

THE SHAPE OF DAVIDIC PSALMS AS MESSIANIC

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Abstract: *Systematic theologians have constructed a Christology that is highly based on NT texts, which, interestingly, supports the anachronistic reading sustained by Psalms scholarship over the last two centuries. In contrast, this paper argues for a forward reading that supports the Psalms as intrinsically messianic. Methodologically, I study the Davidic psalms in five collections, giving emphasis to the superscriptions, structural form, and content. My observations show that the Davidic psalms first trace the establishment of the Davidic kingship, followed by his downfall. Then, remarkably, the Davidic characterization shifts to a royal figure, who is blameless, victorious, and juridically condemned. The final Davidic collection reveals a community of people supplicating patiently before the arrival of a blissful and just society. The paper shows that the NT's understanding of Jesus fulfilling the messianic hopes in the Psalter is a formidable and reasonable interpretation and need not be anachronistic.*

Key words: *Psalms, Davidic covenant, messianic hopes, Christology, shape, superscriptions, macrostructure, chiasmus, editing, Gerald Wilson*

In June 2017, *Christianity Today* published a report by Caleb Lindgren that laments the lack of use of the OT by systematic theologians.¹ This is based on Rick Brannan's analysis and ranking of the top one hundred references from 830,000 Bible passages in more than three hundred theological works.² Among the top hundred references, only nine belong to the OT (eight from Genesis, and one from Isaiah). Lindgren rightly asked "whether the OT is necessary for Christian theology, and whether it should be included in systematic theology more often."

In the same report, Michael Bird, a lecturer of theology at Ridley College, points out the following:

I found it somewhere between interesting and alarming that the Old Testament features relatively sparsely in most systematic theologies. While one might expect New Testament references to dominate, even so I would have anticipated a decent spattering of the Old Testament precisely because the New Testament is

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¹ Caleb Lindgren, "Sorry, Old Testament: Most Theologians Don't Use You," *Christianity Today* (June 13, 2017), <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2017/june/old-testament-systematic-theology-top-100-verses-logos.html>.

² Brannan explains how he ranked the data. "First we identified all the Systematic Theology resources available for Logos Bible Software. Then we located all the Bible reference citations and extracted relevant context for each reference. We manually classified the contexts of over 2,000 of those references. Then we used that as training data to train a classifier to classify the rest. Lather, rinse, repeat." Rick Brannan, "Writing a Systematic Theology? You must discuss these references," theLab, Logos Academic Blog, June 5, 2017, <https://academic.logos.com/writing-a-systematic-theology-you-must-discuss-these-references>.

saturated with Old Testament allusions and citations. I mean, the Psalms—especially 110, 2, 118, and 16—really do provide the substructure to apostolic preaching, and yet they are virtually absent from the analysis.

The biblical references to the Psalms noted by Bird are important OT passages in the NT that explain Jesus as the Messiah. The book of Psalms is also the OT book that Jesus quoted from most. Passages in Psalms 110 and 118 are the most cited in the NT,³ and yet in Brannan's analyses, none of the top-ranked references he has provided in the category of "Christology" contains any OT texts. If Brannan's study represents the character of the general theological works "out there," then the dearth of OT texts, and specifically key passages in the Psalms, has serious implications for our understanding of systematized Christology—it will be a Christology that does not wrestle with how the NT authors had understood Jesus as *the fulfillment of the OT's messianic hopes*. Put differently, the Christology we have, based on systematic theology, has not clarified what Jesus said in Luke 24:44, that "everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in . . . the Psalms." This contributes to the prevalent scholarly view that any Christological interpretation, or messianic reading of the Psalms, is anachronistic.

In the last three decades following Wilson's landmark work on the *Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*,⁴ many psalms have been studied as compositional units.⁵ However, very few works examine psalms with the דָּוִד (Davidic) superscription as a whole. In this essay, I will explore the connections between the Davidic psalms and the hopes for a future victorious Messiah beyond the frequently quoted psalms in the NT. There are three impetuses for doing so. First, almost fifty percent of the psalms are "Davidic" and they are generally clustered together. The location of a lone psalm, like Psalm 86, is unlikely to be random as we will show below. While the Davidic psalms are generally located in clusters or collections, they are distributed disproportionately across the Psalter. Do these collections and their distribution provide some clues as to why they are included and where they are located? Why did the final editor(s) of the Psalms not simply place Psalm 86 after Psalm 70 since the Psalter, within the horizon of Books I–III, is already arranged by superscription type? Second, we note that the 13 historical (or biographical) superscriptions⁶ associated with David provide little more than enigmatic snippets of his life. These superscriptions assume that readers are familiar with David's life, which readers would have to reconstruct from the historical books (esp. 1–2 Samuel). In other words, are there any connections between the Davidic narratives and the location

³ Edward Dalglish, "The Use of the Book of Psalms in the New Testament," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 27 (1984): 26–27.

⁴ Gerald Henry Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (SBLDS 76; Chicago: Scholars Press, 1985).

⁵ W. Dennis Tucker Jr., *Constructing and Deconstructing Power in Psalms 107–150* (SBLAIL 19; Atlanta: SBL, 2014); John C. Crutchfield, *Psalms in Their Context: An Interpretation of Psalms 107–118* (Paternoster Biblical Monographs; Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2011); Jerome F. D. Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (JSOTSup 217; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1996); David M. Howard Jr., *The Structure of Psalms 93–100* (BJSUCSD 5; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997).

⁶ Psalms 3, 7, 18, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 142.

of psalms with these historical superscriptions? Do the narratives play a role in the shape of the Psalter? Third, how should we make sense of the messianic character of the Psalms? The final form of the Psalter, as a postexilic composition, is not merely a nostalgic reminiscence of David who once ruled Israel,⁷ but reflects the messianic hope as with other postexilic prophetic texts, early Jewish literature, the LXX, and the NT texts. The most significant way through which the Davidic narratives expressed this hope is via 2 Samuel 7, where God promised David an everlasting throne to his descendant (2 Sam 7:13). The significance of the messianic hope is also expressed right at the beginning of the Psalter (Psalm 2). It is pertinent, therefore, to ask how the covenantal promises of 2 Samuel 7 contribute to the logic of the shape of the Davidic psalms.

I. DAVIDIC COLLECTION I

The Davidic psalms in the Psalter are organized around five major collections (or “Psalter”).⁸ The first Davidic collection is essentially Book I of the Psalter (Psalms 3–41).⁹ Although Psalms 10 and 33 do not have “David” in the superscription, scholars have generally considered them Davidic since they form a pair alphabetic psalm with the adjacent psalm (Psalms 9, 34).¹⁰ The unity of Book I of the Psalter has been well researched.¹¹ Davidic collection I (hereafter, DC-I) is framed

⁷ This is clearly the view of Susan Gillingham. See “The Messiah in the Psalms: A Question of Reception History and the Psalter,” in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. John Day; JSOTSup 270; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield University Press, 1998), 209–37.

