugaritic and biblical texts in which a partly erroneous interpretation is given to one or both. But after all, the joy of making new observations in the

[1]John Hasting Patton, *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1944), p. 32.
[2]*Ibid*., p. 36.
[3]*Ibid*., p. 39
[4]*Ibid*., p. 41
[5]*Ibid*., p. 33

Bible in the light of newly discovered comparative material is so great that it is too much to expect the critical faculty to weed out all the imaginary ones at the outset. On the other hand, some real ones are also bound to be missed at first. For example, one does not find Ps 89:45 listed in the index; although the emendation which makes that verse a striking parallel to I AB 6:28-29 and to the conclusion of the Ahiram inscription was made long before the latter were known.[1]

While saying Patton was partly in error, Ginsberg was heading for the same with his emendation. Ullendorff writes:

I have found it quite diverting, though not very profitable, to make out a case for Ugaritic propinquity to every single Semitic language in turn. What would be of value, however, is not the tracing of chance relations between individual roots but the collection of complete semantic fields.[2]

Nicholas remarks:

In the search for meaning for a Hebrew word, it has too frequently been assumed that a certain root in Hebrew is likely to have a meaning identical or similar to the same root in a cognate language.[3]

The same caution should be given to Dahood's "Pairs of Parallel Words in the Psalter and in Ugaritic."[4] Not all of them are valid. For a true parallel the meaning of a word

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[1]H. L. Ginsberg, review of *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms* by John Hasting Patton, *JAOS*, 65 (1945), 65.

[2]Ullendorff, "Ugaritic Studies Within Their Semitic and Eastern Mediterranean Setting," p. 249.

[3]Thomas A. Nicholas, "The Current Quest for the Meaning of the Text of the Old Testament," *WTJ*, XXXIV:2 (May, 1972), 135.

[4]Mitchell Dahood, *The Anchor Bible--Psalms III* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1970), p. 445, 89:27, 43; p. 449, 89:14, 16; p. 450, 89:26; p. 453, 89:5, 30; p. 455, 89:6-7, 15.

in one context must correspond identically to the same word in another context, and neither Patton nor Dahood seemed to have bothered with contextual meanings in every case. Therefore a vocabulary parallel requires more than just taking the same word from two different texts and calling them parallel.

Allusions to Ideas

Patton sees several parallels between Ugaritic and Psalm 89 in the area of "Thought Patterns" or ideas. He takes the Father-son relationship in 89:27 and sees close parallels to El and his cohorts in Ugaritic texts.[1] After the conclusion, he avers, "In this same connection it is well to note the expression of El as king and ruler in Ugaritic and YHWH as king and ruler in the Psalms."[2] With this he quotes 89:19. Because of "B'l spn, 'Baal of the north,'" and "El spn, 'El (or god) of the north,'" Patton suggested that צפון in 89:13 is a place name.[3] In another place he asserts:

> The familiar method of expressing the idea of a message being sent in Ugaritic is: bph rgm lipa bspth hwt, "From his mouth let a message go forth, from his lips a word," found in I D 75, 113, 127, 141; 68:6. The identical form is not found in the Psalms but a hint of the idiom is present in Psalm 89:35, "I will not violate my covenant, nor what my lips have uttered" (מוֹצָא שְׂפָתַי).[4]

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[1]Patton, *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms*, pp. 15-16.

[2]*Ibid*., p. 17.

[3]*Ibid*., p. 19.

[4]*Ibid*., p. 22.

At the finish of a different discussion, Patton concludes:

> The pagan polytheistic idea of the assembly of the gods had developed until it was thought of as the assembly of the worshipers of the one God, YHWH. One other word (סוד) may be reminiscent of the same idea in Psalm 89:8a, "El is to be feared in the holy council (סוֹד־קְדֹשִׁים)."[1]

This conclusion cannot be substantiated. Moreover, according to Job 38:1-7, Yahweh had an assembly about Him at the laying of the foundation of the earth. Like nearly all comparative-religionists, he sees 89:10-11 parallel with Ugaritic thinking.[2] Several of Patton's suggested parallels do not concur with the discussion given in the beginning of this chapter, nor with the exegesis in the third chapter.

Following a discussion pervaded with error and comparison, Dahood seems to draw a parallel:

> In Canaanite myth, the principal foes of Baal are Yamm and Mot, while in biblical mythopoeic [sic] language the rivals of Yahweh are Yamm and Tannin in Ps lxxiv 13, Rahab in Ps lxxxix 11, and Rahab, Tannin, Yamm, and Tehom--four in number--in Isa li 9-10.[3]

The reference to 89:11 cannot be likened to the Canaanite myth because Yamm and Mot are gods. It was verified in the exegesis that Rahab referred to Egypt. Besides,

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[1]*Ibid.*, p. 24.
[2]*Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.
[3]Dahood, *Psalms I*, p. 51. For a very similar conclusion see James B. Pritchard, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), pp. 189-90.

Yahweh is incomparable and cannot be lowered to the same

level as Baal in dealing with rivals. Further answers to

this will be given later.

Oesterley refers to thought-structure in assuming his

parallels:

> To come now to some of the Babylonian and Egyptian
> hymns and psalms in which we find points of thought-
> contact with the Hebrew psalms. As an illustration of
> the mythological ode, we may give a quotation from the
> Babylonian Creation-myth (Fourth Tablet), which lies at
> the back of such passages as Ps. 74:13-15, 89:9-14, 104:
> 6-9--namely, the conflict between Marduk and Tiamat; the
> Hebrew psalmist has taken the *rôle* of the hero-god
> Marduk, and applied it to Yahweh. . . .[1]

Since Oesterley does not hold to the biblical concep-

tion of revelation, he is free to apply non-biblical material

as he sees fit. This is a good example of how the uniqueness

of Scripture is reduced.

After illustrating the above point, Oesterley con-

tinues:

> Our next illustration is an Egyptian hymn of praise
> in honour of the Sun-god, Amon-Re, the highest among all
> the gods; it belongs to the middle of the fifteenth cen-
> tury B.C. As will be seen, there are various instances
> in it of thoughts and expressions which find a parallel
> in verses of some of the Hebrew psalms. There is no
> question here of borrowing; but such parallels illustrate
> the existence of similarity of mental outlook on the part
> of religious poets, expressed in their poems. . .[2]

[1]W. 0. E. Oesterley, *The Psalms: Translated with Text-Critical and Exegetical Notes*, reprint (London: S.P.C. K., 1962), p. 39.
[2]*Ibid*.

Only two lines of the hymn will be shown here:

Thou, greatest in heaven (cp. Ps. 89:6), most ancient
        on earth; thou, lord of all that is, that abidest
        in all things.
The only one of his kind among the gods (cp. Ps. 86:8,
        96:4, 135:5), the stately Bull of the thrice-three
        gods, the lord of all gods.[1]

Concerning these latter verses (89:6-8), Wright says, "The ascription is simply borrowed from a pagan context and used of Yahweh, any *definite* comparative notion having fallen into the background."[2] His reference to borrowing will be handled later. Oesterley's *thought contact* and *similarity of mental outlook* are purely a result of his own thought structure.

