

CHIASTIC PSALMS (III): A STUDY IN THE MECHANICS OF SEMITIC POETRY IN PSALMS 101-150

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We are all familiar with chiasmus in the Hebrew Bible. Sometimes the device is called alternation or introverted parallelism. The word "chiasm" itself comes from the name of the Greek letter *chi*, which looks like our English letter X. An outline of a verse, a paragraph, or even a book which conforms to such a shape is called "chiastic." The simplest outline would be A-B-B-A, but more elaborate ones are easily discovered.

In an earlier article¹ I traced the history of the study of this phenomenon in the Psalms. I will omit that history here.

I also gave several illustrations of chiasmi in individual verses, and some of these I shall repeat just to get us thinking in the right channels. Amos 6:8b reads: "I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and his palaces I hate." Notice the verbs on the outside and the objects on the inside. Or, to put it another way, the first clause is verb-object while the second clause is object-verb. Hence the term introverted parallelism. Within the material we will be examining let us select just one of scores of verses that are chiastic within themselves. Ps 145:2 reads (in Hebrew order):

A On every day
B I will bless you
B I will praise your name
A For ever and ever

One last and slightly more complex example is from Isa 1:18:

A If be your sins
B¹ like scarlet,
B² like snow
C they shall be white;
C if they be red
B¹ like crimson,
B² like wool
A they shall be

The verb "to be" is in both "A" parts. Notice the "B" elements—two red colors and two white things. Observe the "C" elements—both are denominative verbs, but antonymous.

With that introduction let us move to the last third of the Psalter and note those Psalms that are arranged chiastically as a whole, not just within individual

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¹JETS 17/1 (1974) 11-28.

verses. Let me note here that others have discovered inclusios or frames in the Psalms—that is, they have noted key words in the opening and closing verses of the Psalms. Psalms 146-150 are the most obvious since each of them both begins and ends with a "Hallelujah." In my second article² on this subject I mentioned that L. J. Liebreich had discovered that about half of the Psalms had such inclusios.³ Also, a glance at the index in M. Dahood's commentary on the Psalms will indicate his familiarity with this widely-used device.⁴

I shall start with Psalm 103, although Nils Wilhelm Lund saw certain words and ideas in Psalm 101 on which he tried to establish a chiasmic outline.⁵

PSALM 103

1a	A Bless the LORD, O my soul
1b-5	B The God who meets all our needs
6	C The God who does right
7	D He reveals himself to the children of Israel
8-9	E The eternal mercy of the LORD
10	F How God does not deal
11-14	G Comparisons to God's excellencies
15	G Comparisons to man's frailties
16	F How God does not deal
17a	E The mercy of the LORD is eternal
17b	D His righteousness to children's children
18	C Those who do his precepts
19-22a	B All that God rules should bless him
22b	A Bless the LORD, O my soul

At the very outset one can note that the same words both open and close the Psalm. In the "B" parts the word "all" occurs four times on each side of the outline. The Hebrew verb *šh*, "do/make," links the third item from each end. "Children" is obviously the key word tying v 7 to 17b. The divine name *Yhwh* and *hesed*, "mercy," each occur in the "E" sections. The negative *lô'* appears in both vv 10 and 16. And lastly the preposition "as" occurs five times in vv 11-15: "As the heavens," "as the east," "as a father," "as grass," "as a flower." Also note that there are two more occurrences in v 10. Then finally note the number of times *kî*, "for," occurs in vv 11-14.

Bullinger has an outline similar to this, but with minor variations.⁶ As is usually the case his outlines are based more on ideas than on words. For example, he pairs up v 9 with vv 11-16 on the theme of "sparing goodness," while I base my division on the repeated use of "mercy" and "eternity."

²JETS 19/3 (1976) 191-200.

³"Psalms 34 and 145 in the Light of their Key Words," *HUCA* 27 (1956) 183-192.