⁸ There is some disagreement in the identification of these groups of Davidic psalms. For instance, Zenger, Tucker, and Buysch see Psalms 138–145 as the “fifth/last” Davidic Psalter (hence, five groups of Davidic psalms); Seybold and Singer call them the “fourth” David Psalter; Wenham understands them as the “third Davidic Collection.” In this essay, I follow Buysch’s argument, considering Psalms 101–103 and 108–110 as two Davidic collections (third and fourth). Cf. Christoph Buysch, *Der letzte Davidpsalter: Interpretation, Komposition und Funktion der Psalmengruppe Ps 138–145* (SBB 63; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2010), 15; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150* (ed. Klaus Baltzer; trans. Linda M. Maloney; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 524; Dennis Tucker Jr., “The Role of the Foe in Book 5: Reflections on the Final Composition of the Psalter,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current State of Scholarship* (ed. Nancy L DeClais-sé-Walford; SBLAIL 20; Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 186; Klaus Seybold, “Zur Geschichte des vierten Davidpsalters (Pss 138–145),” in *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception* (ed. Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller; VTSup 99; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 368–90; Dwight C. Singer, “The Literary Context of the Fourth Davidic Grouping in the Psalter (Psalms 138–145),” *WTJ* 75 (2013): 373; Gordon J. Wenham, *Psalms as Torah: Reading Biblical Song Ethically* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 48; Jean-Marie Auwers, *La composition littéraire du psautier: un état de la question* (CahRB 46; Paris: Gabalda, 2000), 27.

⁹ For a good discussion of how Psalms 1–2 function as the prologue, see Beat Weber, “Psalm 1 als Tor zur Tora JHWHs: Wie Ps 1 (und Ps 2) den Psalter an den Pentateuch anschliesst,” *SJOT* 21 (2007): 179–200; Mark J. Whiting, “Psalms 1 and 2 as a Hermeneutical Lens for Reading the Psalter,” *ExpQ* 85 (2013): 246–62; Robert Alan Cole, “An Integrated Reading of Psalms 1 and 2,” *JSOT* 98 (2002): 75–88.

¹⁰ Note that Psalms 9 and 10 are two halves of an acrostic and are composed as a single psalm in the LXX. For a good study of the poetics parallels and connections between the Psalms 9 and 10, see Les Maloney, “A Word Fitly Spoken: Poetic Artistry in the First Four Acrostics of the Hebrew Psalter” (Ph.D. thesis, Baylor University, 2005).

¹¹ Gianni Barbiero, *Das erste Psalmenbuch als Einheit: Eine synchrone Analyse von Psalm 1–41* (ÖBS 16; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1999); Gianni Barbiero, “Le premier livret du Psautier (Ps 1–41): Une étude synchrone,” *RevScRel* 77 (2003): 439–80; William Bellinger Jr., “Reading from the Beginning (Again):

by the untitled Psalms 1–2 on its left and the Korahite Psalms 42–49 on its right. Building on Zenger’s earlier work, Barbiero’s analysis of Psalms 3–41 is perhaps the most insightful to date and will be adapted in this essay.¹² As with Zenger, Barbiero breaks DC-I into four main groups (Psalms 3–14, 15–24, 25–34, 35–41) via their semantic content, superscription form, compositional shape and genre categories. Each of these groups is observed to be concentric and chiasmic in structure.

In group 1 (Psalms 3–14), the psalms are precisely arranged. Two pairs of five psalms (Psalms 3–7, 10–14) are composed with alternating sequence of “day-night-day-night-day” emphasis.¹³ Psalms 8–9 at the center are “night-day” psalms.¹⁴ Psalms 10–14 are also structured as an *alternation* between communal (Psalms 10, 12, 14) and individual laments (Psalms 11, 13). There is a thematic movement *towards* Zion in Psalms 3–8 and movement *away* from Zion from Psalms 10–14.¹⁵ At the center of the first group, Psalms 8–9 highlight motifs of Yahweh’s kingship and judgment.

The shape of group 2 (Psalms 15–24) is concentric and can best be visualized by the genre of the psalms.¹⁶ The entire group is framed by two entrance liturgies (Psalms 15, 24) with inner rings of confidence (Psalms 16, 23) and supplication psalms (Psalms 17, 22). Psalms having longer superscriptions are found at the center of group (Psalms 18–22) and psalms with shorter superscriptions are found on both sides (Psalms 15–17, 23–24).¹⁷ At the center, there is a series of four kingship and torah psalms (Psalms 18–21). Interestingly, I observe that these four psalms contain poetic *inclusios* that are not found in the rest of Psalms 15–24. Psalms 18 and 19 as a whole is framed with the motif of Yahweh as “rock” (צור, cf. 18:3, 19:15). Psalm 20 is framed by the refrain “Yahweh will answer” (ענה, cf. 20:2, 10) and Psalm 21 is framed by Yahweh’s “strength” (עו, cf. 21:2, 14).

Group 3 in DC-I consists of 10 psalms arranged concentrically and bounded by two alphabetical acrostics, Psalms 25 and 34. Two pairs of four psalms (Psalms

The Shape of Book I of the Psalter,” in *Diachronic and Synchronic: Reading the Psalms in Real Time* (ed. Joel S. Burnett and W. H. Bellinger Jr.; LHBOTS 488; New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 114–26; Erich Zenger, “Der Psalter als Buch,” in *Der Psalter in Judentum und Christentum* (ed. Erich Zenger and Norbert Lohfink; Herders Biblische Studien 18; Freiburg: Herder, 1998), 1–58; idem, “Das Buch der Psalmen,” in *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Kohlhammer Studienbücher Theologie 1.1; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1995).

¹² Barbiero, *Das erste Psalmenbuch als Einheit*; idem, “Le premier livret du Psautier (Ps 1–41).”

¹³ Cf. Pss 3:6, 8; 4:5, 9; 5:4, 6:7; 7:7; 10:12; 11:2; 12:6; 13:4; 14:2, 5.

¹⁴ Cf. Pss 8:4; 9:20. At the same time, “day” psalms correspond to the motif of “external hostility” while the “night” psalms correspond to the motif of “personal distress.” Personal distress of the psalmist in Psalm 4 relates to his poverty, and in Psalm 6, his disease. According to Barbiero, “Le premier livret du Psautier (Ps 1–41),” 468, this is a “composition principle.”

¹⁵ There is a thematic trajectory developing across Group 1. In Psalms 3–7, the psalmist looks towards the temple and enters Yahweh’s house (3:5; 5:8). At the center of the entire subgroup, Yahweh is enthroned in Zion (9:12–15). In Psalms 10–14, the psalmist calls upon the eternal kingship of Yahweh (10:16) and declares Yahweh’s rule at the temple and in heaven (11:4). By Ps 14:2, 7, Yahweh’s gaze and salvation *come* out from Zion. Barbiero, “Le premier livret du Psautier (Ps 1–41),” 469.

¹⁶ J. Clinton McCann Jr., “The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter: Psalms in Their Literary Context,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms* (ed. William P. Brown; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 354.