In his consideration of "Breaking the sceptre," Hillers cites a passage from the Shamshi-Adad treaty and a parallel one from the Code of Hammurabi.[3] These are followed by similar passages from a Ugaritic text and the Ahiram inscription. Then he parallels several biblical verses, after which he purports, "Ps. 89:45, corrupt in its present form, seems to contain the same picture: note the parallelism of throne and sceptre, as in the Ugaritic example quoted

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[1]*Ibid*., p. 40. For further comments see pp. 400-01.
[2]G. Ernest Wright, *The Old Testament Against Its Environment*, Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 2 (London: SCN Press, Ltd., 1950), p. 34, fn. 49.
[3]Delbert R. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964), p. 61.

above. . . ."[1] Except for what he calls a fundamental differ-
ence between Isaiah 45:15 and Psalm 89:47, Williams would see
an Egyptian text parallel with the latter.[2]

The present writer admits a difficulty at this point
in determining what may be treated as allusions or direct
application to Psalm 89. In studying the broader contexts,
all of the above seem to be treated as allusions. Some of
the so-called parallels in the next section may seem to be
allusions, but for other reasons they are treated there.

Direct Application to Concepts and Institutions

In one sense this might be called the hard-core area
in applying the ancient Near East to Psalm 89. DeQueker, as
one example, claims, "Le début du psaume LXXXIX présente donc
des parallèls frappants avec la litérature ugaritique et
phénicienne."[3] And he wastes no time in noting them. He
even cites what he calls an Akkadian parallel and says, "Ici
l'affirmation est identique pour ainsi dire à celle du Ps.
XXXIX, 8."[4] After several other so-called parallels, he
makes the blunt statement, "Les *b^enê elîm et* les *q^edosîm* du

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[1]*Ibid.*

[2]Ronald J. Williams, "Some Egyptianisms in the Old
Testament," *Studies in the Honor of John A. Wilson,* SAOC, No.
35 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 95.

[3]L. DeQueker, "Les Qedosam du Ps. lxxxix à la Lumière
des Croyances Semitiques," *ETL*, 39 (1963), p. 479.

[4]*Ibid.*

psaume LXXXIX formet la cour de Yahweh, tout comme les *bn ilm* formaient celle des dieux El et Baal dans la religion cananéenne ou phenicienne."[1] And many more could be listed here.

In commenting on 89:6-8 Labuschagne provides a very suitable answer to DeQueker and all others cited earlier who drew parallels to this portion:

> The reason for the psalmist's emphasizing Yahweh's incomparability with reference to the heavenly beings can only be that he realized the peril of regarding them as gods surrounding Yahweh, a dangerous tendency he undoubtedly observed among his contemporaries. In this conception Yahweh would be nothing but a god among the gods and there would be no difference between Yahweh with his *entourage* of gods and Baal with his assembly or Marduk with his. This confusion of Yahweh's *entourage* with the pagan divine assemblies was in fact very real. In my view our psalmist polemizes against the tendency to identify the pagan conception of the divine assembly with the Hebrew conception of Yahweh's *entourage*, and regard these attendant beings as gods, headed by Yahweh, in the same way as El or Baal was the head of the Canaanite pantheon and Marduk the head of the gods in Babylonia.[2]

Driver sees a parallel in function. He quotes 89:7 and Psalm 29:1 and postulates:

> These 'sons of God' perform for Jahveh the same functions as the Igigi, 'the gods of the upper world,' who represent the host of visible stars, and the Anunnaki, 'the gods of lower world,' perform for the principal deities of the Babylonian pantheon.[3]

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[1]*Ibid*., pp. 480-81.

[2]C. J. Labuschagne, *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament*, Vol. V, *Pretoria Oriental Series*, edited by A. Van Selms (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966), pp. 81-82.

[3]Godfrey R. Driver, "The Psalms in the Light of Babylonian Research," *The Psalmists*, edited by D. C. Simpson (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), p. 153.

Later he quotes 89:15 with the following remark,
so various kinds of favourable demons stood around
the greater gods and goddesses of the Babylonian pantheon."[1]

How he can compare ואמת חסד with *favourable demons* is beyond
the present writer's thinking. He observes at least two
other parallels to Psalm 89.[2] But, on the other hand, Driver
is somewhat different from certain scholars who claim par-
allels. He rightly comments:

> The similarities between these two literatures to which
> I have here drawn attention are significant as shewing
> how alike was the diction and, superficially, the
> thought of these two great peoples; but how much more
> significant are the differences, both moral and spir-
> itual![3]

There would be no point in listing all the scholars
who see parallels to 89:10-11, Rahab, etc.[4] Many were cited
in the third chapter. One of the adherents not yet mentioned
is Rogers. In an early work he states, "Here is a passage in
the Psalter in which we can discern quite plainly the influ-
ence of the Babylonian creation story."[5] Then he quotes

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[1]*Ibid*., p. 164.

[2]*Ibid*., pp. 123-24; 140-41.

[3]*Ibid*., p. 172.

[4]For additional views see Antoon Schoors, "Literary
Phrases," *Ras Shamra Parallels: The Texts from Ugarit and
the Hebrew Bible,* Vol. I, *Analecta Orientalia 49*, edited by
Loren R. Fisher (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum,
1972), pp. 34-36.

[5]Robert William Rogers, *The Religion of Babylonia and
Assyria* (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1908), p. 133.

89:9-13, after which he declares:

> This poet has heard of Tiamat and her story. Here Tiamat is called Rahab, and it is not Marduk, but Jehovah, who has slain her. Just as the elder Bel, or Ellil, was displaced, as we have seen by Marduk, so here Marduk is displaced by Jehovah. He has "broken Rahab in pieces"--nay, more, he has scattered his enemies, that is, the helpers of Rahab. And then, then, after he has defeated Rahab, he creates the world. It is certainly the Babylonian Tiamat and Marduk story which this poet has in mind and is using poetically to glorify Jehovah. And be it observed he is following exactly the same order of progression as we have just seen in the Babylonian story --first the conflict, then the creation.[1]

And in a later work he has another discussion on Rahab and 89:10 [11].[2] But in this effort he includes a picture of the conflict in myth on a limestone slab.[3] (See the following page of this dissertation and especially note his comments opposite the plate.) As for the totality of his remarks, only a portion is correct on four counts: (1) No doubt the poet had heard the Babylonian story, (2) Jehovah defeated Rahab, (3) the poet wrote to glorify Jehovah, and (4) the Babylonian story is a myth. All else is pure conjecture. One may say that Rogers' so-called parallel is a mixture of fact and fancy.

In the third chapter on exegesis it was carefully

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[1]Ibid., p. 134. Also see H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Old Testament: Its Making and Meaning* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1937), p. 142 and C. F. Whitley, *The Genius of Ancient Israel* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1969), p. 62.

[2]Robert.William Rogers, ed., *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament*, second edition (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1926), pp. 60-61.

[3]*Ibid*., p. 487.

PLATE. NO. 8

Conflict between a god, as the representative of Cosmos, and a horned dragon, as the representative of Chaos. In the early mythology it was Ellil who thus destroyed the dragon. In the later mythology it was Marduk who assumed this role, and when the Hebrews caught up these mythological ideas the role of destroyer was taken by Jahweh. See Psalm 89. 8-12, and compare Rogers, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria,* New York, 1908, pp. 133, 134.

The original is in the British Museum. Limestone slabs, Numbers 28 and 29.

Illustration from L. W. King. *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, London, 1903, by kind permission of Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd.

spelled out that Rahab was Egypt. In no way could it be a reference to Tiamat. Also, there is no evidence that Yahweh replaced Marduk. On pages 99 ff. of this dissertation it was demonstrated by the hermeneutical method that creation did not follow conflict.

