

ESCHATOLOGICAL EXPECTATIONS IN THE PSALTER: A STUDY OF PS 145

by  
A. K. Lama  
B.VSc. & A. H., R. A. Univ., Pusa, 1984  
M.Div, A. I. T, Bangalore, 1997  
D. Min, Samford Univ. Birmingham, 1992  
(Box D560)

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*Dr. Willem A. VanGemenen*  
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## Introduction

Ever since Mowinckel's proposal "YHWH has become king,"<sup>1</sup> the debates on eschatological expectations in the Psalter have revolved around the usage of the two words "messiah" and "king." Some scholars contend that the "royal psalms" not merely represent the nostalgia or the witness of the glorious past but "also as beacons to give direction to the hopes and expectations of a new king."<sup>2</sup> Others, such as Norman Whybray<sup>3</sup> and M. A. Vincent,<sup>4</sup> are not enthusiastic about the eschatological interest in the Psalter. Vincent writes, "One *can* read the Psalter eschatologically, even to the extent of finding an eschatological 'programme' within it; but the final editors' organizational scheme is a far cry from *making* one or even *encouraging* one to read the Psalter in that way."<sup>5</sup> Still others differ and join Geerhardus Vos, who asserts that it is "in the Psalter that the term Messiah enters into the eschatological vocabulary. This nomenclature of messianism does not have its seat in the

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S. Mowinckel, *Psalmstudien* Vol. 2 (Oslo: Kristiana, 1921), 6.

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Walter refers to Clements, 1996:58; Broyles, 1997:24; Greidanus, 1999:222-223. See Walter Rose, "Messianic Expectations in the Old Testament," *In die Skrifling* 35(2) (2001): 284.

3

Norman Whybray, *Reading the Psalter as a Book* (JSOTSup 222. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 88-99.

4

M. A. Vincent, "The Shape of the Psalter: An Eschatological Dimension?" *New Heaven and New Earth Prophecy and the Millennium Essay in Honor of Anthony Gelston* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 62.

5

*Ibid.*, 79.

prophets. The term Messiah, i.e. ‘the Anointed,’ is specifically proper to the Psalter.”<sup>6</sup> The eschatological issues in the Psalter are not only about the extant of the eschatological king but also the identity of king and the domain of his kingdom—Who is this king? What is the nature of his kingdom? How is the kingdom connected to eschatology? Who are the subjects of his kingdom? Is there any ethnic particularity?

On the one hand, some scholars from classical Dispensationalism, who seek the literal fulfillment of the OT promises, claim that the term “kingdom is synonymous to Millennium.”<sup>7</sup> Israel and the Church are antithetically distinct to the extent that “the Davidic kingdom is the millennial kingdom” to be realized in the future. Therefore “there is no promised kingdom on earth in this age.”<sup>8</sup> They vehemently argue against the “already” aspect of the kingdom. For example, concerning the proclamation of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, Stanley D. Toussaint writes, “It is best to conclude that the kingdom was not

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Geerhardus Vos also points out that the eschatological character of the Psalter is evidenced not only in the kingship language but also in other expressions, such as: (1) references to a new song (Pss 33:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1), new things, new creation, or new name (cf. also Isa 42:9-10; 62:2; 65:17; 66:22; Rev 2:17; 21:5). These conceptions are all connected with the fulfillment of God’s plan; (2) reference to “set time” (cf. Ps 75:2-[75:3, RV]; 102:14—[102:13]; and Hab.2: 3); (3) a definite fixed program and the implication that there is a plan organically linking the previous works of God with the present and future, eschatological events (Ps. 77:10ff; 138:8—“perfect that which concerneth me”; for not the work of thine own hand”); (4) reference to judgment being “written” (cf. Ps. 149:9) “Morning” in Psalms 46:5; 49:14; 130:6 (cf. 59:16; 112:4; 118:27; 143:8; Hos 6:3; Isa 17:14; 21:11-12) suggested the break (dawn) of the great day of Jehovah. See Geerhardus Vos, *The Eschatology of the Old Testament* (ed. James T. Dennison, Jr.; Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2001), 131, 140.