¹⁷ Furthermore, Barbiero sees a chiasmus in the superscriptions of Psalms 23 and 24. Note that this is not visible in the English translations. Psalm 23 begins with מזמור לדוד and Psalm 24 with לדוד מזמור.

25–28; 31–34) frame a thanksgiving and praise hymn at the center (Psalms 29, 30). Like the first group, Barbiero argues that Psalms 25–28 express a movement *towards* the temple,¹⁸ culminating at Psalm 29, a hymn praising Yahweh's enthronement at the temple (29:9–11). Psalm 30:1 then begins with a surprising superscription: “a song at the dedication of the house.” This superscription is surprising for three reasons. First, the association between the dedication of the house (i.e. the temple) and David is clearly forced. It was Solomon who dedicated the house, not David. Second, the reference to the “house of God” in the superscription is unique. No other superscription in the Psalter makes a reference to the temple. Third, the superscription has little to do with the rest of the content of Psalm 30, though it has more relevance to Psalm 29. There appears to be a deliberate but awkward splicing of Psalms 29 and 30 together. These phenomena allow us to render Psalms 29–30 as the distinctive concentric center of the group. Following these two psalms at the center, Psalms 31–34 highlight the protection and watchful eyes of Yahweh *from* Zion (31:21–22; 33:13–15; 34:16).¹⁹

The final group in DC-I is Psalms 35–41. Likewise, these seven psalms are arranged symmetrically based on genre categories. The group is framed by two supplication psalms (35, 41), followed by inner rings of thanksgiving (36, 40) and sapiential psalms (37, 39). At the center, Psalm 38 is a supplication psalm. While Barbiero considers Psalms 37 and 39 functioning as two centers in the group,²⁰ it is better, in my opinion, to see Psalm 38 functioning as the center of the group for at least three reasons. First, Psalm 38 stands at the center of the chiasmic group (Psalms 35–41) and is framed by two sapiential psalms (Psalms 37, 39). Second, the superscription of Psalm 38 is also framed by three psalms with superscriptions that end with **לְדוֹד** (Psalms 35–37) and three psalms with superscriptions that begin with **לְמַנְעָה** (Psalms 39–41). The superscription of Psalm 38 at the center, **מִזְמוֹר לְדוֹד**, **לְהַזְכִּיר**, neither ends with **לְדוֹד** nor begins with **לְמַנְעָה**.²¹ Third, the first half of the group (Psalms 35–37) focuses on motifs of “external evil and oppression of enemies” while the second (39–41) highlights motifs of “inner misfortune, sickness and sin.”²² This phenomenon is similar to the alternation sequence of external hostilities and personal distress seen in Psalms 3–7. The characterization of the shape of DC-I as discussed above can be illustrated by Figure 1 below.

¹⁸ Barbiero, “Le premier livret du Psautier (Ps 1–41),” 471.

¹⁹ The similarity in the construction of the titles in Psalms 25–28 binds them as a unit. This also applies to Psalms 29–31. Note that the **מִזְמוֹר** in the superscriptions of Psalms 29–31 is absent in the rest of group 3. The superscriptions of Psalms 32–34, beginning with **לְדוֹד**, likewise, form a unit. Barbiero points out that although Psalm 33 has no superscription, Psalms 32 and 33 are a unit. Barbiero, “Le premier livret du Psautier (Ps 1–41),” 471.

²⁰ Barbiero, “Le premier livret du Psautier (Ps 1–41),” 473–75.

²¹ Barbiero also finds that the **לְדוֹד** in the superscriptions of Psalms 35 and 37 form an *inclusio* around the subgroup (35–37) just prior to the center Psalm 38. The other subgroup (39–41) is united by the **לְמַנְעָה** in the superscriptions.

²² I am using Barbiero's argument for this point. For the concept of sin, see Pss 38:4, 19; 39:2; 40:7; 41:5. Barbiero, “Le premier livret du Psautier (Ps 1–41),” 472.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41						
TRG	Laments				Laments				EL	Kingship and Torah Praise										EL	Ind. Laments				Thanks-giving				Sup	A Memorial				Sup												
	D	N	D	N	D			D	N	D	N	D			C	F																														
	E	P	E	P	E			N	D			C	I	C	I	C																														
	H	D	H	D	H			L	L	L	L	L	L	L																																
	Kingship & Judgment								Kingship and Torah Praise										YHWH Enthroned Temple Hymn				A Memorial																							
	Supplication				H TK				Supplication														To Temple				YHWH sees from Zion																			
	To Zion				YHWH enthroned				Away from Zion																																					
	Group 1 12x Psalms									Group 2 10x Psalms										Group 3 10x Psalms										Group 4 7x Psalms																

Figure 1: Davidic Collection I (Psalms 3–41)²³

In brief, we observe four groups of psalms in the first Davidic collection. Each of these groups are concentric in shape and the centers of the first three groups consist of distinctive motifs associated with Yahweh’s kingship, torah, temple, and thanksgiving. The fourth group has a distinctive emphasis on human supplication in affliction.

II. DAVIDIC COLLECTION II

The second Davidic collection (DC-II) consists of Psalms 51–72 and 86. The lone Psalm 86 is not a randomly misplaced Davidic psalm. It belongs to DC-II for good reasons, as we will show here. For some time, scholars have shown that Books II and III of the Psalter are a single compositional unit. The superscriptions across these two Books form a chiasmic Korahite-Asaphite-Davidic-Asaphite-Korathite (A-B-C-B’-A’) arrangement (42–49, 50, 51–72, 73–83, 84–89).²⁴ The parallel genre structures of the two Korahite subgroups (Psalms 42–49 and 84–89)²⁵ form the frames around Books II–III. Furthermore, the Elohistc Psalter that begins Book II (42) extends all the way to Psalm 83 in Book III, binding them together.²⁶ Like DC-I, Psalms 51–72 are concentric. The unit is framed by two supplication psalms (51, 71) followed by an inner ring of lament psalms (52–55; 69–70).

²³ Legend: TR = Torah psalm; KG = Kingship psalm; D = Day psalm; N = Night psalm; EH = External hostility; PD = Personal distress; CL = Communal lament; IL = Individual lament; H = Hymn; TK = Thanksgiving psalm; EL = Entrance liturgy; CF = Confidence psalm; L = Lament; PJ = Emphasis on the poor and justice; W = Emphasis on the wicked; Sup = Supplication psalm; Sap = Sapiential/wisdom psalm.

²⁴ David C. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Books of Psalms* (ed. David Clines and Philip R. Davies; JSOTSup 252; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 71; Zenger, “Das Buch der Psalmen,” 354.

²⁵ Gillingham, “Zion Tradition,” 323; Zenger and Auwers have also noted this parallel. Auwers, *La composition littéraire du psautier*, 49; Zenger, “Das Buch der Psalmen,” 354.