The problem and the *hapax legomenon* (מטהר) in 89:45 have been referred to before. But now the passage in which it appears is distinctly said to be in parallel with a Ugaritic passage. However, it is seen as such only on the basis of an emendation. Morton reviews the emendations of Oesterley and Gunkel, and asserts:

> That this emendation is in the right direction is sup-
> ported by a striking parallel passage from the Ugaritic
> (49:VI:28-29),
> (28) sbtk lyhpk ks'a mlkk
> (29) lysbr ḥt msptk
> (28) . . . Verily he will overturn the throne of thy
>   kingdom;
> (29) Verily he will break the scepter of thy rule.[1]

He continues by endeavoring to give support to Gins-berg's emendation on the same problem.[2] It is well here to switch to the broader discussion of Greenfield. In connec-tion to the Ugaritic reference cited above, Greenfield

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[1] William Hardy Morton, "The Bearing of the Records of Ras Shamra on the Exegesis of the Old Testament" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1946), pp. 79-80. A portion of Morton's material is taken directly from George A. Barton, "A North Syrian Poem on the Conquest of Death," *JAOS*, 52 (1932), pp. 221-31.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

states, "The clearest parallel (Ps. 89:45) was first noted by

H. L. Ginsberg."[1] Opinions are given in a footnote:

> H. L. Ginsberg, who first drew the parallel with the Ugaritic text (*JAOS* 65 11945]: 65 n.2) proposed reading *matteh yādō* by comparing Ugar. *mt yd*. For a recent rendering of the unchanged consonantal text cf. G. Ahlstrom, Psalm 89 (Lund 1959), p. 137. He is followed by M. Dahood, *The Psalms II* (N.Y., 1968), p. 319. But Dahood's rendering of *mithārō* as "his splendor" is not acceptable for the putative Ugaritic *thr* "gem" does not exist. This vocable occurs as an adjective meaning "pure" and describing *iqni* in *UT* 51, V. 81.96.[2]

While scholars differ over Ugaritic words and meanings, it is interesting to note that emendations are part of the cause.[3] Since the matter has been covered in the exegesis, there is no advantage in repeating it.

Psalm 89:20-30 and II Samuel 7 have been seen to have parallels in the ancient Near East. In commenting on Nathan's covenant oracle to David and the literary parallels in Egyptian hymns of victory, Kline says in a footnote:

> Nathan's oracle also has its parallels in the suzerainty treaties which promise prolongation of dynasty to the vassal king, as is argued successfully by P. J. Calderone in *Dynastic Oracle and Suzerainty*

[1] Jonas C. Greenfield, "Scripture and Inscription: The Literary and Rhetorical Element in Some Early Phoenician Inscriptions, *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright*, edited by Hans Goedicke (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 256.

[2] *Ibid*., fn. 17.

[3] Greenfield himself quotes an emendation " . . which does least violence to the Massoretic text. . . . *Ibid*., p. 257. But why have any violence?

Treaty (Manila, 1966). Cf. too *TGK*, pp. 36 ff. These parallels consist in formal similarities in ideology and concept.[1]

Kline is pointing out that a *transference* is made from king-vassal in the Egyptian literature to יהוה-servant (vassal) in biblical literature. However, in Israel the covenant concept came directly from Yahweh with guaranteed eternal and spiritual significance, the same cannot be said for human-conceived covenants or treaties in the ancient Near East.

At this point the present writer is forced to be extremely selective. If he were to write according to his findings in research, this work would easily double in size. Scholars have run wild in seeing parallels to concepts and institutions of covenants, adoption, kingship, enthronement, ruling, and festivals. The reader should keep in mind that the following is just a trickle of the vast material available.

Hohenstein has a chapter in his dissertation entitled "The Royal Psalms and Ancient Near Eastern Parallels" and he commences with these remarks:

[1]Meredith G. Kline, "Canon and Covenant: Part III," *WTJ*, XXXIII:1 (November, 1970), 50, fn. 108. Kline does not mention Psalm 89, but then he does not need to do so. Therefore see Joachim Becker, review of *Dynastic Oracle and Suzerainty Treaty* by Philip J. Calderone, *Biblica*, 50:1 (1969), 111--15. While Weinfeld does not exactly employ the word *parallel*, his material should be read in conjunction with the above. Cf. M. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East, *JAOS*, 90:2 (April-June, 1970), 189-92.

As has been frequently observed, the methodology of historical criticism often involves an interpretation of the Biblical material in the light of ancient Near Eastern parallels. This is especially true of the expressions concerning Israelite kingship as they are found in the Royal Psalms. The conclusion of critical scholars is that kingship in Israel is a modified version of kingship in Egypt and Mesopotamia and that the Biblical Royal Psalms reflect this similarity.[1]

To admit parallels without a guideline intensifies the problem of handling the critics. And he gives evidence of this. Later he says, "In the Royal Psalms there are at least three passages that seem to support the notion of divine kingship. They are Pss. 2:7; 89:20-30; and 110:3."[2] The notion that the king of Israel is divine is denied, but why admit they *seem to support?* Cooke cites the adherents of the Uppsala school who hold such a view and sufficiently disproves that such a concept was held in Israel.[3]

Along the same thought, Engnell writes:

In the ideology prevalent throughout the ancient Near East, the sacral king was considered divine in origin and the incarnate god in the cult, where he played the role of the god according to the "cultic pattern" which appears in more or less similar form in the different regions of the uniform culture of the ancient Near East. This sacral-divine kingship also existed in Israel and its ideology was valid: the king is of divine origin (Pss. 2:7; 89:29; 110:3; II Sam. 7:14); he is divine (Pss. 8:6; 45:7; II Sam. 7:9); he is the incarnation

[1]Herbert E. Hohenstein, "Psalms 2 and 110: A Comparison of Exegetical Methods" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, 1967), p. 136.

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 142.

[3]Gerald Cooke, "The Israelite King as Son of God," *ZAW*, 73 (1961) , 202-25.

of "righteousness"; he is the perfect judge; and he functions in the cult in the dual role of suffering and victory, of expiator and savior. Here, already, we find a messianic ideology connected with the living historical bearer of the kingship, which is taken over from the Canaanite, pre-Israelite period. As a matter of fact, this early Canaanite stage of the Old Testament belief in a Messiah is more or less fully found in extra-biblical West Semitic sources: the Amarna letters, the Panammu, Kalamu, and Zakir inscriptions, and last, but not least, the texts from Ras Shamra.

As bearer of this whole cultic and ideological reality, the Israelite king is designated by the special name "Messiah" (Hebrew māshîah, Aramaic meshîha', "the Anointed One"), due to the well-known fact that the king was consecrated to his office by a holy anointing with oil (compare I Sam. 10:1--Saul, 16:13--David, I Kgs. 1:39--Solomon, II Kgs. 9:6--Jehu, 11:12--Joash), by which he was made partaker of the Holy Spirit, that is, of the divine life, and thus became divine himself.[1]

Of course, if one treats portions of Scripture as Engnell did, then anything can be assumed. Answers to this particular issue will be given later.

Johnson takes a less harsh position than Engnell, ". . . in Israelite thought the king was a *potential* 'extension' of the personality of Yahweh. . . ."[2] Some other

[1]Ivan Engnell, *A Rigid Scrutiny: Critical Essays on the Old Testament*, translated and edited by John T. Willis, with the collaboration of Helmer Ringgren (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), pp. 222-23. See also Engnell's work, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*, revised edition (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), p. 147.