<sup>7</sup> Stanley D. Toussaint, “Israel and the Church of Traditional Dispensationalist,” *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism: A Comparison of Traditional and Progressive Views* (ed. Herbert W. Bateman IV; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999), 247.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

proclaimed as being present by John the Baptist, the Lord, the Twelve, or the seventy, but only as being in a condition of nearness.”<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, some scholars oppose such a belief. Some postulate the replacement of Davidic kingship.<sup>10</sup> Others see the kingdom fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who represents the Davidic line, and therefore abrogates the expectation of Davidic kingship.<sup>11</sup> Others see the transition as simply transferring messianic hope from an individual Davidic king to the congregation of Israel. Still others, like Vos, purports the enlargement of the house of David in its role as “Messiah’ but not the rejection of the covenant with David (Is 55:3).<sup>12</sup> The contentious nature of these discussions underpins the importance of the study of eschatological expectation in the Psalter and demands more focused study of the text of individual psalms at a micro level. Thus, in this paper I intend to study Ps 145 and explore the possible clarifications this text might bring to some of these litigious issues.

### **Translation of Ps 145**

In order to highlight the literary structure that signifies thematic connections, transitions, movement, and inclusio in the text, I have underlined, bolded, and highlighted the

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<sup>9</sup>

Ibid., 232.

<sup>10</sup> H. G. Wilson and others in the non-dispensational camp claim the rejection of human Davidic king based on Ps 89.

<sup>11</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, “Kingdom Promises as Spiritual,” *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspective on the Relationship Between Old and New Testaments in Honor of S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.* (ed. John S. Feinberg; Westchester: Crossway, 1988), 281.

<sup>12</sup> Vos, *The Eschatology of the Old Testament*, 132.

text with different colors. These highlights accentuate the poetic ingenuity of the text, both in the external and internal structures.

### PRELUDE

1. A Song of Praise, of David.  
 (א) I will exalt you my God, the King;  
 And **I will bless** your name **forever and ever**.  
 (ב) 2. Every day **I will bless** you,  
 And I will praise your name forever and ever.

### STANZA I

- (ג) 3 **Great** is the Lord, and highly to be praised;  
 And His **greatness** is unsearchable.  
 (ד) 4 One generation shall praise your works to another,  
 And they will declare your strength<sup>13</sup>.  
 (ה) 5 The glorious splendor<sup>14</sup> of your majesty,  
 And upon words<sup>15</sup> of your wonderful works, I will meditate<sup>16</sup>.  
 (ו) 6 They will speak of your frightening might  
 And I will recount<sup>17</sup> your **greatness**<sup>18</sup>.

### STANZA II

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<sup>13</sup>

The phrase וַיְבָרֵךְ in BHS is in plural construct but it is singular in Septuagint, Syriac (P) and Targum.

<sup>14</sup> Perhaps the phrase כְּבֹד הַדָּר is deleted or the letter ה or כ is deleted. Ref Syriac (P).

<sup>15</sup> Septuagint and Syriac (P) have λαλήσουσι which is future active indicative verb, probably it should be read with Qumran where it is piel verb יְבָרֵךְ.

<sup>16</sup> Septuagint and Syriac (P) have διηγῆσονται, which is future middle indicative verb, probably it should be read as יְשִׁיחוּ.

<sup>17</sup> The phrase אֲסַפְרֶנָּה in Septuagint and the Targum has 3rd plural reading, probably to be read as יְסַפְּרוּ.

<sup>18</sup> The Kethiv reading וַיְבָרֵךְ is singular construct here. Many manuscripts such as the Septuagint, Theodotion, Syriac (P), and Targum follow Qere reading וַיְבָרְכֶךָ which is plural construct, but Jerome follows Kethiv.

- (ז) 7 They shall bring the remembrance of your many<sup>19</sup> **goodness**  
 And they shall sing out loud of your righteousness<sup>20</sup>.
- (ח) 8 The Lord is gracious and merciful;  
 Slow to anger and great in loving kindness.
- (ט) 9 The Lord is **good** to **all**<sup>21</sup>,  
 And his mercies are upon **all** his works.