⁴*The Anchor Bible* (3 vols.) (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1968).

⁵*Chiasmus in the NT* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1942) 101.

⁶E. W. Bullinger, ed., *The Comparison Bible* (London: Lamp, 1914) *loc. cit.*

PSALM 104

- 1 A Bless the LORD, O my soul
 2-14 B God's creation of the land and what is on it
 15 C The benefits to man
 16-18 D The benefits to animals
 19a E The moon
 19b E The sun
 20-22 D Animals work at night
 23 C Man works in the daytime
 24-32 B God's creation of the seas and what is in them
 33-35 A Bless the LORD, O my soul

Again, as in Psalm 103, we have the same inclusio to make the beginning and end of the Psalm. Admittedly the "B" sections are long, but nevertheless key words do tie them together and leave us with the impression that the author worked at making a unified poem. Some of the linking words are "wind/spirit/breath" (vv 3, 29, 30), "earth" (vv 5, 13, 14, 24, 32), "mountains" (vv 6, 8, 10, 13, 32) and the verb "send" (vv 10, 30). The terms for "man" are not the same but *'ānôš* and *'ādām* respectively.

PSALM 105

- 1-11 A Thank the LORD for remembering his covenant with Abraham
 12-41 B Review of the exodus
 42-45 A Praise the LORD for remembering his holy word to Abraham⁷

We have only a very broad chiastic structure for Psalm 105. The repetition of key words and phrases in the two outside sections, however, is quite remarkable. "Abraham his servant" occurs in vv 6 and 42, while "Abraham" alone is in v 9. "His chosen ones" is in 6 and 43. "Remembered" is in 8 and 42. "Word" is also in 8 and 42. "Give" is in 11 and 44. Synonyms for "people" are in 1 and 43. "Earth" is in 7 and 44. "Statute" is in 10 and 45. And "holy" is in 3 and 42. Although some English versions might lead the reader to believe that "sing" occurs once in 2 and twice in 43, three different Hebrew words are used.

PSALM 106

- 1-5 A Exhortation to praise
 6-46 B Review of exodus rebellions
 47-48 A Prayer and benediction

Like Psalm 105, Psalm 106 begins and ends with a kind of benediction (although the benediction of v 48 may be construed as a benediction for the fourth book within the Psalter and not an integral part of Psalm 106). In the middle is a large

⁷Bullinger, in both *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968 reprint of 1898 ed.) 382 f., and in *The Comparison Bible*, *loc. cit.*, deals with this Psalm. In it he further breaks down each section, but not according to a chiastic pattern. And as is usually the case the sections are titled not according to key words but according to the overall thrust of the verse. Occasionally some appear to be forced.

section devoted to a review of the exodus. As Psalm 105 was about God's faithfulness, so this one is about the unfaithfulness of his covenant people.⁸

And as with the preceding psalm we find a number of key words that serve to link the prelude and the postlude. They are "salvation" and "save" in vv 4 and 47, "Hallelujah" in 1 and 48d, "Yahweh" in the vocative position in 4 and 47, "nation" in 5 and 47, "give thanks" in 1 and 47, the noun "praise" in 2 and 47, "forever" in 1 and 48, "people" in 4 and 48. In addition to these we find the synonyms *ml*, "utter," and *'mr*, "say," in 2 and 48 respectively and *'ašrē*, "happy," and *bārūk*, "blessed," in 3 and 48 respectively.

