

Psalm 105: A Davidless/Zionless Song of Our Father Abraham

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An “Abrahamic” Psalm in a Davidic Psalter

Psalm 105 is unique as the only psalm that mentions the patriarch Abraham and does so not just once but three times (Ps 105:6, 9, 42; cf. Ps 47:10). This emphasis on Abraham stands in stark contrast to the absence of any reference to David who is the major figure in most of the book of Psalms.

Much of the Psalter is reflective of the story of David. His name is found in the titles of 73 psalms, especially in the early chapters of the book (vid. the titles of Pss 3-41 and 51-70).¹ “Historical” titles further link some psalms to particular events in David’s life, such as “when he fled from Absalom” (Ps 3; cf. Pss 18, 51-52 *et al.*).² Book II of the Psalter concludes “Here end the prayers of David son of Jesse” (Ps 72:20)--even though Davidic Psalms continue well past this “ending” colophon (vid. Ps. 108-110, 138-145). It is not surprising that the addition of Psalm 151, in both the Greek Septuagint (LXX) and the Hebrew Dead Sea Scroll 11QPs^a, is an autobiographical Psalm of David and his battle with Goliath.³ Moreover the “Davidizing” of the Psalter is manifest in the Greek Septuagint that has repeatedly

¹ B. S. Childs, “Psalm Titles and Midrashic Exegesis,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 16 (1971) pp. 137-50; Bruce K. Waltke, “Superscripts, Postscripts, or Both,” *JBL* 110 (1991) pp. 583-96; and Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms: From Biblical Text to Contemporary Life*, vol. 1, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) p. 20.

²Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985) pp. 170-71.

³ Klaus Seybold, *Introducing the Psalms* (New York: T & T Clark, 1990) pp. 13, 16.

added Davidic headings not found in the Hebrew Massoretic text (vid. Pss 33, 93, 95-99, 104).⁴ This is particularly noticeable in Psalm 33, which is an orphan Psalm, bearing no title in the Massoretic text, yet is found in the midst of a solid Davidic collection (Ps. 3-41). The Septuagint added a Davidic title to this Psalm (“A Psalm of David”) although it may reflect an early Hebrew *Vorlage* similar to that found in the Dead Sea Scroll 4QPs^q which also contains the Davidic title.⁵ This nexus between David and the Psalms is also recognized in the *Midrash Tehillim* on Psalm 1:1, which comments that “Moses gave Israel the Five Books, and David gave Israel the five books of Psalms.”⁶ The New Testament continues the process of expanding attribution of psalms to David when Acts 4:25-26 quotes “Why do the nations rage . . . against his Anointed One (Messiah)” from Psalm 2:1-2, which is an untitled Psalm in both the Hebrew and Greek texts yet is identified in Acts as from “the mouth of your servant, our father David” (cf. Heb. 4:7 of Ps. 95).⁷

Why then is God’s “servant,” our father Abraham, highlighted at the end of Book IV (Ps 105) while David is never mentioned? Is it not odd that neither David nor Zion is cited at all when Psalm 105:1-15 is a verbatim parallel to a hymn given during David’s installation of the ark in Jerusalem as recorded in 1 Chronicles 16:8-22? Why does the Psalmist return to Abraham and avoid any reference to the Davidic

⁴ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72* (Leicester: The Tyndale Press, 1973) p. 34; and Gerald H. Wilson, “The Structure of the Psalter” in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. David Firth and Philip S. Johnson (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005) p. 241

⁵ Peter Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, Word Biblical Commentary 19 (Waco: Word Books, 1983) p. 270; Wilson, *Editing*, pp. 174-5.

⁶ Seybold, *Introducing Psalms*, p. 16; William G. Braude, *The Midrash on Psalms* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), line 5; Wilson, *Psalms*, p. 77.

⁷ Wilson, *Psalms*, 20.

king, covenant and city that were so renowned internationally that even the Babylonian captors requested that the exiled Jews sing “one of the songs of Zion” (Ps 137:3)?

Current scholarship has identified the editorial framework that structures the book of Psalms into five books or collections, each marked off by a concluding doxology (Bk I 1-41; Bk II 42-72; Bk III 73-89; Bk IV 90-106; Bk V 107-150; cf. Midrash citation above).⁸ The presence of duplicate Psalms confirms that these “Books” once were separate collections and later concatenated (vid. Ps 14[Bk I]=Ps 53[Bk II]).⁹ Surely within the “Books” there are mini-collections from other authors such as the choir directors Asaph (Ps 74-82) and Korah (Ps 44-48). There is even one Psalm attributed to Solomon (Ps 72) and one to Moses (Ps 90). While Books I and II are dominated by Davidic headings, Book III features Davidic contemporaries in the songs of Asaph (Ps 73-83), Korah (Ps 84-85, 87-88) and Ethan (Ps 89). It is Ethan’s Psalm 89 that concludes Book III with the penetrating, accusatory question: “Where is your former great love, which in your faithfulness you swore to David?” (Ps 89:49).

Book IV opens, not with a Davidic response to Ethan’s question, but with the only Psalm attributed to Moses (Ps 90). Furthermore, Book IV concludes with a psalm-pair featuring Abraham (Ps 105) and Moses (Ps 106). Book V returns eschatologically to a Davidic king (Ps 110) with a Zion-centric doxology concluding the whole Psalter (Ps 145-150). This raises the question: Why does Psalm 105

⁸ Tremper Longman, *How to Read the Psalms* (Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1988) p. 43. Gerald H. Wilson, “Structure” pp. 229-34.

⁹ Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 28.

uniquely focus on God's promises to his anointed [Messiahs] servants (n. b. the plural), Abraham and the patriarchs, with no mention of God's servant David, the Davidic covenant, the coming "anointed" Son of David, or his kingly rule from Zion?

New Methodologies and New Questions

This study examines Psalm 105:1-15 from both canonical and intertextual perspectives. While drawing on insights gained from a more traditional approach that explores the unique sounds, words, images, themes, lines and structures, with a particular eye to semantic/syntactic parallelism as well as rhetorical and literary features, their significance is explored within a new intertextual and canonical framework.¹⁰ It also does not pursue the profitable genre analysis, promulgated by Gunkel, Mowinckel, Westermann and others, which focuses on each genre as arising from a conjectured historical or cultural *sitz im leben* whether in the cult (sacrifices/feasts/ temple/priests), the king's royal court or the editorial sage's wisdom circle (vid. Ps 1).¹¹ Yet an intertextual comparison was made of Psalm 105, as a historical psalm presented in hymnic style,¹² with other historical psalms such as Psalms 78, 106 and 135 and revealed lexical and thematic overlaps between them as a genre. This intertextual comparison was largely limited to the second section (Ps.

¹⁰ Some core books that describe Hebrew poetry are: Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Harper Collins, 1985); Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); James Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and its History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); M. O. O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981); and W. G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, JSOT Sup 26 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986).

¹¹ Anthony R. Ceresko, "The Sage in the Psalms," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. John Gammie and Leo Perdue (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990) pp. 217-230.

¹² Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988) p. 308.

105:16-45) and will be treated elsewhere.¹³

Recent scholarship has moved to the consideration of the meaning of a particular psalm to its context within the canonical setting shaped by later editors who assembled the psalms into collections and finally into a completed book. Though each individual psalm was written/recited by an author in light of an original audience, and setting and was formatted in the style of a particular literary genre, yet these separate individual psalms were later placed together into a canonical text by editors who, in the construction of the book, have shaped each psalm and seated each psalmic jewel into its present canonical literary setting. Thus it behooves the modern reader to read the psalm in light of its canonical context within the book of Psalms in order to recapture that editorial layer of meaning. The works of G. Wilson, Howard, McCann, Zenger, and others have highlighted editorial principles of collection, connection and meaning within the canonical book of Psalms.¹⁴ They have gained

¹³ Vid. my website: http://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/ted_hildebrandt/index.cfm

¹⁴ Many of these writers and others present their cases in J. Clinton McCann (ed.) *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, JSOT Sup. 159 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993). Robert L. Cole, *The Shape and Message of Book III: (Psalms 73-89)* JSOT Sup. 307 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) applied these insights to Book III. Zenger and Davis worked on Book V: E. Zenger, "The Composition and Theology of the Fifth Book of Psalms, Psalms 107-145," *JSOT* 80 (1998) pp. 171-81; Barry C. Davis, "A Contextual Analysis of Psalms 107-118," Ph.D. dissertation (Deerfield: Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1996). Creach, Zenger, Howard and Goulder have examined Book IV: Jerome Creach, "The Shape of Book Four of the Psalter and the Shape of Second Isaiah," *JSOT* 80 (1998) 63-76. M. D. Goulder, "The Fourth Book of the Psalter," *Journal of Theological Studies* 26 (1975) 269-89. E. Zenger, "Israel und Kirche im gemeinsamen Gottesbund: Beobachtungen zum theologischen Programm des 4. Psalmenbuchs (Ps 90-106). M. Marcus, E. W. Stegemann, E. Zenger, eds. *Israel und Kirche heute: Beiträge zum christlich-jüdischen Dialog—Für Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich* (Freiburg: Herder, 1991), pp. 236-54. David M. Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93-100*. Biblical and Judaic Studies Vol. 5 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997). G. Wilson's *Editing*, his Yale dissertation, was one of the early ones that began this productive thread of research in 1985.

new insights into the message of Psalms as a book because of an analysis that takes seriously each psalm's relationship to its neighbors, and its function within the clearly marked five "books" (Bks I-V) that comprise the book of Psalms as a whole. A canonical reading will show Psalm 105's relationship to neighboring Psalms and its collectional function in Book IV. Beyond a psalmic canonical reading, an intertextual method will also be utilized to help in the exploration of Psalm 105:1-15 as it shares expression with 1 Chronicles 16; both of which may have drawn on a common oral/written original that pre-dated both texts.¹⁵

New methodologies provoke the reader to ask and answer new questions. What is the relation of Psalm 105 to its neighbors (Ps 104 and Ps 106)? How does Book IV answer the demise of the Davidic covenant raised at the end of Book III in Psalm 89, after facing the destruction of the temple, the defeat of the Davidic king and the humiliation of Mount Zion when its inhabitants were helplessly exiled to Babylon? How is Psalm 105:1-15's meaning shifted--which is a verbatim parallel of 1 Chronicles 16:8-22--when taken from that historical context and placed into the book of Psalms at the close of Book IV? What do the slight variations between 1 Chronicles 16 and Psalm 105 reveal about the direction the artistic bricoleur was going when he authored Psalm 105? How is the story told in historical narrative altered when the same events are recited in poetic form (Cf. Ex 14/15 [The Song of the Sea], Jdg 4/5 [The Song of Deborah]; 1 Sam 31/2 Sam 1 [David's eulogy for Saul])? How does the change of medium, from narrative to poetry, change the

¹⁵ Koptak, to the contrary, has 1 Chronicles 16 being based on Ps. 105. Koptak, "Intertextuality," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry and Writings*, ed. T. Longman and P. Enns (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008) pp. 325-26.

message? Why is Abraham brought in at this point in the psalter and how does he help respond to the lack of divine deliverance experienced as the Babylonians triumphed over Zion? If the sages who edited the Psalter paired psalms (9/10; 42/43; 105/106; 111/112) is it possible they paired proverbs as well (cf. Prv. 26:4, 5)?¹⁶ Though a complete exegesis of Psalm 105 is beyond the scope of this paper, these questions will provide direction for the exploration of this Psalm of Abraham and its role as the close to Book IV.