### INTERLUDE

- (י) 10 **All** your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord,  
 And your **godly ones shall bless** you<sup>22</sup>.

### STANZA III

- (יא) 11 They shall speak of the glory of your **kingdom**,  
 And they will talk of your strength<sup>23</sup>;
- (יב) 12 To make known to the sons of men his strength<sup>24</sup>,  
 And the glorious majesty<sup>25</sup> of his **kingdom**<sup>26</sup>.
- (יג) 13 Your **kingdom** is an everlasting **kingdom**,  
 And your dominion is throughout **all** generations.

(יד)<sup>27</sup>

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Probably it should be read as רב instead of רב. Ref. Septuagint.

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The word וְצִדְקָתְךָ in Symmachus's Greek version and Jerome is plural.

21

The phrase לְכָל is missing in Syriac (P).

22

The phrase יְבָרְכֶנְךָ in few manuscripts of Targum has ךַּ as 2ms suffix.

23

The phrase וְגִבּוֹרֹתֶיךָ in Jerome is translated as plural construct.

24

The phrase גִּבּוֹרֹתָיו in Septuagint and Syriac (P) have singular construct.

25

The word הַדָּר is missing in Targum and Syriac (P).

26

Instead of 3ms suffix in מְלֹכֻתוֹ Septuagint and Syriac (P) have suffix 2 sg.

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## STANZA IV

- (ס) 14 The Lord **sustains all** who fall,  
And he raises up **all** who are bowed down.
- (ע) 15 The eyes of **all** look up to you with hope,  
And you will give them<sup>28</sup> their food in due time.
- (פ) 16 Your hand<sup>29</sup> is open,  
And satisfy the desire of every living thing.
- (צ) 17 The Lord is righteous in **all** his ways,  
And kind in **all**<sup>30</sup> his works.
- (ק) 18 The Lord is near to **all** who call upon him,  
To **all** who call upon him in truth.
- (ר) 19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear him;  
He will also hear their cry and will save them.
- (ש) 20 The Lord **guards all** those who love him;  
But **all** the wicked, he will destroy.

## POSTLUDE

- (ת) 21 My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord;  
And **all flesh will bless** his holy name **forever and ever**<sup>31</sup>.

## Why Ps 145?

Ps145 is a beautifully regular and well-integrated acrostic composition

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Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts along with Septuagint and Syriac (P) fill the missing “nun stropha” in the acrostic arrangement with **עֲשׂוּ נְאֻמֵּי יְהוָה בְּכָל־דְּבָרָיו וְיַחֲסִיד בְּכָל־מַעֲלָמֵי** meaning “The Lord is faithful in his words, and holy in all his works.”

<sup>28</sup>

The phrase **לְהַמְלִיכָם** is missing in Septuagint, probably deleted. Refer 104:27.

<sup>29</sup>

The word **אֶת** to be read as **אֵת** in cross-reference with Septuagint and Syriac (P). Hebrew fragments of Cairo Geniza, many medieval Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, and Jerome have **יְדִיָּה** instead of **יְדִיָּה**.

<sup>30</sup>

Hebrew fragments of Cairo Geniza has **לְכָל**.

<sup>31</sup>

The phrase **וְעָד לְעוֹלָם** is added. Many medieval Hebrew manuscripts add the same verb as in Ps 115:18.

among all other acrostics psalms,<sup>32</sup> except for the omission of the נ line.<sup>33</sup> Both the external and internal structures show that its composition is intentional and programmatic. An analysis of its literary structure enhances the theological interpretation of the text. It is also the only psalm that has the word תְּהִלָּה in its title. Its reoccurrence with יְהוָה in v.21 forms an interesting inclusio (v.1 has לְדָוִד תְּהִלָּה and v.21 has יְהוָה תְּהִלָּתְךָ). In the Synagogue liturgy this is one of the most popular psalms<sup>34</sup> because it begins with the word *Ashre*.<sup>35</sup> But in recent biblical scholarship the importance of this psalm has emerged because of its location in the Psalter's division. It is positioned as the last psalm of book V, just before the five *hallel* psalms, and represents a dramatic turn in the Psalter, the last of the David series (Ps 138-144). This Davidic psalm, along with Ps 146, revisits Yahweh kingship theme of Ps

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<sup>32</sup>

Other acrostics psalms are Ps 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, and 119.