PSALM 107

- | | |
|-------|------------------------------------|
| 1-3 | A Exhortation to praise |
| 4-9 | B God delivers those in the desert |
| 10-16 | C God delivers those in darkness |
| 17-22 | D Fools repent and find salvation |
| 23-32 | C God delivers those in the deep |
| 33-42 | B God delivers those in the desert |
| 43 | A Exhortation to be wise |

Both the opening and closing verses have the divine name as well as the multifaceted *hesed*: "mercy/lovingkindness/covenant-fidelity/etc." Some of the clues to the linking of vv 4-9 with vv 33-42 have to do with the desert. "Hungry" and "thirsty" are together in 5 and singly in 9, 33 and 36. The phrase "city of habitation" appears in 4, 7 and 36. The unusual phrase "desert wastes" of v 4 answers to the unusual synonymous phrase "salt desert" of v 34; the normal word for "desert," *midbār*, occurs in 4, 33 and 35. Coincidentally or not, "way" appears in 4, 7 and 40 (also 17).

Although none of these words characterizes darkness or the deep, the "C" parts do have in common the roots *'mr*, "words" in 11 and "commanded" in 25, and *'h*, "Most High" in 11 and "mount up" in 26.

The above outline is not to deny the patently obvious strophic structure of the Psalm. The "refrain" of vv 8-9, 15-16, 21-22 and 31-32 concludes what are clearly stanzas or strophes in the Psalm. What is more interesting, however, is the chiasmic structure within each stanza. Note first how vv 4-9, the first stanza after the prelude, can be outlined:

- | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| 4-5 | A Hunger plagues the wanderers |
| 6 | B Prayer to Yahweh |
| 7 | C They are led to a city |
| 8 | B Praise to Yahweh |
| 9 | A Their hunger satisfied |

As in the Psalm as a whole, so in these individual stanzas there are key words that link the various parts. "Hungry" appears in vv 5 and 9. The divine name is in vv 6 and 8. And then there is the interesting link between "way" in 4 and the

⁸Again Bullinger breaks down the large middle section (vv 6-46) into three or five subpoints, each with five more sub-subpoints that are parallel rather than chiasmic. Typical of them is the series sin-punishment-sin-punishment-deliverance.

cognate accusative phrase *yadrikēm b^ederek* "he led them in a way" of 7.

Now notice the second stanza's outline:

- | | | |
|-------|---|--------------------------------|
| 10-12 | A | Condemned because of rebellion |
| 13 | B | Prayer to Yahweh |
| 14 | C | Deliverance from condemnation |
| 15 | B | Praise to Yahweh |
| 16 | A | Shackles now broken |

Here there are several interesting concatenations. First there is "iron" in 10 and 16, the "A" elements in the outline. Then vv 10-12 are tied to v 14 (the "A" to the "C") by the identical terms "darkness," "shadow of death" (or "deep darkness") and "bonds." And v 14 is tied to v 16 ("C" to "A") by Hebrew synonyms for "break." Lastly and most obviously the "B" elements, which are the same in all these stanzas, are linked by the name Yahweh.

The third stanza is vv 17-22, and here is the chiasitic outline:

- | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------|
| 17-18 | A | Fatal foolishness |
| 19 | B | Prayer to Yahweh |
| 20 | C | Deliverance |
| 21 | B | Praise to Yahweh |
| 22 | A | Festive sacrifice |

Regrettably, we have no vocabulary reasons for this arrangement. It is based strictly on the thoughts, not on the words—except, of course, for the occurrence of Yahweh in the two "B" verses.

The last stanza is not quite as regular as the first two:

- | | | |
|-------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 23-27 | A | Observations on the perils of the sea |
| 28 | B | Prayer to Yahweh |
| 29-30 | C | The storm subsides |
| 31-32 | B | Praise to Yahweh |

The first obvious irregularity is the absence of a second "A" element. But it is interesting that the "lift" of 25 and the "exalt" of 32 both translate a form of *rûm*. There may also be an intended link between the two occurrences of "go down" in vv 23 and 26. Although not the same in the Hebrew, we have "works of the LORD" in v 24 and "his wonderful works" in v 31. As in other stanzas there is a linking word between the "A" and "C" sections. Here it is "waves" (vv 25 and 29).