[2]A. R. Johnson, "Divine Kingship and the Old Testament," *ET*, LXII:2 (November, 1950), 42. According to Johnson, Mowinckel held a ". . . belief in some form of divine kingship." p. 37. For other comments see Schoors, "Literary Phrases," pp. 54-55.

studies on kingship have been cited in this present work.[1]
The reader is urged to peruse them to observe the effort
scholars go to in order to draw parallels to Psalm 89. A few
more that could be mentioned[2] prove only one thing: that the
parallels which scholars associate with the psalm really
prove that specific guidelines are needed. The exegesis in
the third chapter has already handled the biblical account.

A new aspect is now ready for consideration--the
paralleling of the content of Psalm 89 to a festival. Con-
tinuing with Johnson, he comments:

> Gunkel's point of view was early taken up by the Nor-
> wegian scholar S. Mowinckel, who published an attractive
> exposition of the royal psalms in the light of their
> Egyptian and Assyro-Babylonian parallels, and extended
> the class so as to embrace Ps . . . 89. . . . [3]

Then Johnson relates a few other matters and ties
Mowinckel's "some form of divine kingship" with the following:

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[1]For example, the two footnotes just previous to this
one; also, A. R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*
(Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967); "Hebrew Concep-
tions of Kingship," *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, edited by S.
H. Hooke (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1958); and John Gray,
"The Hebrew Conception of the Kingship of God: Its Origin
and Development," *VT*, VI:3 (July, 1956), 268-85.

[2]Cf. John Gray, *The Krt Text in the Literature of Ras
Shamra*, second edition (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), pp. 7-8;
"Canaanite Kingship in Theory and Practice," *VT*, II (1952),
193-220; review of *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* by A. R.
Johnson, *VT*, VI:4 (October, 1956), 440-43; also consideration
should be given to the first seven chapters of *Myth, Ritual,
and Kingship* (see fn. 1 above).

[3]Johnson, "Divine Kingship and the Old Testament,"
p. 37.

This thesis was later touched upon by Mowinckel in his famous series of studies in the Psalter, where a place was found for the king in the ritual of the New Year Festival at Jerusalem, as Mowinckel sought to reconstruct it on the basis, primarily, of the Babylonian *akitu* festival and the partially analogous ritual of the Osiris-Horus complex including, of course, the associated royal ideology.[1]

Others have followed. Johnson continues:

Accordingly, it is not surprising to find that shortly afterwards H. Schmidt, who accepted Mowinckel's theory in principle, restated it with a slightly stronger emphasis upon the part played by the king, incorporating (in addition to Ps 132) Ps 2, 20, 21, 89:1-3, 6-19.

Johnson finally gets around to his position. What is interesting to note is how he arrived at his conviction:

At about the same time the present writer, who had been examining the Psalter from an entirely different angle (i.e., that of a comparative study of Greek and Israelite ideas of life after death), found himself forced into a partial acceptance of Mowinckel's views together with a greater emphasis upon the role of the king in the New Year Festival through reading the discussion of the חיה in the challenging work of W. W. Baudissin on the Adonis-Esmun-Tammuz relationship and its possible bearing upon the conception of Yahweh as 'a *living* God.' Taking his stand upon the view that Ps 2, 18, 89, 110, 118 and 132 are all royal psalms, he advanced the thesis that the New Year Festival, in the modified form of Mowinckel's theory which the writer is prepared to accept, was rooted in the pre-Davidic cultus of אל עליון (R. V. 'God Most High'), and

[1]*Ibid*. Cf. Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 vols., translated by D. R. Ap-Thomas (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), I, 106-92. For Psalm 89 see I, 118, 144, 176. In addition to Mowinckel, see the views of Weiser and Kraus in Harvey H. Guthrie, Jr., *Israel's Sacred Songs: A Study of Dominant Themes* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1966), pp. 14-21.
[2]Johnson, "Divine Kingship and the Old Testament," p. 38.

that in the ritual drama the kings or nations of the
earth, who represented the forces of darkness and death
as opposed to those of light and life, united in an ef-
fort to destroy Yahweh's chosen people by slaying the
Davidic king upon whom its vitality and indeed its sur-
vival as a social body was held to be dependent.[1]

After quoting Psalm 89:8-11 [9-12], Anderson claims,
"All of this adds up to the conclusion that the hymns to
Yahweh as King belong essentially to the New Year's festival
celebrated in Jerusalem during the pre-exilic period."[2] But
this is not half as serious as the parallels Gaster conceives.
Only portions of his total discussion will be cited. He
quotes 89:2-5 and says:

> Here is reproduced, clearly and unmistakably, the
> familiar coronation element of the Ritual Pattern. In
> this case, however, it is not the accession of the god
> that is represented but that of a king--a regular fea-
> ture, as we have seen, of the seasonal festivals. Even
> the stereotyped terminology is preserved . . . we may
> aptly compare the Babylonian coronation formula . . .
> and we may recall also that similar expressions are to
> be found in the Canaanite *Poem of Baal*. . . .[3]

For verses 6-11 he avers:

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[1]*Ibid*., p. 39. See also his work, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel,* pp. 106-110.

[2]Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, second edition (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 483. Especially see his footnote 33 for other views. Practically the same view is held by Donald Anders-Richards, *The Drama of the Psalms* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1968), pp. 62-63. Cf. also Whitley, *The Genius of Ancient Israel*, p. 56 and George Widengren, "King and Covenant," *JSS*, 2:1 (January, 1957), 22.

[3]Theodore H. Gaster, *Thespis: Ritual Myth and Drama in the Ancient Near East*, revised edition, Harper Torchbooks (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966), p. 447.

We are reminded, therefore, of the scenes in the Canaan-
ite *Poem of Baal* (VAB), the Babylonian New Year myth (EE
VI, 72 ff.), and the Hittite Purulitext in which the gods
foregather to acknowledge and pay homage to theirnew
king.[1]

He quotes 6-11 and continues:

Then, just as in the Babylonian New Year Myth (EE V) the
triumph of Marduk over Tiamat issues in the establishing
of the cosmic order, so here the psalm passes naturally
to the celebration of Yahweh as lord and creator of the
world (vv. 12-13).[2]

At last, he cites verses 14-19 and this remark en-

sures:

The phrasing of these last lines, it should be noted,
echoes the profession of allegiance wherewith the gods
acknowledge the sovereignty of Marduk in the Babylonian
New Year myth (*Enuma Elish* VI, 113-14). . .

The view of Engnell is as follows:

Throughout the ancient Near East, which is characterized
by a more or less homogeneous cultural level dominated
by the institution and ideology of the sacral kingship,
the unique characteristic of the New Year festivals
above all is the central role which the king plays in
them. He leads the fight against the power of chaos,
is temporarily defeated, "dies," and "descends into
Sheol," but "rises" again and brings home the victory,
ascends the throne, celebrates his *hieros gamos*, and
"determines the destinies"--creates fertility and bless-
ing, prosperity and good years--by certain symbolic
rites; and he does all this in his capacity as the in-
carnate "youthful god." Since this renewal of the

[1]*Ibid*.

[2]*Ibid*., p. 448.