<sup>33</sup>

Since the Septuagint, Syriac (P), Vulgate and the Qumran Psalm scrolls have almost identical *nun* text, some scholars think that it was just a transmission error. Nevertheless, the Talmudic rabbis contended for a deliberate dropping of *nun* in the original composition. They suggested the letter *nun* is associated with Amos 5:2 (נָפְלָה לְאִתּוּסַיָּהּ), “קוֹם בְּתוֹלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל”, “Fallen is Virgin Israel, never to rise again . . .”), which is a negative prophesy on Israel’s destruction and does not fit in the context. Since the *nun* would have reminded the readers an event that was entirely contradicting the verse starting with *mem* and also the whole of intent of this *Ashre* Psalm, its omission was deliberate. See Chaim Pearle, “The Theology of Psalm 145: Part II,” *The Jewish Bible Quarterly* 20/1 (1991): 78.

<sup>34</sup>

Willem A. VanGemeren writes, “In Jewish practice this psalm was recited twice in the morning and twice in the evening service. The Talmud commends all who repeat it three times a day as having a share in the world to come (Ber4b).” See Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary with the New International Version* Vol. 5. (ed. Frank E. Gaebelin; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 860. According to Z. Adar, in Jewish liturgy this psalm was prefixed with Ps 84:5 and Ps 144:5 and suffixed by Ps 115:8 in order to give a nationalistic tone. See Adele Berlin, “The Rhetoric of Psalm 145,” in *Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry* (ed. Ann Kort and Scott Morschauer; Winona: Eisenbrauns, 1985), 17-22.

<sup>35</sup>

Pearle, “The Theology of Psalm 145: Part II.” 73.

93, 96-99 in book IV creating discontinuity with Ps 2-89.<sup>36</sup> Michael D. Goulder sees the setting of this psalm especially after the lament of David in Ps 144 as the culmination of the sequence.<sup>37</sup> In his view, the celebration of the victory is expressed in the acrostic arrangement. He does not see the omission of *nun* as an error, but part of a purposeful design.<sup>38</sup> Wilson also sees this psalm as “the ‘climax’ of the fifth book of the Psalter, with the final *hallel* (Pss 146-50) drawing its impetus from Ps 145:21.”<sup>39</sup> In the Qumran Scroll (11Qps<sup>a</sup>), it is interesting to note that it occupies the middle of the scroll. These salient features make this psalm significant for this study. In recent scholarship this psalm has often been studied in connection with the late composition of book IV and V. The high concentration of “royal psalms” in books IV and the return of Davidic Psalms in book V with a special emphasis on “kingship of Yahweh,” have been interpreted as programmatic. Scholars have shown interest in probing the editorial intent of this arrangement. What might be the editorial intent underneath this arrangement? Does it imply any shift in the theology of Yahweh kingship? The answers to these questions might help us understand the language of eschatological expectations in the Psalter.

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<sup>36</sup>

Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (SBLDS 76; Chico CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 228.

<sup>37</sup>

Michael D. Goulder, *The Psalms of the Return (Book V, Psalm 107-150): Studies in the Psalter* (JSOTs 258, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 277.

<sup>38</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>

Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 227.

## Thesis Statement

In this paper, I contend that the study of Ps 145, both at the macro and micro levels,<sup>40</sup> demonstrates the kingship of Yahweh to be both “realized” and “forward looking.” In other words, the eschatological expectations of Ps 145 are both “already and not yet.”<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, I will also argue that in the “forward looking” eschatological expectations, the poet’s concern is progressively moving towards universalism rather than particularism. The eschatological kingship of Yahweh is gradually cosmic in nature rather than limited.