PSALM 109

This Psalm admits of no unforced chiasitic outline, so none is given. There are, however, some interesting inclusios, which I will only mention. Verses 1 and 30 both have "praise." Verses 2 and 30 have "mouth." Verses 7 and 31 both have "judge." A smaller section at the end of the Psalm is similarly tied together. Verses 21 and 26 both have "your mercy." Verses 22 and 30 have the possessive

pronoun "my." And vv 26 and 31 have "save."⁹

PSALM 110

- 1 A The LORD installs the king
- 2 B His commission to conquer
- 3 C The day of power
- 4 D The LORD promises an oath
- 5 C The day of wrath
- 6 B He will conquer
- 7 A The LORD installs the king

The interconnections within this Psalm have long been recognized. The usual outline finds vv 1, 2 and 3 parallel to 5, 6 and 7, leaving the middle verse—the oft-quoted Melchizedek one—in the center. I recognize the outline too, but in the search for chiasmi I found that it also belongs in this study. It fits best if we read v 7a with Dahood and reposit the troublesome first three words (*KJV*, "he shall drink of the brook in the way") to *manhîl b^ederek y^esîtêhû*, "the Bestower of Succession set him on his throne." Although this makes v 7 a nice counterpart to v 1, we lose in the process the basis for the other outline: ABCDABC. On that scheme "dew" and "brook" answered to each other.

Proceeding to observe other links, notice the antonymous "feet" of v 1 and "head" of v 7. Verses 2 and 6 are linked by the synonyms "enemies," "nations" and "countries." Then, as the above outline indicates, "day of power" and "day of wrath" tie v 3 to v 5.

PSALM 111-112

- 111:1-3 A The honor and eternal righteousness of God
- 111:4a B God will remember
- 111:4b C God is gracious and merciful
- 111:5a D Those that fear the LORD
- 111:5b E God will remember his covenant
- 111:6 F The power of God's works
- 111:7-8 F God's works are true and just
- 111:9 E God commanded his covenant
- 111:10-112:1 D Fearing the LORD is wise and blessed
- 112:2-5 C The godly man is gracious and merciful
- 112:6-8 B The godly will be remembered
- 112:9-10 A The honor and eternal righteousness of the godly

⁹Bullinger saw a chiasmus in vv 21-27. I will give the outline without comment.

- 21a A Thou
- 21b B Thy mercy
- 22a C My humiliation
- 22b D My heart wounded
- 23a E Comparison to a shadow
- 23b E Comparison to a locust
- 24 D My body weakened
- 25 C My emaciation
- 26 B Thy mercy
- 27 A Thou

Although there are some unequally weighted elements in the outline the two Psalms do, nevertheless, constitute a remarkable chiasmus. Furthermore each of the Psalms is an alphabet acrostic.

A number of the key words were used in the outline, but let me underscore those links. The phrase "his righteousness endures forever" is in both 111:3 and 112:9 (it is also in 112:3). Synonyms for "honor" are in both of them too—*hód* in 111:3 and *kábód* in 112:9. Forms of the verb "remember" tie the "B" elements together. Yahweh is characterized by *ḥannûn*, "graciousness," and *rahûm*, "mercy," in 111:4b, and the same terms apply to the upright in 112:4. Forms of the word "fear" link the "D" members in 111:5a and 10. Verses 5b and 9 both use "his covenant." And "works" is the key word in all three verses that form the apex of the double Psalm.

There is possibly a stanza structure to the two Psalms based on the refrains in 111:3, 10 and 112:3, 9. As a support for this scheme notice "justice" in 111:7 and 112:5. "Upright" is another word that links such stanzas together; note it in 111:1, 8 and 112:2, 4.

PSALM 114

Both Lund¹⁰ and Moulton¹¹ saw a chiasmus in this Psalm, but both of them built it on ideas rather than on vocabulary words. Of course the same words occur in vv 3 and 4 as in vv 5 and 6. Other than that, however, the only key word is "Jacob," which occurs in vv 1 and 7.