Intertextuality: Reading Psalm 90 as an Opener for Book IV

This present study explores two layers of meaning. It focuses on the types of understandings derived from an intertextual and canonically sensitive reading. These methodologies were used to examine the psalm line-by-line and word-by-word. A baseline usage of each word in Psalm 105 was set in comparison to its frequency of use in the whole book of Psalms. Each word was specifically examined to see whether it was found in neighboring psalms in order to discover whether proximity or juxtaposition were factors used by the editors in fitting adjacent canonical psalms together. The individual psalm was then analyzed in terms of its function in the larger collectional structure of Books I-V. Psalm 105's relationship with its parallel in 1 Chronicles 16 was also carefully scrutinized.

Tanner suggests the notion of bricolage--a collage of elements in an artistic creation--as a model for understanding the multifaceted mosaic of texts interacting with one another. Part of a text's meaning is produced via quotations, allusions

¹⁶Ted Hildebrandt, "Proverbial Pairs: Compositional Units in Proverbs 10-29," *JBL* 107 (1988) 207-24.

and text-to-text interaction.¹⁷ She cites five categories of text-to-text interaction: (1) intertextuality--the relationship of a text to imbedded texts, whether quoted or alluded to (bricolage); (2) paratextuality--the relation of the text to titles in a work (vid. Psalm titles); (3) metatextuality--the relationship of commentary to the text being elaborated (vid. this current study); (4) architextuality--the relationship of a text to texts of a similar literary type or genre (vid. historical psalms, laments, hymns, etc.); and (5) semiotextuality--the relation of a text to how the current reader actually comes to decipher its meaning.¹⁸ While Tanner calls this final type “hypertextuality” it is better to reserve that term for the digital, non-linear interaction of linked texts displayed on a screen as opposed to static text on a printed page.¹⁹

Tanner’s intertextual treatment of Psalm 90, the opening psalm in Book IV, of which Psalms 105 and 106 are a closing pair, illustrates the multiple meanings a poem may have as its echoes are heard in different historical contexts. She cites the following well-known poem by Walt Whitman.²⁰

O Captain! My Captain! Our fearful trip is done;
 The ship has weather’d every rack, the prize we sought is won,
 The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
 while follow eyes with steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
 But O Heart! Heart! Heart!
 O the bleeding drops of red, where on the deck
 My Captain lies fallen cold and dead.

¹⁷ Beth L. Tanner, *The Book of Psalms Through the Lens of Intertextuality* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001) pp. 6, 16.

¹⁸ Tanner, *Psalms Intertextuality*, p. 27.

¹⁹ Janet H. Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999); George P. Landow, *Hypertext 2.0: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); and Andrew Glassner, *Interactive: Techniques for 21st Century Fiction* (Natick, MA: A. K. Peters, 2004).

²⁰ Tanner, *Psalms Intertextuality*, p. 85

These vivid images describe the death of a sea captain who has weathered the turbulent seas yet lies slain on the bloodied deck of the boat that he had just guided safely into port. The poetic text of the death of a beloved captain takes on a new layer of meaning upon discovering that it was written in the historical context of the assassination of President Lincoln in 1865 at Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC just after the conclusion of the Civil War. Further nuance was added for this writer when he realized that Whitman had served under Lincoln as a nurse in that same bloody conflict. Like many poems that capture a moment in history, its image came to life once again when the boat deck was bloodied in the 1963 assassination of John F. Kennedy. Similarly, the biblical poems echo down through history. Thus Psalm 90 can be understood as a plumb, square and level description of the ephemerality of human life, which quickly passes and returns to dust. But it takes on "new" meaning when it is read intertextually with the Song of Moses, in Deuteronomy 32, as Moses considers his own imminent death. The meaning shifts once again when Psalm 90 is read in the context of the Babylonian exile.

Going one step further, a totally different perspective is gained by reading this same Psalm of Moses (Ps 90) canonically as the opening to Book IV and as a response to Psalm 89 which closes Book III. McCann and G. Wilson observe that Psalm 89 reflects the failure of the Davidic monarchy during the devastating time of the exile to Babylon in 587 BC.²¹ Psalm 90 fits well as an answer to the demise of the Davidic covenant in part by shifting the focus from Yahweh's refusal to help, to Israel's rebellion. Their unfaithfulness, not God's, was the source of the real problem

²¹ J. Clinton McCann, *The Book of Psalms*, The New Interpreter's Bible, vol. IV (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996) p. 1034.

(Ps 90:13).²² Thus Psalm 90 wrestles with the disorientation of exile by looking to Moses. It reconceptualizes the Babylonian exile in terms of a Mosaic framework--seeing the exile as a new “wilderness experience” where the chosen community becomes land-less, temple-less, ark-less, and monarchy-less.²³ In Psalm 90 those who have experienced the collapse of the Davidic covenant in the Babylonian exile turn back to Moses as their lives fade and they, in hope, embrace the Abrahamic covenant (Ps 105/106) with its promise of land and the multiplication of the chosen seed in spite of the humble beginnings of the patriarchs as land-less, temple-less sojourners.

Word	Freq in Pss	Books I-II	Book III	Book IV (only 17 chs)	Book V
Moses מֹשֶׁה	8x	—	77:21	90:1; 99:6; 103:7; 105:26; 106:16, 23, 32	—

Surely pure randomness does not account for the number of times that Moses is found in these Psalms. Of the eight times he is mentioned in the Psalter, seven are in Book IV, which opens with Psalm 90, uniquely titled “A prayer of Moses the man of God,” and closes with the pair of Psalms 105/106 that contain four references to Moses (Ps 105:26; 106:16, 23, 32). He is never referred to in Book V, which returns to an eschatological perspective of King David (Ps 110), a focus on the triumph of Zion (Pss 125-126, 128-129, 146-147, 149), and the Psalms of Ascent (Pss 120-134) that provide songs to be sung by festive pilgrims as they ascend the steep slopes of Mount Zion.

²²Wilson, *Editing*, p. 215.

²³Tanner, *Psalms Intertextuality*, p. 98.

History and Poetry: A Reflection on Psalm 105

The intertextual approach has opened a question of the relation of historical narrative to poetry. In what way does the poet refashion the data of the historical narrative when he crafts them into poetic expression? The following is not meant as an exhaustive detailing of how poetry and narrative interact but as an initial reflection of how a bricoleur poet reshaped historical events to create Psalm 105. The image is of the poet as a master craftsman (bricoleur) shaping and fitting fragments of colored glass into a beautiful stained glass window. The first technique used by the poet is **selection**. Out of all the events of the first Passover and the mighty acts of God as the Israelites left Egypt, the bricoleur of Psalm 105 selects for mention the Egyptian gifts of silver and gold (Ps 105:37; cf. Ex 11:2). The second technique observed is **compression** (cf. Ps 105:14). The Psalmist compresses three stories from Genesis into a single pair of poetic bicola by describing Sarah's/Rebekah's coming under possible harm from foreign kings as a result of Abraham's/Isaac's claiming that his wife was his sister (cf. Gn 12, 20, and 26).

He allowed no one to oppress them;
 for their sake he rebuked kings.
 Do not touch my anointed ones;
 do my prophets no harm. (Ps. 105:14)

A third poetic technique is **reordering** historical events to fit the poet's point. In Psalm 105 the poet cites the Egyptian plague of darkness first when actually it was ninth of the ten plagues listed in Exodus (cf. Ps 105:28; Ex 10). Perhaps, as Clifford suggests, the poet was contrasting the darkness of the first plague against Egypt with the first act for Israel in the desert as being to light the night, rather than following a

strict historical sequencing of events.²² The fourth transformational technique is **attribution**, where the poet attributes agency and motives that were not found in the original historical narration of events. Thus it was God who ordered the famine on Canaan that necessitated the patriarchal clan to seek refuge under the tutelage of Joseph in Egypt (Ps 105:16 cf. Gn 41:56). A fifth technique, **image enhancement**, may be seen in Psalm 105:18 where the description of Joseph's enslavement is enhanced by images of shackled feet and a yoke of iron although these were not present in the original account in Genesis (Gn 37:28). A sixth technique is **interpretive addition**, in which the poet adds his interpretation of the original event that was simply recorded in the historical narrative. For example, in Psalm 105 the patriarchs are understood as "anointed ones" and "prophets" (v. 15), whereas the term "anointed" [Messiah] is not present in the patriarchal narratives but is used later of kings and prophets--although in Genesis 20:7 Abraham is identified as a prophet by the Philistine king Abimelech. Further illustrations are found in Psalm 105:39 in the descriptions of the divine cloud as a *protective* covering and the fire as a *guiding* light in the night, in contrast to the Exodus account of the cloud as an instrument of *guidance* and the fire providing *protection* from the Egyptians. Seventh, there are times when the poetry **concatenates disparate events** into a new stream of meaning. In the closing verses of Psalm 105 (vv. 42-44) the Abrahamic covenant (Gn 12, 20) is juxtaposed with the exodus from Egypt (Exod. 15) and the conquest under Joshua

²² Goulder, "Fourth Book," pp. 288-89 opines that the psalmist is using a Genesis 1 model moving from the darkness to light connecting Ps 105:28 and verse 38. The connection with Genesis 1 is more suited to Ps 104 than Ps 105 however. Cf. Archie Lee, "Genesis 1 and the Plagues Tradition in Psalm CV," *VT* 11.3 (1990) p. 259. Clifford's suggestion seems more tenable given the context in Psalm 105. R. Clifford, "Style and Purpose in Psalm 105," *Biblica* 60 (1979) p. 426.