[3]*Ibid*. His next page could be consulted for an addi-
tional parallel to Psalm 89 along with Psalm 93, and espe-
cially Psalm 74. Similar thoughts are noted by John Gray,
The Canaanites (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers,
1964), pp. 136-37, 160.

cosmos has the character of a renewal of the first crea-
tion, it is only natural for the creation epic to occupy
a prominent place in the New Year festivals. It is the
cultic text recited in these festivals. This is best
known from Babylon, where the *Enuma elis*, the Accadian
creation epic, has this central role in the *akītu*, the
New Year Festival. Texts like Genesis, chapter 1, and
Pss. 74:12 ff., 89:9 ff. allow us to suppose that there
was an analogous situation in Israel. As far as this is
concerned, it is no exaggeration to speak of a common
pattern in the ancient Near Eastern New Year festivals,
although everyone admits that this pattern in its com-
plete form is a synthetic construction and therefore
that, in every reconstruction of these different forms,
we must allow for local variations which depend on dif-
ferent factors including national and religious pecu-
liarities.[1]

What is this New Year's festival or akitu festival
to which some see parallels to Psalm 89? A reading of the
sources already cited and Engnell above would give anyone a
wide spectrum, therefore, an additional explanation will be
given here for clarification.

Usually it is explained as a New Year festival taking
place in April, or, as some say, in Nisan. It was a week-
long activity somewhat similar to a *Mardi Gras*. Allis has
summarized the material and the views of others very well:

> Professor Hooke has described the religious rites
> which dramatized the great events of the feast and
> were supposed to act by sympathetic magic in bringing
> the blessing of the gods on the people, as follows:
>   (a) The dramatic representation of the death and
>   resurrection of the god.
>   (b) The recital or symbolic representation of the
>   myth of creation.
>   (c) The ritual combat, in which the triumph of the
>   god over his enemies was depicted.
>   (d) The sacred marriage (*hieros gamos*).

[1]Engnell, *Rigid Scrutiny*, p. 182.

(e) The triumphal procession, in which the king
 played the part of the god followed by a train
 of lesser gods or visiting deities.

This is, in general, the ritual pattern which scholars
of the Myth and Ritual school in Britain and of the
Scandinavian school are concerned to discover in the
Old Testament as characterizing more or less fully the
pre-exilic cultus in Israel.

The position taken by Professor Hooke and the influ-
ential school of thought which he represents may be
summed up in three brief propositions:
 (1) Such a cultic pattern as has been described pre-
 vailed extensively among the nations of antiquity,
 expecially among those with which Israel came
 more or less closely into contact.
 (2) Israel must originally have shared this pattern.
 (3) Therefore, the scarcity of the evidence of this
 sharing to be found in the Old Testament books
 dealing with the pre-exilic period must be due
 to the efforts to eliminate this evidence made
 by the writers and editors of the Old Testament
 books, as these books have come down to us.[1]

In one of his replies to the above, Allis states:

It is to be recognized, of course, that there are
many passages in the old Testament which speak of God's
sovereign control over the world and over the men that
are in it (e.g., Ps. 104:5-18, 29; cf. Ps. 68 and 89;
Isa. 24, 27 and 30, Ezek. 21). But there is no evi-
dence to show that such passages formed part of a
ritual, an annual ritual, corresponding to the celebra-
tion of Marduk's triumph over Tiamat in the Babylonian
New Year celebration.[2]

The same occasion occurred at Ugarit according to

Kapelrud:

The autumnal New Year festival was an important occasion
not only at Ugarit but in most Near Eastern countries:
the ancient Sumerian *zagmug* festival and the *akitu* fes-
tival in Assyria and Babylonia were the same type. The

[1]Allis, *The Old Testament: Its Claims and Critics*,
pp. 348-49.
 [2]*Ibid*., pp. 358-59. See also p. 472, fn. 44.

character of this festival as it was celebrated at Ugarit (and correspondingly in Canaan) is clearly indicated by what we are told about Baal. It was, in fact, the drama of Baal which was enacted in the autumnal New Year festival. . . .[1]

The comments of Kapelrud could have been continued in order to show the similarities, but that is not the purpose here. But in a very interesting article by Nakata, the question is raised on whether *akîtu* was a New Year festival or not.[2] Throughout the article he discloses all the problems and the lack of significant evidence. Opinions of several scholars are aired. Though not thoroughly convinced, he concludes that *akîtu* was a New Year festival.[3] How can a parallel be drawn with something that lacks solid evidence?

In a very excellent and quite extensive discussion, Oh relates the biblical facts of Israel's festivals and calendar. At one point he states, "In the Old Testament there is no explicit reference to the 'New Year.' The phrase

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[1]Arvid S. Kapelrud, *The Ras Shamra Discoveries and the Old Testament*, translated by G. W. Anderson (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), pp. 67-68. Cf. p. 72. Also cf. Engnell, *A Rigid Scrutiny*, pp. 182-83.

[2]Ichiro Nakata, "Problems of the Babylonian Akîtu Festival," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*, 1:1 (Fall, 1968), 41-49.

[3]*Ibid*., p. 49. Cf. W. G. Lambert, "The Great Battle of the Mesopotamian Religious Year: The Conflict in the Akitu House," *Iraq*, XXV:2 (Fall, 1963), 189-90 and Thorkild Jacobsen, *Toward the Image of Tammuz and Other Essays on Mesopotamian History and Culture*, edited by William L. Moran (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 36.

ראש השנה occurs only once, namely in Ezekiel 40:1."[1] The material that follows is most valuable, but too lengthy to quote here. Just following the discussion on ancient Near Eastern festivals he concludes, "The theory therefore is a mere conjecture in an effort to find parallels with the Babylonian Akitu festival in Israel."[2] And Wright concurs:

> While the Scandinavian scholars have thrown considerable light on the theology of the monarchy and of the Messiah in Israel, certain qualifications must be made. The initial assumption that virtually all of the Psalms and much other Old Testament literature were composed as ritual material for use in the cult cannot be proved. Still less can it be proved that there was ever an important cult drama in Israel each New Year's Day in which a divine battle myth, borrowed from Canaan or Babylon, was re-enacted with the king taking the role of the victorious God. Certainly none of the Old Testament ritual preserved, including that of the Day of Atonement, contains any hint of such a drama.[3]

The present writer looked very carefully at a Ugaritic enthronement ritual[4] and saw absolutely nothing that would even constitute a comparison to Psalm 89. Moreover, there is no evidence that the psalm was employed in a ritual at the time of its composition or even for a thousand years

[1]Pyeng Seh Oh, "The Kingship of Yahweh as a Motif for the Universal Savior in the Old Testament" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, 1961), pp. 99-100.

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 122.

[3]Wright, *The Old Testament Against Its Environment*, p. 66.

[4]Loren R. Fisher and F. Brent Knutson, "An Enthronement Ritual at Ugarit," *JNES*, 28:3 (July, 1969), 157-67.

afterward. To sing a psalm or to have it as part of a ritual are two different things, thus a parallel is out of the question. Also, the guidelines laid out at the commencement of this chapter eliminate any such thing.

It appears to some that drawing parallels to the psalm is not enough. They want to charge the poet with borrowing.