²⁶ On the use of “Elohim,” David C. Mitchell, *The Songs of Ascents: Psalms 120 to 134 in the Worship of Jerusalem’s Temples* (Newton Mearns, UK; Campbell, 2015), 6, notes that there is “an old Hebrew tradition which associates *elohim* with God’s judgment and YHVH with his mercy.” He cites *Sifre* §27; *Pes. de-Rav Kah.* 149a; *Midr. Ps.* 74.2; Zohar, *Shemot* 173b–174a, and cites P. Hayman, “Rabbinic Judaism and the Problem of Evil,” *SJT* 29 (1976): 465, regarding “the basis of a fundamental exegetical rule, namely that the divine name *Yahweh* denotes the attribute of Mercy, the name *Elohim*, the attribute of Justice.”

At the center, it consists of three different groups of supplication, confidence, and thanksgiving psalms (56–60; 61–64; 65–68). These groupings are also supported by their superscription forms.²⁷

Significant in DC-II is the thematic motif of David's downfall, which begins with the death of Uriah (Psalm 51) to the ascension of Solomon (Psalm 72). Within these bookends, the imagery of David's ruin and decline characterizes the structural center of DC-II. A sense of rejection and brokenness pervade these psalms (54:5; 55:5–6; 56:3; 57:5; 59:4; 61:1–3, 7; 62:1–4; 63:1–2; 64:1–3). This can also be seen via the high concentration of *historical superscriptions* that picture David as a suffering and broken king in need of God's help (esp. Psalms 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 63). A number of features in the adjacent Psalms 63–64 depict David as he fled Jerusalem because of Absalom's coup. The brief superscription of Psalm 63 probably alludes to David hiding in the Judean wilderness near the Jordan river (cf. 2 Sam 17:16). The phrase "secret counsel of evil doers" in Ps 64:3 reminds us of the conspiracy between Ahithophel (David's counselor) and Absalom (2 Sam 15:12, 31, 34; 17:1). Likewise, the "bitter words" in 64:4 is fitting of Shimei's curses as David came to Bahurim (2 Sam 16:5–8).

If DC-II can be seen to depict David's downfall, then the postscript at 72:20, "the prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended," functions to underscore the message that the human king in the Davidic Psalter of Book II has come to an end and that hope no longer lies in David's kingship but in that of his posterity.²⁸ As supporting evidence, this brokenness of the Davidic kingship is remarkably expressed by the lexeme, "to reject" (זָנָה). All ten instances of זָנָה in the Psalter are found, fittingly and interestingly, only in Books II–III.²⁹ Their locations also mark the beginning and end of Books II and III respectively (Pss 43:2; 89:39).³⁰ They are precisely located where acute brokenness is portrayed.³¹ The presence of זָנָה in Psalm 89 at the close of Book III consolidates this multiple "brokenness" under the perspective of the Davidic covenant (89:39–52).³² This interesting use of זָנָה expresses the intent of the editor(s) to depict the brokenness of David and Zion in Books II–III of the Psalter.

Like Psalm 38, Psalm 86 stands at the concentric center of the last group of psalms in Book III. Also like Psalm 38, Psalm 86 it is a supplication of David in

²⁷ Note that Psalm 51 is a "psalm of David," Psalms 52–55 are linked by "maskil" in the superscription; Psalms 56–60 are linked by "miktam"; Psalms 61–64 are linked by "a psalm of David"; Psalms 65–68 are linked by "song"; and Psalms 69–70 are linked again by "psalm of David." Psalm 71 is an untitled psalm.

²⁸ Our analysis shows that we need not accept David Willgren's postulation that Ps 72:20 is a frozen colophon. David Willgren, "Psalm 72:20: A Frozen Colophon?," *JBL* 135 (2016): 49–60.

²⁹ Cf. Pss 43:2; 44:10, 24; 60:3, 12; 74:1; 77:8; 88:15; 89:39; 108:12*. Note that Ps 108:12 is a reuse of Psalm 60. Hence, we can say that all of זָנָה are found properly in Books II and III.

³⁰ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 91.

³¹ About half of the instances of זָנָה are found in the laments of the two Korahite groups that frame Books II–III of the Psalter (43:2; 44:10, 24; 88:15; 89:39). זָנָה occurs twice in Ps 60:3, 12 and twice in Pss 74:1 and 77:8, where Zion lies in tatters. All occurrences are found in literary contexts that highlight the brokenness of the exile (43, 44), David's kingship (60, 88), and Zion (74, 77).

³² See also Creach's treatment of the idea of being "cast off" in *Yahweh as Refuge*, 85–86.

affliction. In terms of macrostructure, the parallel concentric genre arrangement of DC-I and DC-II is striking. The main difference between them, however, pertains to the two depictions of the Davidic figure. While the king in DC-I is established in Zion and connected to torah and temple, the king in DC-II is broken because of sin. Both DC-I and II, nonetheless, end with a centrally located psalm that emphasizes the prayer of an afflicted Davidic figure (Psalms 38, 86). Figure 2 below illustrates our discussion above.

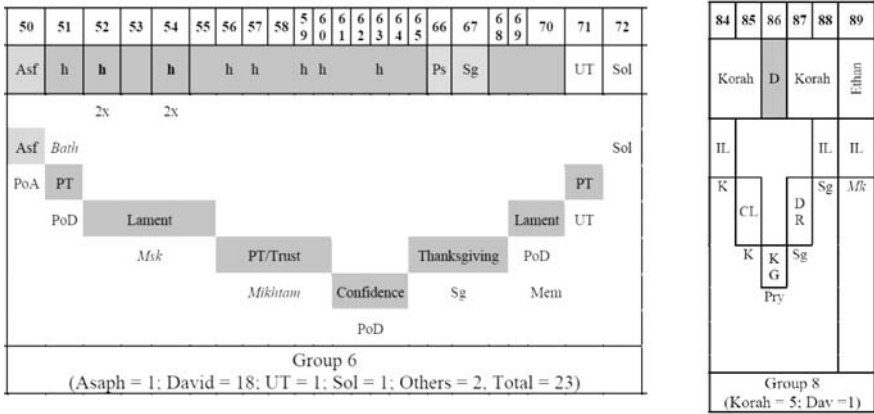


Figure 2: Davidic Collection II (Psalms 51–72, 86)³³

The high points along the contours in DC-I and II can also be envisioned via the *historical* (or biographical) superscriptions in Books I and II of the Psalter, which we will briefly discuss below. The first two historical superscriptions, Pss 3:1 and 7:1, are enigmatic and could refer to 2 Samuel 15 and 18, where David first fled from Absalom and later received the news of Absalom’s death. The third historical superscription at Ps 18:1 then highlights the firm establishment of David’s kingship, prevailing over his enemies. This superscription recalls Nathan’s prophecy in 2 Sam 7:1 and 22:1. The last historical superscription in DC-I is located at Ps 34:1, where David is shown to be in distress.