(Josh 1-8) to illustrate God's keeping his promise to Abraham. Finally, the poet may make a **perspective shift**. In the original narrative Moses' intercessory pleas result in God's provision of bread from heaven and water from the rock, whereas in Psalm 105:40-41 the context is shifted away from the people's rebellion and Moses' intercession to a simple, sovereign act by God in direct response to the people's request.

They asked and he brought them quail,
and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.
He opened the rock, and water gushed out; (Ps 105:40-41a)

Similarly, in the description of the plagues in Psalm 105:28-36, the perspective is strictly divine with none of the interaction between Moses and Pharaoh that is extensively detailed in the Exodus narrative (cf. Ex 7-12). These are some of the techniques employed by the poet to craft the historical material into poetic form in Psalm 105. All these poetic methods create a focus in this Psalm on the absolutely sovereign movements of God and give historical support to the major theme of Book IV: The LORD reigns.

Hearing Psalm 105 in an Intertextual Context

This historical psalm like other historical psalms (Ps. 78, 106, 135)--a rather infrequent type--selectively and creatively reflects on the history of Israel to support and declare its messages. Even Mowinckel, who emphasized the cultic nature of most psalms, allowed for the non-cultic nature of the historical psalms. The didactic flavoring of Psalm 105, reflecting a wisdom perspective (cf. Ps 105:22, 45), also leads away from a priestly/temple/feast setting to a more sage/instructional

*Sitz im leben.*²⁴ Ironically, 1 Chronicles 16:8-22 is paralleled verbatim in Psalm 105:1-15; yet the historical setting in Chronicles is clearly cultic as David, with great ceremony, ritual and innumerable sacrifices, brings the ark into the sacred tent he had raised for it in Jerusalem. This festival was overseen by the Levites and priests, particularly Asaph, one of the Levitical choirmasters to whom David delivered this psalm. In Chronicles, the narrative's purpose was to lead the people in worship in the presence of the long-awaited and newly-installed ark at Jerusalem following its exile among the Philistines (cf. 1 Chr 15:17-19; 25-29). Thus this "historical" psalm reflects a cultic [ritual, ark, priests] origin as well as didactic wisdom crafting (Ps. 105:22, 45).

Psalms 105:1-6: Summons to Praise

Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known among the nations what he has done (Ps 105:1)	Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known among the nations what he has done (1 Chr 16:8)
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The Psalm begins with a hymnic "summons to praise (Ps 105:1-6)"²⁵ using imperative verb forms to exhort worshippers to sing praise to the LORD, to declare his mighty acts and to seek his presence (בָּקֵשׁ [seek, 3b]/דַּרְשׁ [seek, 4a]/בָּקֵשׁ [seek 4b]). The repeated plural verb forms indicate that this call to worship is directed to the whole community rather than to a lone individual. The delayed explicit reference to the addressees in verse 6 clearly identifies them as the descendants of Abraham and

²⁴ Clifford, "Style and Purpose in Psalm 105," *Biblica* 60 (1979) p. 420; cf. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* vol. 2 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962) pp. 111-12.

²⁵ Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150*. Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word Books, 1985) p. 40.

Jacob and focuses attention, in the first five verses, on the praise of the LORD (cf. Ps. 104:1, 35; Ps. 105:1(LXX), 45; Ps. 106:48—each adjacent Psalm of this triad begins and ends with a “hallelujah”). The audience before whom the declaration of Yahweh’s mighty deeds is to be made is “the peoples” (Ps 105:1). The repetition of the word “peoples” six times in this psalm emphasizes its importance as a key word. The shift in the LXX from ἐν λαοῖς (“among the people,” i.e. Israel) in the verbatim parallel text of 1 Chronicles 16:8 to ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (“among the nations”) supports the idea that the audience is foreign “peoples” (cf. Ps 105:1, 13, 20). This contrasts with the nationalistic use of “people” in the later section of this psalm as “his people” (Ps 105:24, 25, 43).

The object of what is to be declared among the peoples provides an inclusio for this section, which begins with making known his deeds (v. 1) and wonderful acts (v. 2) and closes with the piling up of “wondrous works,” “his miracles” and “judgments” (v. 5). The phonetic aesthetics of the repeated “rû+lo” (v. 2a/b) and concluding pronominal “tav” sounds that end both verses 1 and 2 draw focus to “*his* deeds” (v. 1) and “*his* wonderful acts” (v. 2). The recital and remembering of the LORD’s “wondrous works” manifest the theme of the incomparability of God’s kingship, as demonstrated by His mighty acts of deliverance in history and their relevance to the present crisis of the exile. This reinforces the major theme of Book IV which revolves around the Yahweh Malak [the LORD reigns] psalms (Ps. 93, 96, 97, 99). Verse 6 is a janus, or literary hinge, looking back to identify those called to worship in verses 1-5 and looking forward to the next section of God’s promises in the Abrahamic covenant confirmed to Jacob in verses 7-11.

O descendants of <i>Abraham</i> his servant, O sons of Jacob, his chosen ones. (Ps 105:6)	O descendants of <i>Israel</i> his servant, O sons of Jacob, his chosen ones. (1 Chron. 16:13)
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The intertextual comparison of Psalm 105 with Psalm 89 and 1 Chronicles 16 yields two insights. First, the variation between the texts of Psalm 105 and 1 Chronicles 16 aids the hinge function of verse 6 by facilitating its link with verse 9. The parallel passage in 1 Chronicles 16:13 says, “O descendants of *Israel* his servant.” The bricoleur of Psalm 105 craftily substitutes “O descendants of *Abraham* his servant” (v. 6). The shift to “Abraham” away from “Israel” enhances the janus by looking forward to the next section (Ps 105:9) where the covenant with Abraham becomes dominant.

Second, it is of great significance that the term “chosen” (v. 6) is plural, thereby identifying the descendants of Jacob as “chosen ones.” The noun “chosen” occurs just five times in the Psalms, two of which are in an inclusio opening Psalm 105 in verse 6 and closing it in verse 43. The rarity of this term and the proximity of fourth and fifth usages in Psalm 106:5 (“chosen ones”) and Psalm 106:23

Word	Freq. in Pss	Book III		Book IV	
		Ps 89	Ps 78	Ps 105	Ps 106
chosen בָּחַר	5x	v. 3 =David	v. 70 [verb] =David	vv. 6, 43 =nation	vv. 5, 23 =nation, Moses
servant עַבַד	57x	vv. 3, 20, 39=David	v. 70 = David	vv. 6, 42 =Abraham, 26= Moses	v. 36 they served idols [verb]

(Moses, chosen one) clearly show that Psalms 105 and 106 join together as a pair.

The only other place this noun appears in Psalms is in Psalm 89:4, with reference to

David who is labeled God's "chosen one" and His "servant." These are the exact designations that Psalm 105:6 applies to the descendants of Abraham and Jacob. G. Wilson claims that, in closing Book III, Psalm 89 references the Davidic covenant as failed and laments how long the Lord will be in restoring the benefits of the Davidic monarchy.²⁶ Psalm 105, concluding Book IV, responds by projecting these very special Davidic terms (chosen, servant) back onto the descendants (plural) of patriarchs Abraham and Jacob. It is a return to Abraham that will allow the exilic community to move beyond the collapse of the Davidic monarchy and reunite in their position as chosen descendants of father Abraham. This insight comes only as a result of a canonical reading of Psalm 105 as the conclusion of Book IV, and intertextually against the backdrop of Psalm 89 as the conclusion of Book III. This outlook is confirmed by an intertextual comparison with Psalm 78, which is another psalm of historical genre at the center of Book III that in many ways parallels Psalm 105 in Book IV. Psalm 78 states, "He chose [verb form] David his servant" (v. 70). Here again parallel terms are used to identify David as the chosen servant, in contrast to Psalm 105 which extends the "chosenness" to the people and the exceptional servanthood to Abraham, thus moving away from the exclusive identification with David found in Book III.

Psalm 105:7-11: God's Confirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant

In Psalm 105:7-11 God is the subject of every verb as he remembers/confirms

²⁶Wilson, *Editing*, pp. 213-14.

his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob concerning the promised land.²⁷ This change of subject from the second person direct address “you” (vv. 1-6) to God as the subject in verses 7-11 was overlooked by the NIV translators who put the strophic division after Psalm 105:7 rather than correctly inserting it after verse 6.

Phrase	Freq. in Pss	Book I	Book II & Book III	Book IV	Book V
LORD our God יהוה אל הינו	10x	20:8	—	94:23; 99:5, 8, 9; 105:7; 106:47	122:9 123:2

Seven out of the ten times that the title “the LORD our God” is used in the Psalms are in Book IV. This phrase links Psalm 105:7 with its neighbor Psalm 106:47, which itself echoes back to 105:1-3 through its references to giving “thanks”, his “holy name”, “glory” and “praise.” There is a significant shift, however, from an imperatival command to praise that opens Psalm 105 to the petition from those scattered “among the nations” for regathering that closes Psalm 106.