## Methodological Approach

According to Vanhoozer, questions about meaning and interpretation are inherently theological.<sup>42</sup> Theology has to do with language, language has to do with theology, and the source for biblical theology is the biblical text. Therefore, in biblical theology, which I want to pursue in this paper, the preeminence of biblical text, the importance of canonical approach, and the illocutionary aspect of biblical text shall remain non-negotiable. Nevertheless, I am aware that such methodological affirmation does not reduce the inherent complexities of the language, especially in absence of both the speaker

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<sup>40</sup>

By the phrase “macro level” I mean the literary and thematic connections of this psalm with other psalms in books IV and V and by the phrase “micro level” I mean the literary and thematic connections within this psalm.

<sup>41</sup> I am adapting the term “already and not yet” to highlight the perspective of the hope “realized” and hope “forward looking” in the book of the Psalter.

<sup>42</sup>

Kevin Vanhoozer, “Language, Literature, Hermeneutics, and Biblical Theology: What’s Theological About a Theological Dictionary?” in *Guide to the New International Dictionary Theology of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (ed. Willem A. VanGemeren; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 16.

and the referents.<sup>43</sup> This is why, since the first use of *eschatologia* by K. G. Breschneider<sup>44</sup> in 1804, the meaning and the theological nuances of eschatology have multiplied. I. Howard Marshall, in his article “Slippery Words,” presents a brief but very helpful description of this confusion.<sup>45</sup> He summarizes his findings into nine prevalent meanings for the words “eschatology” or “eschatological.”<sup>46</sup> G. B. Caird, in the last chapter of his book *The Language and the Imagery of the Bible*, also presents an insightful analysis of the meanings of the word “eschatology.”<sup>47</sup> Eschatology, according to him, is not concerned with referentiality, but the merging of the promise with the Promiser—who is the alpha and the

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Peter Cotterell, “Linguistics, Meaning, Semantics, and Discourse Analysis,” in *Guide to the New International Dictionary Theology of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (ed. By Willem A. VanGemeren; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 135.

44 Jean Carmignac traces back the origin of the word Eschatology in his paper “Si on enterrait l’eschatologie,” presented in 1970. See I. Howard Marshall, “Slippery Words,” *ExpT* 89 (1978): 264-269.

45 I. Howard Marshall: 264-269.

46

According to Marshall, the nine meanings of eschatology are: “(1) study of or teaching about the last things; (2) the last things themselves; (3) the last things, or teaching about them, understood in biblical terms as the coming of the kingdom and the Son of man, rather than primary in terms of death and the future state of heaven or hell; (4) the doctrine that the last things are near; (5) in the phrase “consistent eschatology”, the belief that the teaching of Jesus was wholly determined by the belief in the imminence of the last things; (6) in the phrase ‘realized eschatology’, the view that the ministry of Jesus the last things were fully and finally taking place; (7) in the phrase ‘eschatology in process of realization’, the view that in the ministry of Jesus the last things had been set in motion and were working towards a climax; (8) the meaning found in recent writers by Whiteley, that an ‘eschatological’ event is the work of God; (9) the view of Barrett that ‘eschatological’ can be applied to events whose significance is determined by the final elements in the series.” See Marshall, “Slippery Words,” 267.

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G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980), 242-271.

omega, the beginning and the end. Interpretation of eschatological languages also demands an appropriate understanding of typology. Typology, when it is defined with strong emphasis on historical correspondences, has its limitations and does not answer all the questions pertaining to the relationship between the OT and the NT.<sup>48</sup> Francis Young refuses to define “typology” by means of historical correspondence and referentiality, but he presents it as a literary device for inter-illumination through inter-textuality, “architext,” and a “super-text.” For him, this phenomenon functions through mimetic symbols, parallel narratives, corresponding characterization, exemplary patterns, or intertextual resonance.<sup>49</sup>

Incorporating these valuable insights into the intricacy of language, I have adopted a method that majors on the literary analysis of the biblical text and also, that takes the final form of the Psalter more seriously. I have applied “rhetorical criticism,” which looks “for repetitions and patterns in the use of words and phrases, for the particular structuring of words and ideas, and for various other rhetorical or poetic devices, such as chiasm and inclusio.”<sup>50</sup> I agree with Adele Berlin who writes, “The potential success of rhetorical criticism lies in the fact that the devices and symmetries that are present in a poem are not merely decorations—but are pointers or signs which indicate what the meaning is.”<sup>51</sup> The literary form and the structure of this psalm make these methods appropriate.