There are eight historical superscriptions in DC-II. The first, Ps 51:1–2, highlights Nathan’s indictment of David’s sin (against Bathsheba and Uriah). Subsequent to Psalm 51, the historical superscriptions that follow are all negative, depicting David’s downfall, and are drawn primarily from 1 Samuel (cf. 52:1–2; 54:1–2; 56:1; 57:1; 59:1, 63:1).³⁴ By alluding to 1 Samuel, these historical superscriptions do not necessarily reflect a chronological account. They, nonetheless, recapitulate the

³³ Legend: Asf = Asaphite psalms; h = Presence of historical/biographical superscription; Ps = A psalm; Sg = A song; UT = Untitled psalm; Sol = Solomonic psalm; PoA = Psalm of Asaph; Bath = Bathsheba; PoD = Psalm of David; PT = Petition psalm; Msk = A maskil; Mem = A memorial; IL = Individual lament; CL = Communal lament; KG = Kingship psalm; Pry = A prayer; DR = Divine response psalm; D = Davidic psalm.

³⁴ We will return to the exception of Ps 60:1–2, which is the only positive historical superscription in DC-II.

vicissitudes of David's life. The reference to Nathan is significant in the explication of this phenomenon. Nathan's two appearances in the narratives of 2 Samuel mark two important points in the contours of David's life. In 2 Sam 7:1, David is said to have subdued all his enemies. Then Nathan enters the narrative and the rest of the chapter is an account of God's promises to David to establish his dynasty through his posterity (vv. 3–17), followed by David's response to God (vv. 18–29). Nathan's second appearance is found in 2 Sam 12:7–14 where he indicted David for his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah.³⁵

The historical superscriptions of Psalms 51 and 63 in DC-II frame the story of David's sin and his downfall. Moreover, if the *Sitz im Leben* behind Psalms 63–64 is identified as David's flight from Absalom, we would have come full circle from the first historical superscription in Ps 3:1, which also notes David's escape from Absalom.³⁶ Thus, the common story of David's flight from Absalom, revealed by the superscriptions of Pss 3:1 and 63:1, frames the first twelve Davidic³⁷ superscriptions with historical references.

The final historical superscription at Ps 142:1 probably refers to 1 Sam 22:1 (or 1 Sam 24), when David fled from Saul and hid in a cave. Note that this reference (1 Sam 22:1) is closely connected to the last historical superscription in DC-I (Ps 34:1; i.e. 1 Sam 21:13), where David feigned madness in the presence of Abimelech as he fled from Saul. If the association of Ps 142:1 with 1 Samuel 22 is correct, then these two references in Pss 34:1 and 142:1 share a similar motif—David is pictured as a fleeing, afflicted, and praying figure. From the above discussion, we note that the thirteen historical superscriptions have skillfully adapted David's enemies, specifically Absalom and Saul, to frame David's downfall and persistent affliction. At the same time, the reference to Nathan locates the establishment of David's kingship and the beginning of his downfall. The above discussion is illustrated by Figure 3 below.

³⁵ Nathan's role in 1 Kings involves "manipulation" so that the Davidic kingship is passed on to Solomon. According to Sergi, "his main role is to provide divine legitimacy for the Davidic dynasty and to guarantee its existence." Omer Sergi, "The Composition of Nathan's Oracle to David (2 Samuel 7:1–17) as a Reflection of Royal Judahite Ideology," *JBL* 129 (2010): 266.

³⁶ Besides the superscription, Johnson notes that the connection between 2 Samuel 15–18 and Psalm 3 is seen in the "allusion to sleep" in Ps 3:6. She notes that "the military counsel given to Absalom by his royal advisors at the time of his coup centered on when and where David would sleep." Both Ahithophel and Hushai's counsel are connected to where David will sleep. Vivian Johnson, *David in Distress: His Portrait through the Historical Psalms* (LHBOTS 505; New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 16–18.

³⁷ DC-I includes Psalms 3, 7, 18, 34 (4x). DC-II includes 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63 (8x). The last historical reference in Psalm 142 is found in DC-V.

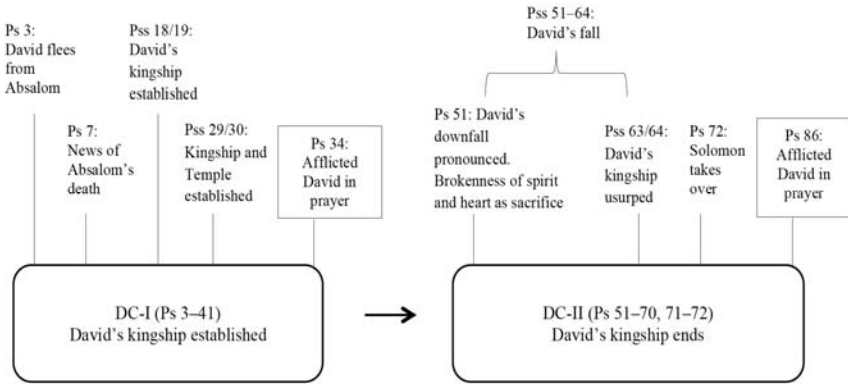


Figure 3: Development of the Historical Superscriptions in Davidic Collections I–II

III. DAVIDIC COLLECTION III

The third Davidic collection (DC-III) is made up of Psalms 101–103. Even though Psalm 102 does *not* have a Davidic superscription, it is framed by the Davidic Psalms 101 and 103, and common motifs across these three psalms show that are meant to be read together.³⁸ Crucially, DC-III is the first presentation of a “blameless” Davidic king with an “integrity of heart” *after* Yahweh’s rejection (נָתַן) in Books II–III.³⁹ Psalm 101 is also the first Davidic psalm after Psalm 86.⁴⁰ Compared to DC-II, the Davidic king in DC-III is no longer depicted as sinful and downfallen. Rather, the king is righteous and wholesome. His zeal for righteousness is for his entire household and the land (Ps 101:5–8). Moreover, DC-III (esp. Psalm 102) is the first concrete description of Yahweh’s impending restoration of a ruined Zion-temple *after* Book III.⁴¹ In other words, DC-III prefigures a “change of fortunes” for both the Davidic kingship and Zion-temple.⁴²

³⁸ Hossfeld and Zenger argue that “the framing of Ps 102:1 with two attributions to David in the neighboring psalms in itself suggests a link between the poor person in Ps 102:1 and David.” Common motifs include the Zion theme. It is also plausible that Psalm 101 is a royal prayer with Psalm 102 as a reference to the king in distress, and Psalm 103 that follows is the resulting praise and thanksgiving for God’s rescue. When the poor in these psalms is identified with David, Hossfeld and Zenger argue that it is “possible to understand Psalms 101–103 as a David triad.” Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 28.

³⁹ Cf. Pss 43:2; 88:15; 89:39.

⁴⁰ Interestingly, there are 14 psalms between Psalm 71 (untitled, but considered the last David psalm in DC-II) and Psalm 86, and another 14 psalms between Psalm 86 and Psalm 101.

⁴¹ Especially after Ps 79:1 when Yahweh’s holy temple is defiled and Jerusalem is “in ruins.” This is reiterated in Ps 89:41. There are statements related to the Zion-temple between Psalms 79–89, but they express praise or a longing for Zion rather than its restoration. Psalm 100 envisions entry into a restored Zion-temple, but it is only in Psalm 102 that a concrete description of Zion’s restoration is given.