Word	Freq. in Pss	Book I (41 chs.)	Book II (31 chs.)	Book III (17 chs.)	Book IV (17 chs.)	Book V (44 chs.)
land/earth הארץ	60x	9x .2 per ch	18x .6 per ch	4x .2 per ch	24x 1.4 per ch	5x .1 per ch
land/earth ארץ	190x	31x .76 per ch	43x 1.4 per ch	31x 1.8 per ch	44x 2.6 per ch	41x .9 per ch

This strophe on the covenant provides the basis of the “wondrous works” that are seen worked out in the “historical” section of this psalm (12-45).²⁸ The land aspect of the Abrahamic covenant is highlighted by the repetition of the term “land” (אֶרֶץ) ten times in this psalm. Adjacent psalms also emphasize this word with seven

²⁷ McCann, *Psalms*, p. 1105.

²⁸ McCann, *Psalms*, p. 1105.

usages in Psalm 104 and five in Psalm 106, totalling 22 times in Psalms 104-106 in Book IV. The term “land” binds Psalms 104-106 together. Psalm 104 describes God’s universal reign over and care of the land in creation. Its promise in the Abrahamic covenant is developed in Psalm 105, its pollution by those rebelling against the covenant of the LORD, and its removal as a result of divine judgment are underscored in Psalm 106. Though the LORD had promised this specific “land” to the patriarchs, yet his sovereign rule extends universally well beyond it to “all the earth” (Ps 105:7), which will be the point of much of what follows in the patriarch’s experience as sojourners in Canaan, Joseph’s descent into Egypt and Israel’s later deliverance from Egypt.

He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded, for a thousand generations. (ESV) (Ps 105:8)	[You] Remember his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations (MT, ESV) (1 Chron. 16:15)
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An interesting divergence occurs between the Masoretic text of 1 Chronicles 16:15, which reads “**You** remember his covenant,” and Psalm 105, which reads “**He [God]** remembers his covenant forever.”²⁹ Psalm 105 features God’s actions and commitments as the sole sovereign who reigns and who protects his people without dependence on human response. Howard’s canonical analysis has suggested that “The LORD Reigns” or YHWH Malak Psalms (יהוה מלך), which dominate Book IV (vid. Pss 93:1; 96:10, 97:1, 99:1), are fleshed out historically in the closing pair of this book (Ps. 105/106).³⁰ A similar historical perspective is taken in Psalms 135 and

²⁹ Some LXX manuscripts have “He remembers” in 1 Chron. 16:15, which is also followed by the NIV, RSV contra NRS, NJB, ESV, NET, NASB.

³⁰Howard, *Psalms 93-100*, p. 182.

136 with an exclusive focus on God's steadfast love (טֹהַר). This hymnic praise stance contrasts with the negative historical outlook of Psalms 106 and 78 that expose Israel's rebellion and covenant violation as reasons for the disasters experienced by Israel. Thus "he remembers" (Ps 105:8) the covenant and Israel too should "remember" so that it may go well with them (Ps 106:13; 1 Chr 16:12=Ps 105:5). The focus of Psalm 105, however, is on God's acts--not on Israel's rebellious response.

Word	Freq. in Pss	Ps 89	Ps 78	Ps 105	Ps 106
covenant בְּרִית	21x	vv. 4, 29, 35, 40 David	vv. 10, 37 unfaithfulness	vv. 8, 10 Abraham	v. 45 deliverance

The "covenant" (בְּרִית; 21 times in Psalms) plays a major role in the conclusion of Book III (Ps 89:4, 29, 35, 40--the only Psalm using the term 4 times) as well as in the conclusion of Book IV (Ps 105:8, 10; 106:45). There is an important shift between Books III and IV, however, in the use of this term. In Book III (Ps 89) the initial three references are to God's making his covenant with his "chosen" "servant" David (Ps 89:3) and his stated commitment to keeping it, saying "my covenant with him [David] will never fail . . . I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered" (Ps. 89:28, 34). Nonetheless these early promissory statements about the Davidic covenant give way to the psalmist's later grappling with the devastation of the exile voiced in the concluding covenantal lament: "You have renounced the covenant with your servant [David] and have defiled his crown in the dust" (Ps 89:39-46). It is suggested that it is to this accusation of the failure of the Davidic covenant at the end of Book III that the editors of the book of Psalms are

responding to in the conclusion of Book IV. They return, with hope, to the Abrahamic covenant (Ps 105). In Psalm 106, the poet cites covenantal violation as the reason for the exile and the covenant's eternity provides the basis for the petition for Israel's regathering (Ps 106:47). In the heart of Book III, Psalm 78 (vv. 10, 37) also uses the term "covenant" in the context of Israel's unfaithfulness and covenant violation thereby providing a basis for divine judgment.

To moderate this stark contrast of covenants, Howard correctly suggests that the major motif of Psalms is "Yahweh reigns" and that "this theme manifests itself in the dual expression of YHWH's divine kingship and the mediation through the human Davidic kings, both of which find their earthly expression at Zion."³¹ Nonetheless, Book IV seems to focus on the divine kingship side whereas Book V returns to the Davidic king (Ps 110) and Zion.

The "cutting" (כָּרַת) or making/solemnizing of a covenant verbally links back to Genesis 15:18, where the original Abrahamic covenant was "cut," and to Genesis 26:3, where the covenant concerning inheriting the land was reiterated to Isaac. Seeking to make sense of the exile, the psalmist returns to the sure, "forever" foundation of the covenant made with Abraham that promised the land as the gathering place of the community. It is ironic that the word "forever" (עוֹלָם) is found most frequently in Psalm 89 (7 times) in reference to the eternity of the Davidic covenant. God's commitment to the Davidic covenant was called into question by the author of Psalm 89 after the devastation of the exile (Ps 89:49).

³¹ Howard, *Psalms 93-100*, p. 207. Cf. James Mays, *The Lord Reigns: A Theological Handbook to the Psalms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994).

There will be a new appeal to another “forever” covenant at the end of Book IV (Ps 105:8, 10; cf. Ps 106:1, 31, 48 [bis]).

Word	Freq in Pss	Ps 105	Ps 106	Ps 135
Canaan כְּנָעַן	3x	v. 11 promised land	v. 38 idols of	v. 11 kings of

In Psalm 105:11 the Psalmist ends this strophe (Ps 105:7-11) by citing a conversation between God and Abraham from Genesis 17:8. The word “Canaan” occurs only three times in the book of Psalms; yet this very rare term is found in the adjacent Psalms 105 (v. 11) and 106 (v. 38; cf. Ps 135:11), thereby providing another lexical link bonding these two psalms into Book IV’s concluding pair. Note also that in the Genesis parallel the pronominal references are to “give to you and to your descendants . . . all the land of Canaan” (NASB). However, the initial singular “you” gives way in Psalm 105:11 to the plural “as your portion for an inheritance,” thus reflecting the pluralizing *tendenz* of this Psalm. This use of the plural personalizes and identifies the Psalmist’s present exilic audience with the statement in Genesis 17 concerning Abraham’s descendants’ future inheritance of the land. Allen is correct in suggesting that the shift from singular “you” Abraham to plural “you” descendants is well in keeping with the movement in this Psalm of the covenantal promises from Abraham to his descendants who are caught in an exile and scattered outside the promised land.³²

³² Allen, *Psalms*, p. 37.

Psalm 105:12-15: Patriarchal sojourners protected

Having reiterated the covenantal promise of the land, the Psalmist turns to the actual patriarchal experience in the land of promise. The poet focuses on three factors: the patriarchs were few in number when they first came into the land; they arrived after wandering from one nation to another; and they were protected by God from the kings who already occupied the land. Each of these themes would resonate with the exilic and post-exilic communities. Both strophes, Psalm 105:5-11 and 12-15, end with divine speech acts in which God directly addresses the patriarchs concerning the promise of the land in the former and the rulers of that land in order to protect the patriarchs in the latter (v. 11—promise; v. 15—protection).³³

The infrequent term “few in number” used in verse 12 is also found in the complaint of Jacob, in Genesis 34:30, describing his situation of conflict with the inhabitants of Shechem. Such sentiments could surely be shared by the post-exilic community who, being few in number as they returned, were facing opposition from Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem--the inhabitants of the land (Neh 4, 6). The undersized number is matched by their lack of status as “sojourners” (ESV) or “resident aliens” (NET) in the land of promise.

Verse 13 depicts the patriarchs’ sojourning in the promised land as wandering between nations (cf. Gn. 15:18-19). “Nation” (גוֹי) is used repeatedly in both Psalm 105 (vv. 13 [bis], 44) and 106 (vv. 5, 27, 35, 41, 47). In Psalm 106, “nations” is used as the cause seducing Israel into covenantal violation (v. 35), as an instrument

³³ Warren, “Modality, Reference, and Speech Acts in the Psalms,” Ph. D. dissertation (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998). Vid. also my website where this dissertation as well as those by Barry Davis and Gerald Shepherd are freely available (Google: Ted Hildebrandt).

through which judgment comes on Israel (v. 41) and as a place of scattering of an Israelite community longing to be regathered (vv. 27, 47). Psalm 105 reverses the use of the term “nations” by showing it instead as a place of divine protection (Ps 105:12-13) and the land as a gift fulfilling the Abrahamic covenant (Ps 105:44). The rare reference to “kingdoms” is paralleled with another historic Psalm’s explicit mention of this term as it relates to the Mosaic conquest of the transjordan kings Og and Sihon (Ps 135:11).

He allowed no one to <i>wrong</i> them; for their sake he rebuked kings. (LXX) Ps 105:14	He allowed no one to <i>oppress</i> them; for their sake he rebuked kings. (NIV/MT) 1 Chr 16:21
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Verse 14 has two features of particular interest. First, while the Hebrew is exactly the same in Psalm 105:14 and 1 Chronicles 16:21, the Septuagint of Psalm 105:14 changes the infinitive “to oppress” (δυναστεύω; 1 Chr 16:21), which fits well with the Hebrew and the post-exilic perspective, to another infinitive “to wrong” (ἀδικέω; Ps 105:14), which is more descriptive of the Genesis wife-sister encounters with foreign kings (Gn 12:10-20; 20:3-17; and 26:7-11). Second, Book IV is permeated with the “Yahweh Malak” (LORD reigns) psalms, but in Psalm 105 all three usages of “king” (מֶלֶךְ; *melek*) are in reference to foreign kings (Ps 105:14, 20, 30). The Israelite forefathers are portrayed as resident aliens wandering about, while the hand of the divine king stays the power of each foreign king so that “no one oppressed” his servants. Such sheltering of the little band of sojourners clearly finds echoes in the hoped-for care of the post-exilic community under Ezra and Nehemiah as they faced antagonistic inhabitants of the land.