The Question of Borrowing

The problem of borrowing seems totally unnecessary but because scholars declare such, space must be given to it One example for evidence is Anderson, who writes:

> To many it will seem that Professor Engnell's reconstruction of the history of Israelite religion does less than justice to the evidence of a real and lasting conflict between the distinctive Hebraic tradition and Canaanite religion. That Israel borrowed much from the latter is clear; and it is begging the question to assume that all such borrowing involved loss.[1]

Kapelrud uses a little different terminology, but he purports, "The psalms are firmly rooted in the Yahwistic faith and the Jerusalem cult; but this does not mean that they do not contain many elements derived from Canaanite religion."[2] And Richardson says:

> In order to ascertain fully whether these affinities are due to borrowing or common ancestry a careful examination along the lines followed in this study would need to be made for the entire Near East. However, in

[1]G. W. Anderson, "Some Aspects of the Uppsala School of Old Testament Study," *HTR*, XLII:4 (October, 1950), 252.
[2]Kapelrud, *The Ras Shamra Discoveries and the Old Testament*, p. 81.

the area of language, in the light of many similarities of expression, the conclusion that Israel borrowed from its neighbors cannot be avoided. Likewise, in the realm of ideas and institutions, some things that the Israel-ites did and thought were unquestionably derived from their neighbors.[1]

Dahood quotes Albright as saying, "Ugarit and Canaan-ite Palestine shared a common literary tradition, which pro-foundly influenced Israel."[2] And Dahood does not deny it. In the next volume of his three volume work, he remarks con-cerning the writer of Psalm 74, "The poet describes this triumph in mythical language taken over from the Canaanites, as we know from Ugaritic literature."[3] On the same page he comments on the views of another scholar and relates his own, "Willesen unfortunately overlooks those historical psalms, such as Ps lxxxix, which intersperse the description of his-torical occurrences with mythological motifs."[4] Under a heading of "Relationships Between Ugaritic and Hebrew" in his last volume, Dahood admits with another who reviewed his work, "These volumes assume that Israelite poetry continues the poetic tradition of the Canaanites, borrowing Canaanite

[1]Henry Neil Richardson, "Ugaritic Parallels to the Old Testament" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Boston University Graduate School, 1951), pp. 262-63.

[2]Dahood, *The Anchor Bible--Psalms I*, p. XVI. For Psalm 89 see pp. XXXI, XXXVII, XXXVIII.

[3]Dahood, *Psalms II*, p. 205.

[4]*Ibid*. In conjunction with this also note p. 300.

poetic techniques, parallelism, vocabulary, imagery, etc."[1]

Other citations could be given to demonstrate this over-emphasis.

On the other hand, Dalglish argues:

It is interesting to note that the Hebrew conception of creation, reflected in Psalms (lxxiv, lxxxix, civ), Deutero-Isaiah, Job and Habakkuk (ch. iii) is more indebted to the Sumero-Accadian materials than to the Ugaritic (*ibid*. pp. 24 f.).[2]

And the argument could go on. But the present writer would ask the question, "Did Israel borrow from anybody?" Barr has written an extensive contribution to the study on the world views of Israel and her neighbors.[3] The Canaanite world view was based on nature and Israel's was based on Jehovah.[4] Certainly nothing was borrowed here. Concerning kingship, McKenzie rightly contends:

[1]Dahood, *Psalms III*, p. XXII. His view, at least in part, stems from his concept of comparative religion and late date of the Exodus, pp. XXII-XXVI. Concerning this influence from Ugarit, one should read Allis, *The Old Testament: Its Claims and Its Critics*, p. 326 and UT, p. 292; but neither view proves anything. For other references to borrowing, see pp. 14, 188 of this dissertation.

[2]Edward R. Dalglish, *Psalm Fifty-One in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Patternism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), p. 272, fn. 111.

[3]Wayne E. Barr, "A Comparison and Contrast of the Canaanite World View and the Old Testament World View" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Divinity School, University of Chicago, 1963), pp. 1-242. The present writer cannot concur with all of Barr's comments, such as those on Psalm 89:10-11, but he does agree with his basic conclusions.

[4]*Ibid*., especially see pp. 217-32.

That Yahweh is king of Israel is clear, particularly in the Pss. And while it is not necessary at this point of the paper to define more precisely the meaning of the kingship of Yahweh, we shall have to point out that the human ruler cannot be understood as king except as associated with Yahweh. Israelite theology would not permit the kind of king who appeared in Mesopotamia and Egypt. There was similarity, and we shall point out some similar features; but Hebrew kingship and its ideology cannot be explained as a derivation or a borrowing from foreign ideologies because of its connection with the kingship of Yahweh, which is a distinctive Hebrew belief.[1]

In his article Feinberg distinctly qualifies what he means in the area of borrowing:

> . . . we understand the similarities to arise, not from borrowing but from the same background of world thought. Though the Hebrew psalmody will be seen as a part of a world literature, yet it must be regarded as *sui generis*. It has the inspiration of the Spirit of God and a boundless power of its own.[2]

His last two statements are enough to conclude here, but the present writer feels that there is another point to be made. Hebrew and its cognate languages form the family of Semitic languages that go back to a proto-Semitic language, so there is no need of borrowing. Where do scholars get the idea that every time the poets of Israel wanted to employ a word they had to borrow it? Even when it comes to poetic structure, it seems quite evident that Israel did not borrow here either. Gevirtz points out that "Lamech's Song to His

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[1]John L. McKenzie, "Royal Messianism," *CBQ*, XIX:l (January, 1957), 26.

[2]Charles Lee Feinberg, "Parallels to the Psalms in Near Eastern Literature," *BS*, 104:415 (July-September, 1947), 294-95.

Wives" had fixed pairs, couplets, and parallel structure.[1]
He claims that Lamech did it ". . , through a clever manipu-
lation of poetic convention."[2] And Gluck says, "Rime seems
to have always existed in Semitic literature. . . ."[3] Then
he goes on to show the articulate rhyme arrangement of Gen-
esis 4:23 and many other ancient biblical poems.[4] The ques-
tion might be raised, "Who borrowed from whom?" Since this
occurred before the Flood, the wisest thing to say is that
poetic form had been in existence before writing.

In the common culture of the ancient Near East,
similar vocabulary, thought forms, poetic structure, figures
of speech, etc., belonged to each ethnic group in common.
Hence, the parallels that crop up everywhere. But the mean-
ing in biblical literature is often unique because of its
distinctly different theological and philosophical viewpoint.
As Bright comments, "That Israel's faith was a unique phe-
nomenon, a thing *sui generis* in the ancient world, would be
denied by no informed person today."[5]

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[1]S. Gevirtz, *Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel*,
SAOC 32 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963). p.'25.
    [2]*Ibid*.
    [3]J. J. Glück, "Assonance in Ancient Hebrew Poetry:
Sound Patterns as a Literary Device," *De Fructu Oris Sui:
Essays in Honour of Adrianus van Selms*, edited by I. H.
Eybers, *et al* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), p. 71.
    [4]*Ibid*., pp. 72-75.
    [5]John Bright, *The Authority of the Old Testament*
(Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), p. 127.

The conclusion may be oversimplified, but there is no question about Ethan borrowing in composing Psalm 89.

Evaluation

This brief survey of material manifests the dire need of some type of guideline in noting parallels. Especially is this evident in the realm of religious thought-structure. For example, Yahweh was identified with Baal and Marduk, not only by name, but even with regard to action. The exegesis clearly pointed out that Yahweh's person, name, characteristics, and power were incomparable. Yamauchi explains Israel's thought-structure extremely well:

> Belief in the existence of only one God, who is the Creator of the world and the giver of all life; the belief that God is holy and just, without sexuality or mythology; the belief that God is invisible to man except under special conditions and that no graphic nor plastic representation of Him is permissible; the belief that God is not restricted to any part of His creation, but is equally at home in heaven, in the desert, or in Palestine; the belief that God is so far superior to all created things, whether heavenly bodies, angelic messengers, demons, or false gods, that He remains absolutely unique. . . .[1]

> Parallel with a pagan deity?--IMPOSSIBLE: Since

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[1]Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Anthropomorphism in Ancient Religions," *BS*, 125:497 (January-March, 1968), 44. Also see Labuschagne, *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament*, especially pp. 22, 48-57 and William Foxwell Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, Anchor Books edition (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1968), p. 115, but one must be extremely careful as to how he evaluates Albright's statements because of his treatment of Psalm 89 on page 124.