⁴² In his study of Psalm 102, Witt finds a similar conclusion. He notes, “As such, Psalm 102, alongside 101, represents an important *literary* turning point in the Hebrew Psalter” (emphasis original). Andrew Witt, “Hearing Psalm 102 within the Context of the Hebrew Psalter,” *VT* 62 (2012): 605.

Furthermore, we notice another important feature in DC-III—the democratization of the Davidic figure. By democratization, I mean that what is promised to, and predicated on the individual David is now applied to a community of people of whom David represents. For instance, in Ps 101:2, the king (individual) is “blameless” (תמים) and walks with “integrity of heart” in his own house.⁴³ But a few verses later, the same attribute of “blameless” (תמים; 101:6) is now predicated on the community described as the “faithful of the land,” who will dwell with David and minister to him in his house. The absence of a Davidic superscription in Psalm 102 adds to the democratization. Identification of David as the distressed petitioner in Psalm 102 can only be implied.⁴⁴ In Psalm 103, the Davidic figure has identified himself with the community by using first-person plural speech in verses 10, 12, and 14.

This shift to a positive Davidic presentation in DC-III (Psalms 101–103) is continued in DC-IV (Psalms 108–110). *Prima facie*, the macrostructural shapes of DC-III and IV are very similar. Both consist of three psalms each. The center psalm in each collection (Psalms 102, 109) is the longest, and identifies with a broken petitioner. Several deliberate lexical parallels between these two Davidic collections suggest that they are to be viewed in tandem. These two psalms use three lexemes, כ + צל + נטה, in the phrase, “as the lengthening of a shadow,” to describe the fleeting human life. Significantly, apart from Pss 102:12 and 109:23, these expressions are not found anywhere else in the HB.⁴⁵

It is also interesting that the six psalms of DC-III and IV form a chiasmic structure.

⁴³ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 15, note that “only in the royal prayer of Ps 18:41 is the king the subject, as the petitioner is here [Ps 101].”

⁴⁴ It is the only superscription in the Psalter that is “intended for a particular instance in a person’s life.” Nancy deClaisse-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 748; Witt writes, “Scholars in the twentieth century have all but dismissed this idea, positing instead that the superscription points to the democratization of the psalm [102] for any common sufferer.” Witt, “Hearing Psalm 102,” 590.

⁴⁵ These phrases are also the only two expressed in the first person by the psalmist. Cf. Ps 144:4, which uses עבר instead of נטה. There are ten occurrences of צל (“shadow”) in the Psalter and only Pss 102:12, 109:23, and 144:4 apply it as a simile to man’s fleeting life.

- A: Idealized Davidic king who rules from Zion (Psalm 101)
 B: Broken petitioner (Psalm 102)
 C: David praising Yahweh's steadfast love (Psalm 103)
 C': David praising Yahweh's steadfast love (Psalm 108)
 B': Broken petitioner (Psalm 109)
 A': Idealized Davidic king who rules from Zion (Psalm 110)

Psalms 101 and 110 sustain the motif of an idealized Davidic king.⁴⁶ They characterize a king who can annihilate all enemies. Both psalms also identify a group of “blameless” people who minister before the king (cf. 101:6; 110:3). The use of “morning/dawn” that characterizes the temporal settings in Psalms 101 and 110 is also not found elsewhere in these two DCs.⁴⁷ In the C, C' units, Psalm 103 parallels Psalm 108 with the expression “my soul/being” (cf. 103:1–2; 108:2). This phraseology, again, is not found elsewhere in the chiasmus. While the word חסד is found in four psalms in DC-III and IV, only Pss 103:11 and 108:5 associate Yahweh's חסד with the heights of the “heavens.”⁴⁸ The above discussion suggests DC-III and IV are to be viewed as a compositional unit.

IV. DAVIDIC COLLECTION IV

The fourth Davidic Collection further develops the Davidic figure in three ways. First, the Davidic figure is characterized as a messianic king-priest who is given the prerogative to judge the nations (Ps 110:6).⁴⁹ Regardless of the critical links between the king-priest and El-Elyon cult,⁵⁰ as Zenger notes, the king described in Psalm 110 is impregnated with messianic concepts and the entirety of the psalm is “similar to Psalm 2.”⁵¹ Second, Psalm 109 depicts not simply an afflicted David but a juridically condemned figure. The crux interpretum of Ps 109:20 is trying to make sense theologically of the phrase, “this is the work of my accusers from Yahweh” (זאת פעלת שטני מאת יהוה). One possible way to resolve this difficulty is to read this text in light of Ps 118:23 (מאת יהוה היתה זאת). In Ps 118:23, the phrase is predicated on the antecedent, “stone,” whom the builders reject

⁴⁶ It has been proposed that the original setting of Psalm 101 is a “royal proclamation issued at the enthronement festival of a prince of Judah in Jerusalem.” The text, however, allows us to identify the speaker “as someone with great power and judicial authority over the whole land (vv. 5, 6, 7, and 8).” In the monarchic period, the speaker can be a royal figure, but in the postexilic period, he is likely to be a “religious functionary.” Phil J. Botha, “Psalm 101: Inaugural Address or Social Code of Conduct?,” *HTS Theological Studies* 60 (2004): 725, 735.

⁴⁷ Psalm 101:8 uses בקר (“morning”) while Ps 110:3 uses the *bapax legomenon* משהר (“dawn”).

⁴⁸ In the Psalms, the description of “heavens” in relation to “steadfast love” is found only in Pss 36:6; 57:4, 11; 89:3; 103:11; 108:5.

⁴⁹ For a study of the relationship between David and Melchizedek, see Robin Routledge, “Psalm 110, Melchizedek and David: Blessing (the Descendants of) Abraham,” *Baptistic Theologies* 1.2 (2009): 1–16.

⁵⁰ For connections between the use of “Melchizedek” in Psalm 110 and the El-Elyon cult, see Routledge, “Psalm 110, Melchizedek and David,” 10.

⁵¹ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 144.

(118:22). Within this context, the affliction that comes from Yahweh arises from his discipline (Ps 118:18). Hence, when Ps 109:20 is read in light of Ps 118:18–23. The theological dilemma of assigning the work of the adversary to Yahweh can be resolved by reading it as Yahweh’s chastisement, which accords well with 2 Sam 7:14 (cf. 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22–24).⁵²

Third, the characterization of the victorious Davidic figure over the nations in Psalm 108 now expresses an unfettered triumphalism. Psalm 108 is a composite psalm made up of Pss 57:8–12 and 60:7–14.⁵³ Only the words “David” and “song” in the superscriptions of Psalms 57 and 60 are kept in the superscription of Psalm 108. Comparing these three psalms, we observe that negative laments are jettisoned from Psalms 57 and 60 and the “victorious” parts of the psalms are retained in Psalm 108. Thus, Psalm 108, as a re-composition of Psalms 57 and 60, emphasizes a triumphalism of Israel’s deliverance from her enemies. The reason for the veiled and fettered triumphalism of Psalm 60 (and Psalm 57) is due to the portrayal of hope under the brokenness of the Davidic kingship in DC-II. However, the victories of Psalm 60 and the reference to the defeat of Edom in the superscription of Psalm 60 (and in vv. 10–11) are given *unfettered* triumphal characterization in Psalm 108 because DC-IV no longer presents a fallen Davidic king but a victorious Davidic king. In short, DC-IV as a whole, is positive, confident (in spite of Psalm 109), and deepens the characterization of the Davidic king.