“Do not touch my anointed ones; and do my prophets no harm.” Ps 105:15	“Do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm.” 1 Chr 16:22
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Two pieces of evidence point to a solid connection of this present strophe (Ps 105:12-15) with the text of Genesis. First, it shares with the Genesis accounts the same divine protection of Sarah/Rebekah, using the verb “touch” in Psalm 105:15 as well as in all three wife/sister incidents in Genesis (Gn 17; 20:6, 11; 26:29). Second, while the use of the term “prophet” is rare in Psalms, Abraham is identified as a “prophet” (Ps 105:15b). Only Genesis 20:7 labels Abraham as a prophet in God’s rebuke of Abimilech in the same context as the wife/sister story alluded to in Psalm 105:14-15.

Word	Freq in Pss	Ps 89	Ps 105
anointed מָשִׁיחַ	10x	vv. 39, 52 (sg.) David, rejected?	v. 15 (pl.) Patriarchs, protected

Verse 15 uniquely labels the patriarchal sojourners as “anointed ones” (messiahs; מָשִׁיחַ, χριστῶν). Although one might expect the term “anointed one” (messiah) to be frequent in Psalms, it is used just ten times. Psalm 89 is the only Psalm that uses it twice (vv. 38, 51). In both instances the “anointed one” appears in the context of a lament over divine abandonment. So Psalm 89:38, closing Book III, complains:

But you have rejected, you have spurned,
you have been very angry with your *anointed one*.

The lament continues in verse 51:

The taunts with which your enemies have mocked, O LORD,
with which they have mocked every step of your *anointed one*.

Both bicola clearly identify the “anointed one” as David (cf. Ps 89:35, 49).

Psalm 2 contrasts the “kings of the earth” who take “their stand against the LORD and against his Anointed One” (Ps 2:2). Yet in both Psalms 2 and 89 the reference is to David or David’s divinely-installed successor (cf. also Ps 18:51). Psalm 105:15, however, transfers the “anointed one” away from David and applies it to the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac as “anointed ones.”

Two things are unique in the Psalm 105 statement: “Do not touch my anointed ones” (v. 15). First, Abraham is given the title “anointed one.” Kraus expresses his bewilderment that such a title would be used of the patriarch.³⁴ Anderson says, “It is unlikely that the Patriarchs were actually anointed with oil” and suggests that it is being used in a secondary sense simply as one called and equipped by God.³⁵ Allen provides a hint at the solution, which is confirmed by an intertextual analysis. He states, “The psalmist is transferring to the patriarchal period a term especially associated with the Davidic monarchy.”³⁶ The unique pluralizing of the form (“anointed ones”) also shifts this regal term away from David to a more democratized identity with God’s sojourning people as the “anointed ones” whom he protects from the hands of oppressive foreign kings.

The above becomes even more intriguing upon noting the very clear *tendenz* of the Chronicler to transform the narrative in favor of David and away from patriarchal or Mosaic history. This is clearly seen through a comparison of the great

³⁴ Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150, A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993) p. 311.

³⁵ A. A. Anderson, *Psalms*, vol. 2, *New Century Bible* (Greenwood, SC: The Attic Press, Inc., 1972) p. 729.

³⁶ Leslie Allen, *Psalms 101-150*. p. 38.

prayer of Solomon dedicating the temple as recorded in 2 Chronicles 6:41-42 and 1 Kings 8:50-53. In 1 Kings the Solomonic prayer of temple dedication ends with “just as you declared through *your servant Moses* when you, O Sovereign LORD, brought our fathers out of Egypt.” In 2 Chronicles 6 the same prayer concludes with “O LORD God, do not reject your anointed one. Remember the great love promised to David your servant.” There is no mention of Moses or the exodus. Dillard posits that the Chronicler has substituted an ending drawn from Psalm 132:8-10 in which the “anointed one” is palpably David.³⁷ Thus identifying the sojourning patriarchs as “anointed ones” in Psalm 105:15, with no mention of David, reinforces our thesis that Psalm 105 (Book IV) is answering the lament of the demise of the Davidic covenant (Book III; Ps. 89) by returning to the Abrahamic promise. The avoidance of any reference to the Davidic kingship, while utilizing Davidic terminology in a song the Chronicler cites as being given by David to Asaph to be sung at the installation of the ark in Jerusalem, demonstrates the unique Abrahamic perspective of this psalm in its use of patriarchal history to declare “The LORD reigns.”

Finally, it is with Psalm 105:15 that we find the parallel with 1 Chronicles 16:8-22 *adieu*. The first fifteen verses open Psalm 105 with a nearly verbatim replication of 1 Chronicles 16:8-22, and Psalm 106 closes with a doxology paralleled in this same song recorded in 1 Chronicles 16:35-36. Together these two psalms form a psalm-pair; an *inclusio* binds the beginning of Psalm 105 to the end of Psalm

³⁷ Raymond B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word Books, 1987) p. 51. Vid. Gerald Shepherd, “The Book of Psalms as the Book of Christ: A Christo-Canonical Approach to the Book of Psalms,” Ph. D. dissertation (Westminster Theological Seminary, 1995) p. 485.

106 via their parallel recorded in 1 Chronicles 16.

<p>Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise. Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting. Ps 106:47-48</p>	<p>Cry out, “Save us, O God our Saviour, gather us and deliver from the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise. Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting.” 1 Chr 16:35-36</p>
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This doxology closes Book IV (Ps 106:47-48) in the same manner that doxologies close the other four books of the Psalms (Bk I, 41:13; Bk II, 71:9; Bk III, 89:52, Bk V, 145-150). This shared relationship of the poem recorded in 1 Chronicles 16 with two psalms in the Psalter (Ps. 105/106) gives some insight into how psalms ripple through history into new contexts (Cf. “O Captain, My Captain” supra). The bricoleur poet crafted a poem that fit not only the installation of the ark at Jerusalem but also the story of the sojourning patriarchs and then resonated with the hopes of the exiles returning from Babylon. The editor’s use of an inclusio-bonded pair of psalms (105:1-15/106:47-48) to conclude Book IV is reminiscent of the inclusio-bonded pair used by the editor to open the Psalter (Ps. 1:1; 2:12).

Conclusion

This essay has examined the historical hymn Psalm 105:1-15 as a unique Psalm of Abraham. The question was asked: How does a poet craft historical events into poetry? From Psalm 105 it was observed that the poetic bricoleur used eight methods when working with historical data: 1) selection, 2) compression, 3) reordering, 4) attribution of agency and motives, 5) image enhancement, 6) interpretive addition, 7) concatenation of disparate events and 8) perspective shifts.

The intertextual and canonical methodologies helped raise several questions such as: Why are David, Zion and the temple, which predominate so much of the Psalter never mentioned; yet Moses and Abraham, who are rarely mentioned in the Psalms, are repeatedly featured in Psalm 90 that opens Book IV and the closing pair, Psalms 105/106 (Ps. 105:26; 106:16, 23, 32)? The question was only heightened by the fact that Psalm 105:1-15 is paralleled verbatim with 1 Chronicles 16:8-22, which is clearly set in the ceremony of David's installation of the ark in Jerusalem. Wilson and McCann have raised the following canonical question. How does Book IV answer the penetrating question raised by Psalm 89 at the end of Book III: "Where is your former great love, which in your faithfulness you swore to David?" The question posed by Psalm 89 lamenting the demise of the Davidic covenant is "solved" by a return to the land-focused Abrahamic covenant (Ps 105). Tanner's intertextual approach to Psalm 90, beginning Book IV, was employed to confirm that Psalm 105 closes Book IV with a patriarchal framework used by the Babylonian exiles to see a new sojourning of the chosen community who, like the patriarchs, were land-less, temple-less, ark-less and monarchy-less.³⁸

The lexical links and divergences between Psalm 105 and Psalm 89, Psalm 106, and 1 Chronicles 16 were explored, noting points of connection and divergence. For example, there is a significant shift in Psalm 105:6 to "Abraham" compared to 1 Chronicles 16:13, which has "Israel." This bonds the Psalm to the Abrahamic covenant and allows Psalm 105:6 to function as a janus tying the two initial strophes of Psalm 105 together.

³⁸ Tanner, *Intertextuality*, p. 21.

Psalm 105 is tied to both Psalms 89 and 106 by the use of the term “chosen,” which occurs only five times in the Psalms, all of which are in Books III and IV. In Psalm 89 it refers to the chosenness of David, while in Psalms 105/106 it refers to the nation and Moses. The great historical center of Book III, Psalm 78, uses the verb form to again refer to David. Similarly the term “servant” is used repeatedly in Psalm 89 (vv. 3, 20, 39) and Psalm 78:70 in reference to David, but Psalm 105 shifts this Davidic designation to Abraham and Moses, with no mention of David (Ps 105:6, 26, 42). The word “covenant,” used frequently in reference to the Davidic covenant in Psalm 89 (vv. 4, 29, 35, 40), is repeated in Book IV in Psalms 105 and 106, but here the reference is to the Abrahamic covenant of the promised land. “Canaan” is used only three times in the Psalter. It bonds Psalms 105 and 106 together as do the ten usages of the word “land” in Psalm 105 and five in Psalm 106. Psalm 104 also refers to the land seven times. Each of these three psalms, however, use the land for a different purpose; yet all use it to support the major theme of Book IV that “Yahweh reigns.” This triad of psalms (Pss 104-106) begin and end with “hallelujah.”