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<sup>48</sup> James Barr, “Allegory and Typology.” in *Old and New in Interpretation: A Study of the Two Testaments* (London: SCM Press Ltd. 1966), 103-48.

<sup>49</sup>

Francis Young, “Typology,” in *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honor of Michael D. Goulder* (ed. S. E. Porter et al.; Leiden: E J. Brill, 1994): 29-48.

<sup>50</sup>

Berlin, “The Rhetoric of Psalm,” 17.

<sup>51</sup>

Ibid.

## Eschatological Expectations in Ps 145

### *Literary Form and Structure*

First, notice the external acrostic features of this psalm, as it is used in this composition to add certain nuances in the thematic development. The psalm begins with א and ends with ת drawing the attention to the progression and expanse of time. L. J. Liebreich points out the centrality of time in the following structural markers.<sup>52</sup>

v. 1    לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד  
 v.2    לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד  
 v.13    כָּל-עֲלָמִים  
 v.21    לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

However, Liebreich fails to see its connection with the root word דָּוַר, which appears twice in this psalm (v.4 דָּוַר דָּוַר, and v.13. בְּכָל-דָּוַר וְדָוַר) to emphasize the expanse of time rather than its centrality. This emphasis on the vastness of time becomes more lucid when this connection is seen in the context of the preceding psalm.

Ps 144:3    אָדָם לַהֲבֵל דָּמָה יָמָיו כְּצֵל עוֹבֵר  
 (Man is like a mere breath; His days are like a passing shadow)

Yahweh, in contrast to the human king, will be praised from one generation to another until eternity (לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד). According to VanGemeran, the structural elements of this psalm highlight the praise of the Lord's kingship and the covenant fidelity of Yahweh.<sup>53</sup>

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L. J. Liebreich. "Psalm 34 and 145 in the Light of Their Key Words," *HUCA* 27 (1956): 181-92.

<sup>53</sup>

VanGemeran, "Psalms," 860.

- A. In Praise of the Lord’s Kingship (vv. 1-3)
- B. In Praise of the Lord’s faithfulness to the Covenant (vv. 4-9)
- A’. In Praise of the Lord’ Kingship (vv.10-13a)
- B’. In Praise of the Lord’s Covenant Fidelity (vv 13b-21)

VanGemeren rightly claims the attributes and the acts of God as the major themes of this psalm; however, the covenantal relationship needs explication.<sup>54</sup> The chiasm between B and B’ is not convincing because the word “covenant” is absent and the indirect covenant language is inclusive and generic in nature. Furthermore, this chiasm does not explain the progressive movement in the poetry—from א to ה. Adele Berlin divides this psalm into two halves (vv.11-9 and vv. 10-20). According to him, the first half is an invitation to praise Yahweh, while the second half gives the basis for that praise. He further subdivides the two halves into quarters that form a chiasm in an ABB’A’ structure of divine greatness and grace.<sup>55</sup> But Berlin’s division does not take into account the widening sphere of Yahweh’s act. Wilfred G. E. Watson highlights the ingenious work of the poet in the internal structure of this psalm by pointing out the “miniacrostic” in vv 11-12 and a reverse rootplay in vv.11-13.<sup>56</sup>

Miniscroctic

- v.11 כְּבוֹד (“glory”)
- v.12 לְהוֹדִיעַ (“To make known”)
- v.13 בְּמַלְכוּתְךָ מִלְּכוּת (“your kingdom is kingdom”)

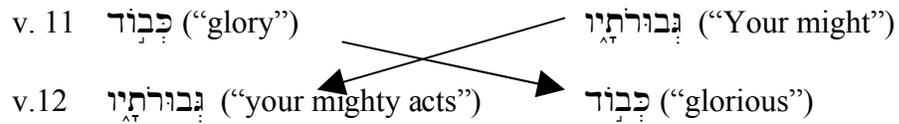
Reverse rootplay

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Berlin, “The Rhetoric of Psalm,” 19.