One final observation on DC-III and IV pertains to the psalms between these two collections. The literary horizon of Psalms 104–107 trace the canonical historical trajectory of Israel from creation to the entry into the Promised Land. Interestingly, Psalms 104–106 carry the most sustained references to “Moses” in the whole of the Psalter. Coming at the end of Psalm 107, the triumphant Davidic figure in Psalm 108 fits remarkably well as the “new” Joshua, who will lead Yahweh’s people into a new and better “Canaan.” Figure 4 below summarizes the key contours of Davidic collections I–IV.

⁵² The chastisement here need not be associated with sin in 2 Sam 7:14 if we read Ps 109:6–19 as a quotation of the psalmist’s enemies.

⁵³ Zenger argued that a “reverse dependency can be excluded.” At least ten differences are found by comparing Psalm 108 with Psalms 57 and 60. See Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 114–16.

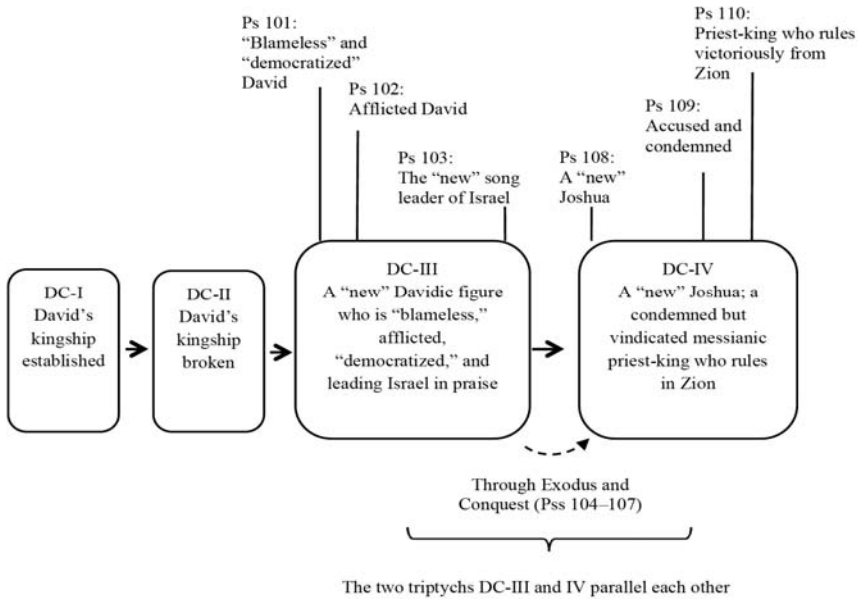


Figure 4: Summary of the Davidic Characterization from DC-I through IV

V. DAVIDIC COLLECTION V

The content in the fifth and final Davidic collection (Psalms 138–145) is a shift from DC-III and IV. Nonetheless, its shape is still concentric by genre categorization. The bookends, Psalms 138 and 145, are kingship psalms. An inner ring consisting of Psalms 139 and 144 are reflective praise hymns. At the center, Psalms 140–143 sustain the motifs of the Davidic distress and supplication. These motifs are also increasingly associated with the *chasidim* (saints) of Israel and not just the Davidic figure (hence, democratization).⁵⁴ While Psalms 138–139 and 142–143 in

⁵⁴ Van Grol argues that "Psalm 145 presents the *chasidim* as the ones David is referring to. The David of the collection [entire 138–145] stands for them. He is their identification figure and symbol." Grol argues that "names from divergent traditions" are integrated at the end "with the name of *chasidim*. The low and needy are found, the righteous (or justified) and the upright, the servant(s) of Yhwh (only singular!), those who revere God, and those who love him." Harm van Grol, "David and His *Chasidim*: Place and Function of Psalms 138–145," in *Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. Erich Zenger; BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 325, 327.

DC-V are individual psalms, the individual in Psalms 140–141, 144–145⁵⁵ is fused with the community.⁵⁶

The presence of affliction and supplication in DC-V even after the advent of the messianic king in DC-III and IV shows that the ideal and victorious king has yet to *fully* establish a utopic social-reality of justice and bliss (cf. 2 Sam 7:10–11). These motifs of bliss and victory happen as we approach Ps 144:12–15. From this point, the ideal Davidic king submits himself to Yahweh's kingship in Ps 145:1.⁵⁷ In other words, Psalms 144–45 at the end of DC-V mark the beginning of a realized, ideal Davidic socio-community identified by ultimate justice, peace, and praise.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, the people, whose God is Yahweh, must continue to persist in confident hope and supplication until that defining shift.

In summary, all five DCs display a concentric structure. Each DC has a structural center. The first DC centers around the establishment of the Davidic kingship and temple (Psalms 18–21, 29–30) while DC-II centers around the fall of David (Psalms 56–68). The superscriptions in Pss 38:1 and 70:1, near the end of DC-I and II, are the only two with the phrase, “for a memorial” (לְהִזְכִּיר).⁵⁹ These two instances are meant to be seen together as a commemorative for the human David (cf. 1 Sam 4:18; 2 Sam 18:18; 1 Kgs 17:18). Put differently, the Davidic figure depicted in these two collections is of the past. In contrast, the frames of DC-III and IV present a very different Davidic figure who is both victorious and vindicated. The structures of the last three DCs (III–V) are similar. The compositional units

⁵⁵ This is not to say that distinction cannot be made between the individual Davidic king and the collective people. For example, Barbiero argues that Ps 144:1–11 identifies the individual king that is clearly set apart from the people in 144:12–15. Gianni Barbiero, “Messianismus und Theokratie: Die Verbindung der Psalmen 144 und 145 und ihre Bedeutung für die Komposition des Psalters,” *OTE* 27 (2014): 44.

⁵⁶ Cf. “poor” (אֲבִינִים; 140:13); “righteous” (צַדִּיקִים; 140:14); “upright” (יִשְׂרִים; 140:14); “our bones” (עֲצָמוֹנָה; 141:7); Pss 144:12–14; 145:4, 6–7, 10–21. Ballhorn notes that the movement in a psalm where an individual is mentioned, who confronts the wicked and the social structures they have created, followed by the voice of righteous community is akin to how Psalm 1 is set up. This feature, to him, reflects an “eschatological” connotation. Egbert Ballhorn, *Zum Telos des Psalters: Der Textzusammenhang des Vierten und Fünften Psalmenbuches (Ps 90–150)* (BBB 138; Berlin: Philo, 2004), 276.

⁵⁷ The final unambiguous transition from distress and lament to praise and peace occurs at Ps 149:6–9, where the final judgment of the wicked is administered, leading to the praise of Yahweh at his sanctuary.