The term “king” is used all three times in Psalm 105 to refer to foreign kings. Yahweh is portrayed as the sole sovereign whose reign protects his people from these foreign kings. The word “anointed” (*messiah*) is pluralized, moving it away from its normal Davidic connection and applying it instead to the descendants of Abraham as a community of “anointed ones” (Ps 105:15). Thus the Psalmist employs these shifts in terminology to develop themes with which he binds together two sojourning communities, Abraham and the post-exilic returnees, separated by a millennia. Both protected from foreign kings by God’s sovereign hand. The exilic community would

find hope as they, like Abraham, sojourned and were in desperate need of God's protection from foreign inhabitants of the land. This expression resonated from the narratives of patriarchal history, through the Davidic installation of the ark (1 Chron. 16), and into the post-exilic community via the poetry of Psalm 105 even as Whitman's poem echoed from the sea Captain to Lincoln to Kennedy.

Dr. Marv Wilson has highlighted our father Abraham as a bridge once again between communities--only this time it is between the Jewish and Christian communities. Then, as now, Abraham provides sojourners with hope. Dr. Wilson, in selecting Abraham as the connecting conduit, has himself become a new "Abraham" who is fathering a generation of Christians with a greater sensitivity of shared history with our Jewish friends. He has shown how Christianity is rooted in the stock of Judaism.

Marv concludes his chapter on "Hebrew Thought" with quotes well suited to the historical Psalm 105's return to Abraham: "This is our foundation: to know the God of history, Israel's history (cf. Heb. 11)" and "to recite his magnalia (mighty works)"--an invitation also echoed in the opening of Psalm 105.³⁸ He finishes with ideas drawn from the deep well of Rabbi Abraham Heschel. "We are not alone. The future is secure. God is alive, at work, and in control." We join with Rabbi Heschel, Dr. Wilson and the Psalmist in proclaiming, "Yahweh reigns!" Hallelujah--praise the LORD (Ps. 105:1 (LXX), 45).*

³⁸ Marv Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) pp. 161-62.

*It has been a great privilege for this writer to have spent the last decade at Gordon College with Dr. Marv Wilson and his resilient wife Polly. What a legacy this father "Abraham" has left in my life, as well as the lives of his colleagues and many generations of students!

Thus there is a shift from Book III and David to Book IV and Intertextuality helped isolate the historical echoes that came into the psalm from narratives outside the book of Psalms (Genesis and Exodus). Finally, literary genre studies helped to identify comparisons and contrasts intertextually between Psalm 105 and other “historical” psalms which are rare in the Psalter (Ps 78, 106, 135).

Psalm 105:16-22: God sent Joseph from servant to savant

God continues to act on behalf of his chosen patriarchal prophets by sending Joseph to Egypt so that the famine in the land could be survived. In the second half of this strophe the king of Egypt send for Joseph and releases him from prison so that he can instruct the elders with wisdom.

The word “famine” in verse 16 clearly links to the Joseph story in Genesis (Gen. 41:27-57; 45:11; 47:13, 20) as the word is rare outside of that narrative. While “famine” is used only eight times in Psalms, three of them are in Psalm 107 (vv. 5, 6, 36) in reference to those who are hungry and delivered by God’s provision. There are often many links between the end of one book and the beginning of the next. Psalm 106:1, which concludes Book IV, begins with the identical call for thanksgiving found in Psalm 107:1, which opens Book V. The diminished supply of “bread” in verse 16 forces the sojourning patriarchs to leave the promised land. Later in verse 40 God himself will feed them the “bread of heaven” when he brings them back out of Egypt. Psalm 104 also refers to “bread” twice as gifts of a benevolent God

blessing humans with the products of the land (Ps. 104:14f). God's reign is manifest in movements of nature as well as in history.

Table sent

The word "sent" (Ps. 105:16) occurs 33 times in the Psalms with four being in this Psalm. Adjacent Psalms that also employ this word (Ps. 104, 106, 107). God "sends" Joseph to prepare Egypt for his people and in the next strophe he "sends" Moses and Aaron to bring the people out of Egypt. But God is not the only sovereign "sender." In verse 20 the king of Egypt "sends" and releases Joseph, demonstrating that God's plan is administered as easily through the human agency of a foreign king as it is through a famine in nature. Allen is correct in seeing the "selling" of Joseph as an echo of the original Genesis account (Gen. 37:28). He also notes Isaiah's use this term to warn the people about to be "sold" into exile (Isa. 50:1; 52:3; cf. Ps. 44:12)(Allen). Again there observing the historical parallels between the sojourning patriarchs and those in the exile. The name "Joseph" appears only here in the Psalms as a with reference to Joseph the person. The other three usages have the northern tribes Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's sons, in view (Ps. 77:16; 78:67; 80:2).

Ceresko is right pointing to the irony here in the double meaning of the term "servant" (עֲבָדָה). It is used as a servant of the LORD (vv. 6, 25-26, 42-43) and ironically here as it is through Joseph's being sold as a slave (עֲבָדָה) that he would prove to be the servant of God similar to Abraham and Moses (Ceresko, 34). This extends to v. 25 where God's servants are also the king of Egypt's servants and God will choose to free his servants from their human master by breaking the shackles of

their human masters. Such benevolent divine deliverance must have been savored by the exilic community seeing themselves in desperate need of a new “exodus”.

Verse 18 provides confirmation of the patriarch/exile historical echo by the reference to “iron” shackles--using later exilic terminology to describe Joseph’s captivity. The iron age began around the twelfth century B.C. and Joseph lived in the middle Bronze Age, at least five hundred years earlier. He would hardly have been shackled with a literal yoke of iron. However, in Jeremiah 28:14 God says that the Babylonians will enslave the nations with a “yoke of iron.” The poetic exilic image of iron is imported onto Joseph with the sense of its being unbreakable and inescapable. Thus Joseph’s enslavement is described in updated exilic terms, utilizing images that those of the Babylonian exile understood all too well. Even though bound with a yoke of iron, the word of the LORD still will unshackle his chosen ones.

Verse 19 refers to Joseph’s divine dreams showing the subservience of his brothers (Gen. 37:5-11). More germane to Joseph’s release were his interpretations of the dreams that predicted the fate of the imprisoned cupbearer and baker (Gen. 40:5-23) and, ultimately, of pharaoh’s dreams in which the seven year famine was prophesied (Gen. 41:15-32).

The king of Egypt “sends” and releases Joseph (Ps. 105:20). The word “set free” or, literally, “open” is used 22 times in the book of Psalms--twice in Psalm 105 (vv. 20, 41) and once in each of the adjacent Psalms (Ps. 104:28 and 106:17).

Table

More significant is the use of the term “possessions/property” in Psalm 105:21. This word is found twice in Psalms, with the other usage in the adjacent Psalm 104:21 where it is translated “creatures” (NLT, NRSV, NIV), although the NASB woodenly translates it “possessions.” Kraus perhaps is most on target by rendering the term in Psalm 104:21 “his creations.” The main point is that only these two neighbor Psalms 104/105 share this term. Though in the English it is difficult to observe, Ceresko sees a lexical chiasm in Psalm 105:18-22 binding this strophe together:

his neck (A:נַפְשׁוֹ: v. 18): ruler (B: v. 20);
 ruler (B': v. 21): at his pleasure (A':נַפְשׁוֹ: v. 22)

Verse 22 completes the story of Joseph’s connection to wisdom as he “instructs” and “teaches.” Several things should be noted in the close of this strophe. The wisdom terminology closing this strophe is also found somewhat oddly appended at the conclusion of the entire Psalm in verse 45. This may manifest the hand of a sage-editor who is fitting these psalms into the collection with the glue of wisdom vocabulary (vid. Ps. 1). The Joseph narrative in Genesis’ wisdom perspective has been well argued by von Rad (Von Rad in Crenshaw **FNT**) and the biblical text is not hesitant to recognize how much the Egyptians were known for and valued wisdom (חֲכָמִים) (1 Kgs. 4:30). Thus Joseph was sent, enslaved, freed and honored as an icon for a nation enslaved in Babylon but with hopes that they too might become instructors in a foreign land of the divine wisdom of which they too were caretakers.

Psalm 105:23-36 Moses and Aaron Sent to Egypt

Table: Egypt, Ham

After showing Joseph's being sent as a forerunner to Egypt, the Psalmist turns to the divine King's sending of Moses and Aaron to deliver his people from Egypt. The term "Egypt" (מִצְרַיִם), with its dual ending that perhaps retains the memory of the uniting of upper and lower Egypt, is used only 15 times in Psalms. It is frequently found in the historical Psalms, which utilize the exodus events as a paradigm of God's deliverance of his people (Ps. 78:43, 51; 135:8-9; 136:10). It is found twice in the psalm-pair Psalm 106 (vv. 7, 21). The parallel term "land of Ham" occurs just four times and only in historical psalms. It links the great historical Psalm 78 (v. 51) of Book III to this psalm-pair that concludes Book IV (Ps. 105:23, 27; 106:22).

It is out of vogue in a post-Kugel environment to mention "synonymous" parallelism, however, this verse beautifully illustrates parallelism, which is the hallmark of Hebrew poetry.

A:Subject:PrN	B:V:Loc	C:Object:PrN	[PrN=Proper Noun;
Then Israel	entered	Egypt;	Loc= locative;
Jacob	sojourned	in the land of Ham.	V=Verb
A':Subject:PrN	B':V:Loc	C':Object:PrN	

The parallel symmetry is just about perfect semantically and syntactically *between* the poetic lines. Yet there is also an *intra*-line paralleling of elements as Israel and Egypt are both taken as proper nouns of national entities and Jacob and Ham are both proper nouns referring to individuals. There is also, to give Kugel his due, a movement from entering Egypt to settling/sojourning that can be seen in the two paralleled verbs; this gives the second line its "what's more" character (Kugel: fnt). Ceresko is correct in seeing verse 23 as a janus hinging the Joseph and Egypt strophes together (Ceresko, 22; fnt).