PSALM 115

- | | | |
|-------|---|--|
| 1 | A | Not to us but to you, LORD, belongs glory |
| 2-3 | B | Our God is in heaven and does what he pleases |
| 4-8 | C | Trust in idols is useless |
| 9-14 | C | Trust in the LORD |
| 15-16 | B | The heavens are the LORD's; he made them |
| 17-18 | A | Not the dead but we will praise the LORD ¹² |

The presence of the negative particle links the two "A" sections. We could add that the divine name is in both, but it is all the way through the Psalm. "Heaven" and the verb "do/make" link the "B" members. Then the centermost vv 8 and 9 both have the verb "trust."

Bullinger discovered a chiasmus in vv 4-8 which I will reproduce here:

- | | | |
|----|---|------------------------------|
| 4a | A | The idols |
| 4b | B | Their fabrication |
| 5a | C | Mouth without speech (sing.) |
| 5b | D | Eyes without sight (pl.) |
| 6a | E | Ears without hearing (pl.) |
| 6b | F | Nose without smell (sing.) |
| 7a | E | Hands without handling (pl.) |

¹⁰Lund, *Chiasmus*, p. 110.

¹¹R. G. Moulton, *The Literary Study of the Bible* (Boston: Heath, 1900) 53-55.

¹²Lund, *Chiasmus*, p. 104, also outlined this one with several points the same as in my outline.

- 7b D Feet without walking (pl.)
 7c C Throat without voice (sing.)
 8a B The fabricators
 8b A The idolators

Either the ancient psalmist worked carefully at such an arrangement or we have before us a fascinating coincidence. Often the climax in the center is logically as well as structurally climactic. "Nose without smell" is not a particularly well-suited high point! Also compare Ps 135:15-18.

PSALM 116

- 1 A The LORD hears my voice
 2 B I call on the LORD
 3 C Cords of death compassed me
 4-5 D I call on the name of the LORD
 6 E He saved me
 7 F The LORD dealt bountifully
 8 G You saved me from death
 9-11 G You let me live
 12 F All God's bounty
 13a E The cup of salvation
 13b-14 D I call on the name of the LORD
 15-16 C You saved me from the bonds of death
 17 B I call on the name of the LORD
 18-19 A I pay my vows to the LORD

This and Psalm 103 are the most elaborate chiasmi in this study, but they only approach the highly remarkable Psalms 25, 37 and 68. It is surprising that none of those who wrote on Semitic poetic devices (most of whom are cited in these three papers of mine on the subject) have mentioned Psalm 116.

The divine name and the pronoun "my" are the key words for the "A" sections. The verb "I call" marks both the "B" and "D" sections with the latter also having in common the phrase "the name of Yahweh." While v 3 has "cords of death," v 15 has "death" and v 16 "bonds." Forms of "save" tie vv 6 and 13a to each other. And forms of the somewhat unusual *gml*, "reward/deal bountifully," are found in the "F" verses. "Death" is in the first half of v 8, and "living" is in the second half of v 9. Between them are the similar concepts "feet" and "walking."

PSALM 122

- 1 A Joy at going to the house of the LORD
 2-3 B Description of Jerusalem
 4 C There the tribes go up
 5 C There are the thrones
 6-7 B Peace of Jerusalem
 8 A Seeking the good of the house of the LORD

As the terminology of the outline indicates, the key phrase for the opening and

closing verses is "the house of the LORD." "Jerusalem" and the element *šlm* rings through vv 2-3 and 6-7 (and even into v 8). In fact, there is a noteworthy alliterative series in vv 6-7 which may or may not have been intentional. Note these six of the ten words in the two verses: *ša'ālū* . . . *š'elôm* . . . *Yerūšālayim* . . . *yišlāyū* . . . *šālôm* . . . *šalwâ*. Lastly, forms of *šām*, "there," tie the two middle vv 4 and 5 together.