Psalm 89 has the inspiration of the Spirit of Yahweh, there

is the compelling necessity to apply literary parallels in

the light of the biblical hermeneutic. Driver affirms:

> We cannot, therefore, believe that Babylonian hymns and psalms exercised any real influence on the work of the Hebrew Psalmists. A few Babylonian poems reach a comparatively high level of thought, but the vast majority fail to do so; even the latent monotheism, if it may be so termed, exhibited by a Babylonian or Assyrian psalmist, is at bottom rather the enthusiasm of a devotee who is striving to exalt his favourite god or goddess to a preeminent position in the pantheon or the vague speculations of a philosopher rather than a matter of vital religion.[1]

Harrison discusses the term Rahab in Psalm 89 and

other portions of Scripture and concludes the paragraph with

this thought:

> Again, it should be observed that although there is an undeniable literary and linguistic relationship between the cuneiform sources from Ugarit and many sections of the Hebrew Bible, it remains true that the characteristic mythological forms of the ancient Near East found no place in Old Testament literature. As Gordon has remarked, the mythology of Canaan constituted little more to the Hebrew writers than a literary background upon which to draw poetic images.[2]

In his work, *The Assyrian and Hebrew Hymns of Praise*,

Cumming concludes:

> Not only is the background of the hymns relatively similar in both civilizations, but the principal features of Hebrew poetry, the rhythm, the uniform length of lines,

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[1]Godfrey R. Driver, "The Psalms in the Light of Babylonian Research, *The Psalmists*, edited by D. C. Simpson (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), p. 172.

[2]R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), p. 369.

parallelism, arrangement in strophes, the rhetorical question, the refrain, the antiphonal responses, the introduction into the hymn of the divine oracle, all belong to the literature of the older civilization. Israel did not invent, but rather found already in existence, its literary forms. . . .

However, this certainly does not mean that the Hebrews were merely passive recipients of Assyrian Culture. They did obviously take over certain literary forms and devices, but they created a new and distinct type of hymn, which begins and ends with the exhortation to praise Yahwe.[1]

The literary parallels certainly demonstrate that Psalm 89 was from the same background of thought structure, but it has the inspiration of Yahweh. Therefore it has the same forms and structures as other ancient Near Eastern poetry, but the pagan poetry did not exercise any real influence on the composer. The meaning of the content in the Psalm cannot be compared to any thing outside the biblical corpus.

Again, the present writer emphasizes the requirement of certain limitations in applying literary parallels. If not, then anyone can become like some of the scholars cited in this work. The present writer followed their method and found all kinds of parallels in *ANET* and elsewhere that could be misapplied. One of the major problems is cited by Schoors:

[1]Charles Gordon Cumming, *The Assyrian and Hebrew Hymns of Praise* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), pp. 154-55. What Cumming has to say applies to Ugaritic material as well. However, the present writer cannot agree with all of Cumming's conclusions on pp. 156-57.

As far as I can see, all parallel phrases have been discovered already. However, scholars often quote only the parallel without analysing its background. This way, limiting their attention to the external similarity of a Hebrew and a Ugaritic phrase, they sometimes attach too much importance to parallels which are purely accidental. The lack of a thorough analysis of the background of an eventual parallel even induces scholars to discover parallels where they do not exist.[1]

Another aspect of these scholars' problem is that they made the same mistake that Albright did in another area:

> In early 1968, I found once again that I had been snared in the habitual patterns of biblical criticism. For many years I had considered Num. 31 as a priestly document of late date and had not troubled to analyze its content.[2]

Thus, by not troubling themselves to analyze the background and contents of Psalm 89, the adherents of all-out parallelism have these marks against them in addition to the other three already indicated in this dissertation: they did not recognize the uniqueness of Yahweh, the inspiration of His Word, and the direction or guidelines needed for drawing such parallels.

Summary

This chapter had commenced with some directions in applying parallelism. The significant feature of the dis-

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[1]Schoors, "Literary Phrases," p. 3.

[2]William F. Albright, "Midianite Donkey Caravans," *Translating and Understanding the Old Testament: Essays in Honor of Herbert Gordon May*, edited by Harry Thomas Frank and William L. Reed (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 197.

cussion was theological thought-structure. In the area of vocabulary, the application is only valid if contextual meaning is identical, and then, the choice of words must be selective. When it came to ideas, concepts, and institutions, the literary parallels were distinctly different because of the thought and meaning behind them. The question of Ethan borrowing was no question at all. Therefore, it must be concluded that the content of Psalm 89 is unique in relationship to the ancient Near East. It has been proven that the whole matter of comparative analogies is a very dangerous one. But the theological viewpoint embraced in Psalm 89 was unknown outside of Israel. In other words, the literary parallels from the ancient Near East are not to be treated as something more than just literary parallels.

CHAPTER VI

NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES

The New Testament is to be treated with the same
respect as Psalm 89 since both are a part of the biblical
corpus. The only problem here is not comparisons or paral-
lels, but one of selection. It seemed like every critical
and some devotional New Testament commentators had something
to say in reference to Psalm 89. The present writer has
chosen only a few works to denote the relationship.

Though New Testament verses are not always specified,
some writers view Psalm 89 as a *Christmas Psalm*.[1] Rodd says:

> This psalm has been traditionally associated with
> Christmas Day. The covenant promise to David did not
> fail, even though the monarchy came to an end and
> Israel became a subject people. It was fulfilled in
> Jesus. . . .[2]

Whether a *Christmas Psalm* or not, the truth just
cited cannot be denied. Jesus Christ is related to David at
both ends of the New Testament: Matthew 1:1 and Revelation

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[1]Cf. C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (New
York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1958), p. 124 and C. H.
Spurgeon, "Psalm LXXXIX," *The Treasury of David*, 6 vols.
(London: Marshal, Morgan and Scott Limited, 1950), IV, 37.

[2]Cyril S. Rodd, *Psalms 73-150*, Epworth Preacher's
Commentaries, edited by Greville P. Lewis (London: The
Epworth Press, 1964), p. 37.

22:16. Also, the analogy of all the Scripture would verify the relationship.

But looking at particular references cited by the scholars, Freed sees the psalm as having influence on the thought and language of the Apostle John.[1] The text of John 7:42 and the psalm references are given as follows:

Jn 7:42

οὐχ ἡ γραφὴ εἶπεν ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ σπερματος
Δαυίδ, καὶ ἀπὸ Βηθλέεμ τῆς κώμης ὅπου
ἦν Δαυίδ, ἔρκεται ὁ Χριστός; . . .