⁵⁸ Psalms 144–145 as a transition has been studied by Vignolo and Donatella Scaiola. Scaiola notes, “the last linking between doxology and macarism can be found in Psalm 144, and suggests a signal of conclusion; secondly, the usual sequence is reversed, as the blessing in anticipated (144,1) with respect to the macarism which is being doubled (144,15). In his [Vignolo’s] opinion, here is the beginning of the end of the fifth book, which develops throughout seven psalms. Psalm 145, which follows, can be considered an extended doxology, due to the inclusion within 145,1–2.21, which resumes 144,1. Pss 146–150 are doxological epilogue, well connected to Ps 145.” Donatella Scaiola, “The End of the Psalter,” in *Composition of the Book of Psalms*, 702; See also Roberto Vignolo, “Circolarità tra libro e preghiera nella poetica dossologica del Salterio: Contribuzione alla ‘terza ricerca’ del Salterio come libro,” in *La Parola di Dio tra scrittura e rito* (Studi di liturgia, N.S. 41; Rome: Centro Liturgico Vincenziano, 2002), 127–88.

⁵⁹ The *hiphil* infinite construct conjugation of זָכַר occurs only in these two locations in the Psalter.

have either the kingship of David or Yahweh as bookends, and picture the supplication of David in affliction at the center.⁶⁰

Davidic Collection	Concentric Structure			Linear Progression
	Front	Center	End	
DC-I (3–41)	Yahweh's kingship (8–9)	Establishment of David's kingship and Temple (18–21, 29–30)	Davidic distress and supplication (38)	Begins with Yahweh's kingship. King David broken (sacrifice accepted). Kingship turned over to a Solomonic king. ↓
DC-II* (51–71, 86)	David's fall begins with Nathan's judgment (51)	David's life threatened (56–64)	David at the brink of death/Davidic distress and supplication (71/86)	
DC-III (101–103)	Blameless Davidic figure (101)	Afflicted figure (102)	David the Song leader (103)	Ideal, condemned-vindicated king-priest. ↓
DC-IV (108–110)	Victorious Davidic king entering Zion (108)	Afflicted and condemned Davidic figure (109)	Vindicated and victorious Davidic rule from Zion (110)	
DC-V (138–145)	Yahweh's kingship (138)	Davidic distress and supplication (140–143)	Davidic figure handover kingship to Yahweh (145)	Ideal king turned over kingship to Yahweh in the end

Figure 5: Shape of the Five Davidic Collections

VI. CONCLUSION

In this essay, I have sought to understand the relationship between the Davidic psalms and the Messiah. It must be acknowledged that the Psalter's re-reading of David's life and the Davidic covenant helps us to understand the logic behind the shape of the Psalms as well as the unfurling of the messianic hopes therein. As summarized in Figure 5, I have shown how the five Davidic collections are concentric in shape. Concentricity highlights a series of structural-center themes. At the same time, a linear progression can be seen across the DCs. The first DC traces the establishment of the Davidic kingship (Psalms 3–41) and the second DC characterizes his downfall due to his sin (Psalms 51–71). Then, remarkably, the Davidic psalms shift the Davidic characterization to a royal figure who is blameless, victorious, messianic. This king is also depicted as juridically condemned. This shift is clear from the two Davidic triptychs in Psalms 101–103, 108–110. However, this high point is not the end. The final Davidic collection (Psalms 138–145) expresses a period of the *chasidim's* patient supplication in affliction before a blissful and just society is ushered in. This Davidic king then submits to Yahweh, his king, by Psalm 145. This final Davidic psalm is a climactic picture of Yahweh's high kingship and dominion.

It is significant that the trajectory traced here does not simply address the few often-quoted psalms in the NT but coheres strikingly with the broad Christological interpretation of the Psalms.⁶¹ In other words, the NT's understanding of the life

⁶⁰ Auwers, *La composition littéraire du psautier*, 60.

⁶¹ For discussions on the use of Psalms in the NT, see Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken, eds., *The Psalms in the New Testament* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2004). On reception of the Psalms in

and ministry of Jesus as the fulfillment of the messianic hopes in Davidic psalms is a formidable and reasonable interpretation, and need not be an anachronistic reading.⁶² This paper will help us understand what Jesus meant when he uttered the words that all things written about him in the Psalms must be fulfilled (Luke 24:44).

the Epistle of Hebrews in the NT, see Dirk J. Human and Gert Jacobus Steyn, eds., *Psalms and Hebrews: Studies in Reception* (LHBOTS 527; New York: T&T Clark, 2010).

⁶² Consider the fourteen parallels between the Psalms and Christological rereadings of the Psalms in the NT: (1) The characterization of the ideal Davidic figure as ideal, blameless (John 8:46; cf. Psalms 101–103), shepherd (Matt 2:6; 26:30; John 10:11–14; cf. Pss 78:70–72; 80:1), victorious (1 Tim 6:15; Rev 19:16; cf. Psalm 108), messianic priest-king (Matt 16:16; Heb 3:1; 7:14–24; cf. Psalm 110), Torah-pious (Matthew 4; Mark 10:17–18; cf. Psalms 112; 119), and Son of God (Matt 16:16; Luke 1:32; cf. Ps 2:7, 12; 8:5; 72:1). (2) The king is both afflicted and victorious (Acts 4:27; Rom 15:16; cf. Psalms 101–102; 109–110). (3) Two triumphant depictions of victory over death and one depiction of his death (1 Cor 15:23–28; Rev 20:5–6; cf. Psalms 18, 144–145). (4) The raging of the nations against Jesus and false accusations that led to his condemnation (Matt 26:59–62; Acts 4:25–26; cf. Ps 2:2; 109:6–20). (5) Jesus ushers in the sure blessings of the Davidic promises and submits his kingship to God the father at the end (Acts 13:33–41; 1 Cor 15:28; cf. Psalms 144–145). (6) Through the brokenness of Jesus, sacrifice is accepted to God (Rom 3:24; Heb 10:19; cf. Psalms 51–69). (7) Jesus as the better Moses and David (Heb 3:2–6; Acts 2:29–36; cf. Psalms 90–92, 101–103). (8) The rejection of Jesus and building of God’s house (Matt 16:16; 1 Pet 4:4–8; Pss 109:20; 118:22). (9) The concept of “new song” in the Book of Revelation as the dawn of a new era (Rev 5:9; 14:3; cf. Pss 33:4; 40:4; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1). (10) Persistent supplication of the people of God until the coming of a new era (Eph 6:18; 1 Thess 5:17; Jas 5:13–20; cf. Psalms 38, 86, 140–143). (11) The appearing of a paradisiacal Zion city with the river of life and fruitbearing trees, where the people of God dwells in security and bliss (Rev 21:1–3; 22:1–3; cf. Pss 1:3; 46:4). (12) The people of God will reign with Jesus at Zion (Rev 20:4; cf. Ps 149:1–9). (13) A concluding call for the people of God to heed the word of God (Rev 22:7; cf. Ps 147:19). (14) The expression “Hallelujah” and eschatological consummative praise (Rev 19:1–6; cf. Psalms 145–150).