PSALM 125

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1 | A | Those who trust the LORD cannot be moved |
| 2 | B | The LORD surrounds his people |
| 3a | C | Wickedness will not affect the righteous |
| 3b | C | Nor will the righteous commit iniquity |
| 4 | B | Prayer that the LORD will bless the righteous |
| 5 | A | The perverse will be led away by the LORD |

This outline may not be too convincing to the English reader. True, "Yahweh" occurs in vv 1 and 5, linking them, and also in 2 and 4, linking them. But who would ever guess a connection between the "moved" of v 1 and the "turn aside" of v 5? Both, however, translate forms of the root *mwṭ*. Then, for what it is worth, we could say that there is a parallel between the prepositional phrases "around his people" (v 2) and "in their hearts" (v 4). "The righteous ones" are in both halves of the center verse, but the Hebrew words for evil are synonyms.

PSALM 126

As a whole this Psalm is not chiastic. Usually it is set up as Lund did—ABCABC—with one verse to each point.¹³ But Magne, in a study of repeated words in the Psalms, has unwittingly pointed out a chiasmus in vv 1-4.¹⁴ A glance at even an English Bible will reveal this, although it is not perfectly regular.

PSALM 135

- | | | |
|-------|---|--|
| 1-4 | A | Exhortation to praise the LORD |
| 5-14 | B | The LORD is great and what he has done |
| 15-18 | B | Idols and what they cannot do |
| 19-21 | A | Exhortation to praise the LORD |

This chiastic arrangement is done largely on the basis of ideas rather than vocabulary. The sections are fairly long. First of all there is the obvious inclusio, "hallelujah," of vv 1 and 21. Otherwise the "A" sections are tied together only by the word "house" in vv 2 (twice), 19 (twice) and 20. The "house of Yahweh" and "house of God" of v 2 are of course echoed by "Zion" and "Jerusalem" in v 21. Then "the servants of Yahweh" and "those who stand in his house" are "the house of Aaron" and "the house of Levi" (vv 1, 2, 19, 20). The two "B" sections

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 107.

¹⁴J. Magne, "Répétitions de mots et exégèse dan quelques psaumes et le Pater," *Bib* 39 (1958) 191.

have only occasional links based on such words as "do/make" in 6, 7, 15 and 18, "wind/breath" in 7 and 17, and "nations" in 10 and 15.

Bullinger has another of his interesting introverted parallelisms for vv 15-18, which are reminiscent of 115:4-8. In fact many of the phrases in these two passages are identical in the Hebrew.

- 15a A The idols
- 15b B Their fabrication
- 16a C Mouth without speech (sing.)
- 16b D Eyes without sight (pl.)
- 17a D Ears without hearing (pl.)
- 17b C Mouth without breath (sing.)
- 18a B Their fabricators
- 18b A The idolators

PSALM 136

- 1-3 A Exhortation to thanksgiving
- 4-9 B What the LORD has made and done
- 10-16 C The LORD struck Egypt
- 17-20 C The LORD struck the Amorite kings
- 21-25 B Israel's heritage from the LORD
- 26 A Exhortation to thanksgiving

Discounting the twenty-six-times-repeated refrain of Psalm 136, we have a broadly chiasmic poem. The command "give thanks" is thrice repeated in vv 1-3 and occurs again in the concluding verse. The only term of consequence that the "B" sections have in common is the word "earth/land." But there is this interesting logic which the Psalm seems to contain: God made the land and therefore God can give the land to the people of his choice. The "C" members share only the word *nkh*, "struck." But again the thrust of the two clusters of verses is the same.

PSALM 137

- 1a A Exiled in Babylon
- 1b-2 B Zion remembered
- 3 C Sing one of the songs of Zion
- 4 C How can we sing the song of the LORD
- 5-7 B Jerusalem remembered
- 8-9 A Curse on Babylon

Most of the key words that tie the two halves of the Psalm together are used in the outline, but let me underscore them. "Babylon" is in vv 1a and 8. "Remember" is in 1b and 6. The synonyms "Zion" and "Jerusalem" also mark that pair. Then the verb/noun cognates "sing/song" occur in the two middle verses.