Verse 24 opens this strophe with a reference to the increasing of the numbers of Israelites in Egypt, solving problem of being "few" introduced in verse 12 which began the third strophe. Thus the movement from the third strophe (Ps. 105:12-15), where the numerical insignificance of the patriarchal sojourners gives way to the

numerical explosion that begins the fifth strophe (Ps. 105:23-36), demonstrates how this psalm carefully follows the contours of the Abrahamic covenant promised and highlighted in the second strophe (Ps. 105:7-11). This lengthy strophe also lists the plagues of Egypt thereby recalling the wonderful works cited in the first strophe as the bases for praise (Ps. 105:1-6).

In verse 25 Yahweh's rule is shown to extend to the very hearts of Israel's foes. The sixfold use of the term "people" in this Psalm, often with the pronominal suffix, identifies them as "his" people. One of the major roles of the reign of the divine King in Psalms is to deliver/save "his people." The term "his servants" reminds us once again of the shift away from David as God's servant (Ps. 89:3, 20, 39) extending that designation to the chosen people in Psalm 105.

Table: Moses

In verse 26 the divine King sends again, only this time it is Moses and Aaron instead of Joseph and the purpose is to bring his people out of Egypt. The designation of Moses using the Davidic designation "his servant" as well as the use of Moses' name 7 out of 8 times in Book IV is unique in the Psalter. The names "Moses" and "Aaron" are found together only three times in Psalms, two of which are in this concluding psalm-pair (Ps. 105:26; 106:16; cf. Ps. 77:20). Somehow Aaron finds his way into Book V repeatedly (Ps. 115:10, 12; 118:3; 133:2; 135:19), whereas Moses is totally absent. The modifier "chosen one" found fourteen times in Psalms and used here of Aaron, also takes a special Davidic designation and shifts it away from David (Book III: Ps. 78:70; 89:19=David).

Table: signs/wonders amazing acts

By calling for the praise of God based on his wonderful acts, verse 27 harkens back to the hymnic opening in verse 5. The paired terms translated “signs/wonders” and “miracles/amazing acts” are rare appearing eight and five times, respectively, in Psalms. They are used almost exclusively in historical Psalms (Ps. 78:43, 135:9) which fact is reinforced by the reappearance of the cognomen “Ham” as it is also found exclusively in the historical psalms (Ps. 78, 105-106).

The Poetic Plagues of Egypt: Psalm 105:28-36

The plagues of Egypt are described in the remaining verses of this strophe (vv. 28-36). Susan Gillingham has done an extensive treatment isolating the exodus traditions found in Israelite psalmody. She has isolated many allusions which extend beyond the normal historical Psalms. She notes how often such “Exodus tradition” psalms come in pairs which is of significance to this study which finds those traditions in the Psalm 105/106 (Pss. 77/78; 80/81; 105/106; 135/136 and 114, Gillingham, 27 fnt). The parallels between the plagues sections of Psalm 105 and Psalm 78 will be strong and undeniably palpable, yet there are significant differences in how the plagues function in these two Psalms. First, Psalm 78 uses the plagues to highlight Israel’s rebellion and unfaithfulness, while Psalm 105 views them strictly from the perspective of Yahweh’s sovereign rule and protection of his people from the hand of a foreign king. There is no mention of Israelite unfaithfulness in Psalms 105. Second, Psalm 78 uses Israel’s rebellion as the basis for explaining why God “rejected the tents of Joseph,”--quite a contrast from how positively Joseph is

portrayed in both Psalm 105 and the Genesis narrative. Third, the placement of the plagues sequence is out of historical order in Psalm 78 where it follows the rebellion in the wilderness rather than preceding it. The poetic positioning of plagues there is used to feature the ungratefulness of the Israelites. Finally, in Psalm 78 Israel's rebellion becomes a reason why he chose Judah. Psalm 78 concludes with an exuberant affirmation of the Davidic monarchy with no mention of Moses or Aaron in contrast to Psalm 105:

Mount Zion, which he loved.
 He built his sanctuary like the heights...
 He chose David his servant ...
 [who] shepherded them with integrity of heart;
 with skillful hands he led them. (Ps. 78:68-72).

Psalm 78, at the core of Book III, is quite different from Psalm 105, which never mentions Zion, the temple, or David, yet repeatedly mentions Moses and frames the historical section with an Abrahamic inclusio. Once again the suggestion that Psalm 105 is answering the demise of Davidic monarchy lamented in Psalm 89 is corroborated. A Davidic downfall is something Psalm 78 seems to be totally unaware of.

In Psalm 105 the plagues commence with the plague of darkness; however in Exodus it is the ninth of ten plagues. Clifford may be correct in suggesting that darkness is used to bracket this section, which begins with divinely-sent darkness (v. 28) and ends with the guidance of a luminescent cloud of fire (Ps. 105:39; Clifford, 426). The key word "sent" is used to begin verse 28. There is a shift from the divine "sending" of Joseph (v. 17), Moses/Aaron (v. 26) and the plagues (28) to the

Egyptian king who “sent” and freed Joseph (v. 20) demonstrating that the divine king rules equally over both human history, foreign kings as well as over the nature.

Table: Rebel

The word employed for “rebel” is used only ten times in the Psalter with four of these usages in Psalm 78 (vv. 8, 17, 40, 56) and three in Ps. 106 (vv. 7, 33, 43) and once in both Psalm 107 (v. 11) and here in Psalm 105 (v. 28). Thus this word binds the 105/106 pair together and also shows a strong link to Ps. 78. Yet Psalm 105 totally distinguishes itself. Both Psalm 78 and 106 decry the *rebellion* of the Israelites that provides a basis for divine judgment. Psalm 105, however, uses this same word in the same exodus from Egypt context to show the clear loyalty and subservience of the Egyptian foreign king. The king of Egypt does not rebel against the word of the divine King. Thus providing Psalm 105 another basis for praise/thanksgiving as the exilic community understands that Yahweh is also king over the Babylonian king who will not *rebel* but merely do the LORD’s bidding. One should also note that in Psalm 105 the plagues are directed against a submissive foreign king with no reference to the plagues as a judgment on the gods of Egypt as found in the Exodus narrative (Exod. 12:12)

Verse 29 describes the turning of the river to blood which is paralleled in Psalm 78:44. The term for “frogs” is only found twice in the entire Psalms not surprisingly exclusively linking Psalm 78 (v. 45) with Psalm 105 (v. 31). The term “king” is used in the plague of frogs (v. 30) with no mention of any king in the corresponding passage in Psalm 78:45b. The reference to “king” in Psalm 105 is exclusively used for foreign kings under the sovereignty of the divine king with never

a single reference to any Israelite king. Verse 31 begins once again featuring the incomparable power of God's spoken word where he commands and things whether human or in nature respond (cf. Ps. 105:11, 12, 19b, 28b). The term for "locusts" in verse 31 creates a nexus with Psalm 105 and both of its canonical neighbors Ps. 104 (vv. 23, 34) and 106 (v. 35). The term "borders" is found only 5 times in the Psalter twice in Psalm 105 (v. 31, 33) where the idea is not simply "land" (NIV) but particular boundary, border-defined, territory. It may be that this term was selected in memory of the boundaries set for the plagues when Goshen, where the Israelites lived, was miraculously untouched by the plagues (Exod. 8:22; 9:26). This rare term is found in Psalm 78 (v. 54) and 104 (v. 9). What is of interest intertextually in Psalm 105:32 is the use of the term "fire". It is found three times in Psalm 78 but there it is used not as a means of deliverance for Israel as in Psalm 105 but as a kindling of God's anger against Israel (Ps 78:21, 63) as it is also used in Psalm 106 (v. 18) and nowhere else in the Psalter. It does, however, bond these three Psalms together but the actual usage clearly distinguishes Psalm 105 where it is used to focus on God's mighty acts whereas Psalms 78 and 106 use it to expose Israel's guilt and provide a basis for divine judgment. Once again in verse 33 there is a rare word in Psalms shared between Psalm 78 and 105 (vine; 78:47; 105:33) as well as the term for bordered-defined territory already described in verse 31. Verse 34 continues the pattern with the word for locusts being found only three times in the Psalter yet found in both Psalm 78 and 105 (Ps. 78:46; 105:34). In verse 35 there is a direct quote from Exodus 10:12 "And devoured all vegetation" (NRSV) which is exactly the same except the untranslated direction object marker (תָּ) is dropped which is

characteristic of Hebrew poetry. The term for “vegetation/grass” while only found 7 times almost exclusively in Book IV is found in both psalms adjacent to Psalm 105 (Ps. 104:14; 106:20). As God “struck” the vines in verse 33, in verse 36 the firstborn are “struck” down. An amazing confirmation is found in the use of the phrase “all the firstborn” which occurs only in the Psalter in Psalm 78:51 and 105:36 which would be expected but also in Psalm 89 where it refers God’s promise of the inviolability of King David

I will also appoint him [David] my firstborn,
the most exalted of the kings of the earth. (Ps 89:28)

This is exactly the point Psalm 89 will struggle with when it concludes with the accusatory lament that the inviolability of the Davidic monarchy had in fact been totally violated, crushed under the yoke of the Babylonian exile. Psalm 105 will answer not by returning to a “new” son of David (cf. Ps. 110; Book V) but rather will return to Abraham the chosen sojourning servant of the LORD (Ps. 105:42).

The following chart illustrates some of the connections and variations between the text of Exodus, Psalm 78 and 105. Psalm 106 does not treat the plagues but picks up where Psalm 105 leaves off, focusing on the wilderness trek recorded in Numbers. Notice the shift in order in Psalm 105 where the darkness is first and the order of the gnats and flies is reversed. There are also several order reversals in Psalm 78 as well.