Ps 89:4 f. (LXX B)

ὤμοσα Δαυεὶδ τῷ δούλῳ μου
ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος ἑτοιμάσω τὸ σπέρμα σου

Ps 89:4 f. (MT)

נשׁבעתי לדוד עבדי

עד־עולם אכין זרעך

Ps 89:36 f. (LXX B)

εἰ τῷ Δαυεὶδ ψεύσομαι
τὸ σπέρμα αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα μενεῖ

Ps 89:36 f. (MT)

אם־לדוד אכזב

זרעו לעולם יהיה[2]

Later in his work Freed again refers to John 7:42 and speaks of Psalm 89:4 f. and 36 f. as a part of ". . . the

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[1]Edwin D. Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John*, Vol. XI, *Supplement to Novum Testamentum*, edited by W. C. Van Unnik, *et al* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), p. 41. Especially see p. 47 also.
[2]*Ibid*., pp. 39-40.

most likely direct sources. . . ."[1] The *NASB* also has 89:4
in the margin for John 7:42.

Another scholar holds that 89:37 was the source for
John 12:34. With 89:4-5 and John 7:42 in his discussion,
Van Unnik states concerning 89:37, "If it was said that the
'seed of David' would remain for ever, it did apply a forti-
ori to the 'Son of David' which is a well-known name for the
Messiah."[2] Then the author relates this to ὁ Χριστός in
John 12:34. Speaking of the psalm passage (89:37), Van Unnik
concludes:

> At any rate this text is far more suitable as the source
> for John xii34 and could more easily be adopted than any
> of the others adduced so far. It has the advantage of
> . . . being a specific text and not a vague reminiscense
> . . . offering parallel to the most important part of
> the text. . . .[3]

As for Pauline usage, some writers see a direct con-
nection of Psalm 89:20 with Acts 1:3:22. Among those who do
are Bruce[4] and Harmon.[5] Other passages of the psalm are

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[1]*Ibid*., p. 119.

[2]W. C. Van Unnik, "The Quotation from the Old Testa-
ment in John 12:34," *Novum Testamentum*, 111:3 (July, 1959),
178.

[3]*Ibid*., p. 179.

[4]F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Books of Acts* (Grand
Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), pp. 272-
74. Other references to the psalm may be found on pp. 78,
202.

[5]Allan M. Harmon, "Aspects of Paul's Use of the
Psalms," *WTJ*, XXXII:l (November, 1969), 22-23.

employed by Higgins in discussing the Christology of the New Testament.[1] And Forbes gives a great deal of attention in his deliberation to show the relationship of Psalm 89:28 (Hebrew) to Hebrews 1:6.[2] These are just a few of the suggestions of how Psalm 89 has influenced some of the New Testament writers. Besides New Testament commentaries and related articles, theology books and general works, both conservative and liberal, contain much to denote the psalm's bearing on New Testament thought.

A fair amount has been said about Psalm 89 and Christ's first advent. The fullness of the Davidic Covenant will be realized in Jesus Christ at His second advent. Verses 4-5 could relate to Revelation 11:15. Ethan had asked the question of faith, "How long, 0 Lord?" (Ps. 89:47 [Hebrew]). If one may apply the answer of an angel just prior to that final advent, ". . . there shall be delay no longer" (Rev. 10:6).[3]

[1]A. J. B. Higgins, "The Old Testament and Some Aspects of New Testament Christology," *CJT*, VI:6 (July, 1960) 200, fn. 1; 202.

[2]John Forbes, *Studies on the Book of Psalms* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1888), pp. 98-108.

[3]Cf. Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), p. 473.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Concerning the four-fold problem stated at the outset of this work, it has been answered in the chapters that followed. Archaeological discoveries from the ancient Near East have aided much to the understanding of the background of the Scripture. But it was seen in noting the relationship to Psalm 89 that certain basic presuppositions were needed. The observation was made that all scholars approach this matter with assumptions, and thus, interpretation becomes the issue. In comparing the finds of the ancient Near East to Psalm 89, one's assumptions and interpretation determine the outcome. It takes more than a biblically-oriented scholar; it takes one who has biblical presuppositions and a hermeneutical method based on sound principles.

One of the purposes then was to take the latter approach and exegete the psalm and set forth its truths. The other main purpose was to see how materials from the ancient Near East compared to this standard. But before these were achieved, the prerequisites to the exegesis had to be considered.

Form criticism has made some contribution to the psalm in the area of literary genres, types, and word studies.

However, on the whole, it is a discipline that requires biblical assumptions also. Following this were the questions of authorship, date, background, type, and meter. The proposed suggestion on the first three was that Ethan had written the psalm shortly after the invasion of Shishak in the days of Rehoboam. Because of the nature of the composition, it was considered a royal lament. The question of meter is yet to be solved.

Of course the key to the entire study was the exegesis. It was held that the poet was singing praises to Yahweh for His eternal covenant with David. Then Yahweh's incomparable person and work was declared in the realms of heaven and earth. The author then brought the effects of Yahweh's grace down to his own day. At this point, the truth is related that the all-powerful, all-graceful one had made a covenant with His chosen and anointed servant, David. The promises and guarantee were extended to David's seed. But obedience was required if the blessings of the covenant were to be enjoyed. Then comes the description of an invasion that must have been the rod of chastisement. It was evident to Ethan that Yahweh had not restored things to what had been known and experienced before. With that, his cry of faith comes forth as he wants to see the restoration in his lifetime. Although the poet did not see it, expectation is there because of the reference to the anointed in the last verse before the benediction.

Several views of certain scholars were refuted throughout the exegesis. But these views gave an indication of what was to follow in the succeeding chapters.

When it came to comparisons, the evidence revealed that some were valid and others were not. Words and fixed pairs could be identical in form but not always in meaning. Modes of expression fit into the same category. The reason much of the aforementioned has some comparison to the literature of the ancient Near East is that the poetic diction, structure, and style were stereotyped. Concepts and institutions such as angels, king, ruling, covenant-treaties, first-born, etc. can only be recognized as common matters in the cultures of the day. The spiritual and moral significance of those that belonged to Israel prevent a full comparison.

Parallelism is where the battle really takes place; this is where the infantry fights. But this conflict is not won by a steady offensive and sturdy defense, it can only be decided by certain directives in applying parallels. The recognition that cultural, geographical, and linguistical ties existed was not the problem in total. For the full sense of parallelism it is mandatory that the theological thought structure of peoples be considered. Since the thought structure of Psalm 89 is based entirely on Yahweh, His person, inspiration, and work, the literary parallels from the ancient Near East should not be considered as containing the same spirit. Vocabulary, allusions to ideas,

direct application of concepts and institutions were taken into account and found wanting. When the smoke had cleared, it was observed that Psalm 89 was unique. Borrowing was put into the same category as myth and ritual--disqualified. The statement was offered in the first chapter of this dissertation that the parallels from the ancient Near East cited by many scholars would be evaluated as to their contribution. It may be said without question that archaeology has made its contribution to help one see that the psalm was certainly in the ancient Near East, but in no way can it demonstrate that the ancient Near East was in Psalm 89. As indicated, the Bible must be seen in its ancient Near Eastern setting, but as the Word of God, it is also against the ancient Near East.

Both parallels and fulfillment were found in the New Testament for very obvious reasons. As the son of David, Jesus Christ will complete all aspects of Yahweh's covenant with David. The thought-structure in the Word remains constant throughout.

It is hoped that this paper will only aid others to see the uniqueness of Psalm 89 regardless of its setting in the ancient Near East. Finally, to clarify one last thing, the effort was not to try to defend the Scripture, but clarify its relationship to the literary finds provided by the efforts of archaeologists. Rather than attempt a defense of the Word of God, the present writer would much rather join Spurgeon in the defense of a lion!

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