PSALM 143

- 1-2 A Prayer for a hearing
- 3a B I am persecuted by the enemy

- 3b C I am struck to the ground
 3c D I am put into the grave
 4 E I am overwhelmed
 5 F I remember the work of your hands
 6 F I spread my hands to you
 7a E I am failing
 7b D I might go to the pit
 8 C I lift up my soul to you
 9 B Deliver me from my enemies
 10-12 A Prayer for life

The chiasitic outline of this complaint Psalm is based on a number of repeated key words. "Yahweh" in the vocative is found in vv 1 and 11. Likewise both contain the phrase "in your righteousness." We have synonyms for "faithfulness" in vv 1 and 12. "Your servant" occurs in vv 2 and 12. The synonyms *šedeq*, "righteous," and *mišōr*, "upright," are in 2 and 10 respectively. The adjective "living" in v 2 is paralleled by the verb "preserve my life" in v 11.

"Enemy" appears in both "B" elements. The "C" lines share the synonyms "my life" and "my soul" and the contrasting ideas "down to the ground" and "I lift up." The "dark places" of v 3c corresponds to "the pit" in v 7b. "My spirit" links v 4 to 7a. And in the innermost pair of verses we have the word "hands"—God's in v 5 and "mine" in v 6.¹⁵

PSALM 146

- 1 A Praise the LORD
 2 B I will praise the LORD as long as I live
 3-4 C Human help is vain
 5-9 C God's help is sure
 10a B The LORD will reign forever
 10b A Praise the LORD

All the Psalms from 146 to 150 begin and end with a "hallelujah," so that forms the "A" element in the chiasitic arrangement of this Psalm. A phrase indicating a long time ties the "B" elements of the outline together, but they are only synonymous, not identical. Likewise we have two different words for "help" in v 3 and v 5. And the words for "earth" are different too in v 4 and v 6. Then to express man's finitude and God's eternity we have only contrasting phrases, not the use of identical terms.

PSALM 149

- 1a A Praise the LORD
 1b B Sing his praise in the assembly of the saints
 2-3 C The LORD is king

¹⁵Because they do not contribute to my thesis I have ignored the fact that "earth" is in vv 3 and 10, "enemy" and "my soul" in 3 and 12 and "spirit" in 4 and 10.

- 4 D The LORD will bless his people
 5-6 E The saints should praise God
 7 D God will punish their kings
 8 C God will punish their kings
 9a B The honor of the saints
 9b A Praise the LORD

The "hallelujah" inclusio hardly needs to be mentioned. But "saints" is a key word found in vv 1b, 5 and 9a (the first, middle and last verses of this Psalm). God is "king" in v 2, but he will bind the Gentile "kings" in v 8. The English word "people" appears in vv 4 and 7, but the Hebrew words are different. Likewise some readers of English might think the word "sing" occurs three times (as it does in the *ASV*, for example), but the three Hebrew words are *šir* in v 1, *zamar* in v 3 and *rānan* in v 5.

CONCLUSION

The only point this paper seeks to make is the same point my two previous studies on the subject sought to make—namely, that consciously or unconsciously many of the Psalms were written in a chiastic pattern. While it is commonplace to find chiasmi within individual verses, the discovery of them in larger blocks of material only augments one's appreciation of the literary genius that produced the Hebrew Scriptures.

This is not an effort to affect the interpretation and certainly is not a device for determining glosses, rearranging verse order or emending the text. It can, on the contrary, be a powerful argument for the integrity and unity of some of the Psalms I have treated. Also I hope it can evoke a new appreciation for the ancient poets who gave us this body of spiritual hymns, songs, meditations and poems.