Plagues	Exodus	Psalm 78	Psalm 105	Other Psalms
1. Nile to Blood	1: 7:14ff	1: 78:44	2: 105:29	
2. Frogs	2: 8:1ff	3: 78:45b	3: 105:30	

3. Gnats	3: 8:16ff		5: 105:31b	
4. Flies	4: 8:20ff	2: 78:45a	4: 105:31a	
5. Livestock	5: 9:1ff	6: 78:48		
6. Boils	6: 9:8ff			
7. Hail	7: 9:13ff	5: 78:47	6: 105:32f	
8. Locusts	8: 10:1ff	4: 78:46	7: 105:34	
9. Darkness	9: 10:21ff		1: 105:28	
10. Firstborn	10: 11:1ff	7: 78:51	8: 105:36	1: 136:10

Ps. 105:37-41 God's Exodus and Wilderness Provisions

This strophe opens with God's bringing Israel out of Egypt with even the Egyptians happy at their departing. It features God's protection, guidance and provision as Israel transitions from their enslavement in Egypt to the place of dependence and divine provision in the wilderness. What events from the full featured description of the Exodus will the Psalmist select? As with Joseph's "iron" yoke in verse 18, he returns to the mention of metals (silver and gold, Ps 105:37) which, while paralleled in Exodus 11:2, is hardly the most salient event of that narrative. The point here seems to be that as they left they left with prosperous bounty--a hope which would resonant deeply with the exilic community. Rather than Israel "stumbling" (v. 37) it is the Egyptians upon whom the dread of Israel "falls." The explicit mention of "Egypt" used only 15 times in the Psalter, is found multiple times in Psalm 105 (vv, 23, 38), to 106 (vv. 7, 21), 78 (vv. 12, 43, 51) and in the other

historical Psalm 135 (vv. 8, 9, 10) as well, although seldom elsewhere. Verse 39 continues the close connection with Psalm 78 with multiple word parallels: cloud (only 4 times in Pss), fire, light and night (Ps. 78:14). Both psalms draw on the cloud narrative from the Exodus account (Exod 13:21f; 14:19ff).

Table: Cloud

As Psalm 105 moves to the wilderness events the request for food the parallel and contrast with Psalm 78 reinforcing what has been seen before. In Ps. 105 they simply “ask” and God benevolently responds with quail, “bread from heaven” and water from a rock. There is no mention of Moses interceding, no bitter complaining, and no testing of God (Meribah; Exod. 16-17). Yet Psalm 78:18 features this same word “asking” but the context is one which focuses, not on divine benevolence, but on an Israelite demand testing God. Same words, same historical event yet totally divergent themes are developed—divine provision versus Israel’s rebellion.

Table: Flowing rock

Verse 41 closes this strophe with the water flowing from the rock incident. Psalm 78 references this rock/water connection twice (vv. 16, 20). The term for flowing or “gushing out” (NIV) is found only twice in the whole Psalter uniquely in Psalm 105 and Psalm 78 (v. 20). “Flowing” in the Pentateuch is used almost exclusively in the stock phrase “land flowing with milk and honey” and never in reference to the “flowing” of the water from the struck rock in Exodus 17 or Numbers 20 (cf. Ps 114:8). Thus the literary linking of Psalm 78 and 105 without pentateuchal parallel. While the history and vocabulary used are so similar in the two Psalms yet the thematic direction could not be more divergent. Psalm 78 focusing on the rebellion of the Israelites and the divine selection of his chosen servant David, contrasts with Psalm 105 with never a mention of Israel’s rebellion but only God’s

sovereign guidance, provisions and protection of his people. Truly the LORD reigns in the historical events described in Psalm 105.

Psalm 105:41-45: Remembering Our Father Abraham

The last strophe of this Psalm provides an inclusio bracketing back to how the poem began (cf. Ps. 105:8, 41). The LORD “remembers” his holy promise to his servant Abraham. Here the term “servant” is once again applied to Abraham (cf. v. 6). The use of this term is found repeatedly in reference to David in Psalms 78 and 89 in Book III (vv. 4, 21; 78:68, 70) is here attributed to Abraham (Ps 105:6, 42) and Moses (v. 26) with no mention of David. The exodus of old was not based on the David covenant promising a new ruler but rather an Abrahamic covenant promising a land, the multiplication of a seed and a blessing to all nations. It is this Abrahamic covenant that was the divine impetus for bringing Israel out of Egypt and it echoes down the restoring the hope of exiles regathering in the land. God remembers of his covenant with this servant sojourner Abraham and chosen one Moses that brings deliverance at the end of Book IV of the Psalter answering the demise of the Davidic monarchy lamented at the conclusion of Book III (Ps 89:38ff).

Verse 43b returns to the identification of the chosen ones (plural) harkening back to verse 6 and its parallel in 1 Chronicles 16:13 again shifting this term of specialness away from David (Ps 89:3) and disseminating its specialness to the whole nation. This term “chosen,” is used only 5 times in the Psalter, has dual usages both in Psalm 105 (6, 43) and its paired-psalm 106 (5, 23) and also only elsewhere in Psalm 89 (v. 3) thereby linking the conclusion of Book III with the conclusion in Book IV. Further the parallel between Psalm 105 and its paired-Psalm 106 should

not be missed in the term “shouts of joy” which is used only 15 times in Psalms, and uniquely coupled with the “covenant” (Ps. 106:44-45) in these two sister psalms. The use of these shared terms, however, is for totally divergent purposes. In Psalm 105, it is a cry of joy as God has remembered his covenant and brought his people back into the promised land (exodus). Yet in Psalm 106 it provides a basis for the cry for regathering, “Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from the nations” (Ps 106:47). Psalm 105 stays with the historical perspective concluding with praise based on the LORD’s reigning and returning his people to the land with no cry for present deliverance. While many have noted abrupt movement from lament to praise found in the laments in the early chapters of Psalms (vid. Ps. 13), yet few have noted some hymns of praise which conclude with an abrupt lament or cry for deliverance (Ps. 106, 89).

Table: Statutes

Psalm 105 concludes with a wisdom observation utilizing terms “statutes” which is found 31 times in the book of Psalms with 21 of those usages in the massive torah poem Psalm 119. Similarly, the term “laws” (torah) which also is found 36 times in the Psalter also has 25 usages found in Psalm 119 acrostic. One should not overlook the 3 times it is used in Psalm 78 and especially twice in the wisdom Psalm which opens the whole Psalter (Psalm 1:2). This jump to a wisdom conclusion was also noted in the conclusion of the Joseph strophe (Ps 105:22). Furthermore the verb “keep” while being found overwhelming in Psalm 119 also links Psalm 105 (v. 45) to Psalm 78 (v. 7).

Table: colophon

The Psalm concludes with a hallelujah colophon calling for the praise of Yahweh. Davis, after examining the initial section of Book V, has demonstrated the difference between the rubric “praise the LORD” which opens a psalm (הַלְלוּ יְהוָה; cf. Ps. 111-113) and the closing colophon “praise the LORD” (הַלְלוּ יְהוָה; cf. Ps. 115-117) which here concludes Psalms 104, 105, and 106 drawing them into a triad which brings Book IV to a close (Davis, 315, 328, *passim*).

Conclusion

Psalm 105 is truly a unique Psalm being the only one to mention our father Abraham (Ps. 105:6, 9, cf. 47:10). While most of the Psalms feature David and the hope of a Davidic descendant as the one who will deliver his people (Pss. 2, 110), it is Psalm 105 that puts Joseph, Moses, and especially, Abraham front and center as chosen servants of the LORD with never of mention of King David. This paper confirms the observations of G. Wilson and McCann that Book III ends with the tragic lament of the demise of the Davidic monarchy (Ps. 89) to which Book IV responds that “Yahweh reigns” (Ps. 93-99) and that he will restore the exiled Israelite community to the land based God’s remembering of the covenant he had with his chosen servant Abraham (Ps. 105).

An intertextual methodology was used which sought to read between texts using a methodology which looked at the use of specific shared lexemes between other texts and Psalm 105. It specifically highlights shared rare words in the Psalter as confirming the relationship. This methodology resulted in a reading which connected Psalm 105 to other historical psalms like Psalm 78 and especially its paired

neighbor Psalm 106. Psalm 105 begins with a text parallel to 1 Chronicles 16 and Psalm 106 ends with a text paralleled in that same passage. It also revealed lexical connections with Psalm 89. The links with the historical narrative texts of Genesis/Exodus were tersely identified although the specific verbatim parallels in 1 Chronicles 16:8-22 were explored in more detail. What was fascinating was the divergent way in which exact lexical parallels and even shared references to the same historical events (vid. Ps. 78) were used to support totally different matrix of themes. Psalm 105 focuses exclusively on God's role in providing and protecting his chosen servants while Psalm 78 and 106 using the same events and often words uses them to expose Israel's unfaithfulness to God as a rationale for divine judgment. It revealed that while both Psalm 78 and 89 moved to a Davidic conclusion, Psalm 105 specifically avoided it and returned to God's covenant with Abraham and its promise of the land. The later exiles found in Abraham a parallel of one who wandered from country to country yet was protected from foreign kings by the word of the LORD. God's remembering his covenant with Abraham, doing wonderful works delivering his servants in the Egyptian plagues and guidance of his community of chosen ones (Messiah's) into the promised land all produced hope for the later exiles. Thus the historical deliverance from Egypt is echoed into hoped for regathering and return to the land in this poem especially when linked to the close of Psalm 106.

The concluding colophon "Praise the Lord" canonically links these adjacent psalms together in a common theme. Psalm 104 features the basis of praise as God's mighty acts in creation, Psalm 105 finds it in God's sovereign rule over foreign kings through the hands of his chosen servants Abraham, Joseph, Moses and Aaron and

Psalm 106 demonstrates that even in the face of Israel's rebellion, God remembers his covenant and can be called on for deliverance. Psalm 105 wove together a bricolage of historical events from the patriarchs through the plagues of Egypt in Genesis and Exodus historical accounts. Psalm 106 picked up from the Exodus focusing on the rebellion in the wilderness accounts in Numbers.

The Psalmist recognizes that it is this chosen servant and sojourner, Abraham, whose relationship with Yahweh that led to his delivering his chosen community from the shackles of Egypt which echoed hope into the hearts of those later scattered as they shuffled from one country to another. It is this same Abraham to whom God promised the land once again bond two historical separated communities ancient Israel and contemporary Judaism providing them with a tenacious hope and resilient connection to the land.