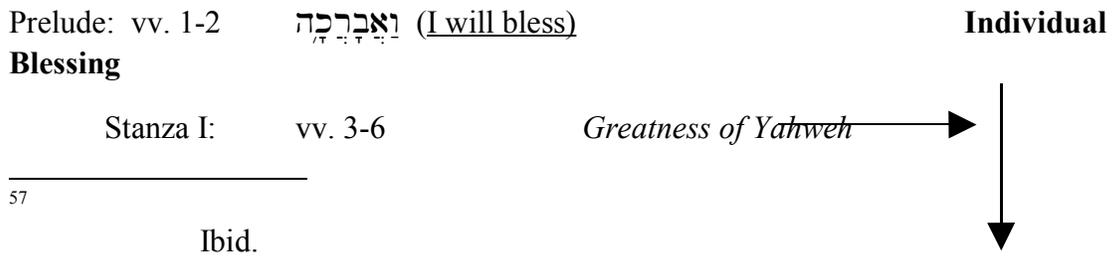
<sup>56</sup> Wilfred G. E. Watson, “Reversed Rootplay in Ps 145,” *Biblica* 62 (1981): 101-2.



This reversing phenomena of the letters כ, ל, and מ into כלמ in the root of מְלָכּוֹת, in the chiasm, and the four fold repetition of כלמ leads Watson to suggest that the basic theme of this poem is “God’s eternal and universal kingship.”<sup>57</sup> But Berlin sees this phenomenon simply as feature of the alphabetic acrostic, rather than a reverse acrostic.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, Watson’s observation cannot be set aside without a stronger counter-argument. He rightly contends that the thematic center of this psalm is the kingship of Yahweh.

At the same time, Barnabas Lindars and Reuven Kimelman’s literary structure, which highlights the change in the subject of בָּרַךְ from an individual blessing to the community and then all flesh blessing, deserves our attention. Based on my translation above, I have adapted their literary structure to highlight the transforming and broadening progression of the themes in the internal structure of this psalm (see Figure 1).<sup>59</sup>

FIGURE 1  
 LITERARY STRUCTURE AND THEMATIC MOVEMENT



58 Berlin, “The Rhetoric of Psalm,” 19.  
 59

Barnabas Lindars, “The Structure of Psalm CXLV,” *VT* 29, (1989): 23-30;  
 Reuven Kimelman, “Psalm 145: Theme, Structure, and Impact,” *JBL* 113 (1994): 35-58.



In the above figure, the motif of individual blessing unfolds into the blessing of the community but it does not stop there. Their experience of Yahweh’s attributes (greatness, goodness, kingship, shepherdhood) is so contagious that it perpetuates from one generation to another until all humanity (כָּל־בָּשָׂר) receive his blessing. The above structure highlights the thematic development of “blessings” and the characteristics of Yahweh as king; however, it requires a detail discussion in the following paragraph.

***Thematic Development***

In the following paragraph, I will investigate five thematic developments to substantiate my thesis. First, I will show how the nature of the king in this psalm is idealistic and cosmic in dimension. Second, I will discuss how the eschatological expectation in regard to the kingship is in some sense already realized. Third, I will contend that jurisdiction of the kingdom within this psalm expands from particularism to universalism. Fourth, I will show that there are some elements of eschatological expectations that are still located in future.

Fifth, I will argue how the pattern of the “realized” and “forward looking” aspects of the eschatological expectations of this psalm has correspondence in the NT.

(1) The Nature of the King

Unlike Ps 2, the identity of the king is forthrightly stated as “my God” (v.1) and “Lord” (v.3, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21). There is no mention of the king’s enthronement in Zion (Ps 2:6) but his reign is real and present, and his dominion extends over Zion for all generations (Ps 146:10). He is great and his greatness is proven. He deserves all the praise of man.<sup>60</sup> This is why one generation will commend him to another generation (v.4). He is gracious, compassionate and slow to anger (v.8). He receives praise and exaltation from all (v.21). He is both righteous and loving (v.17). He is the promise-keeper and faithful (v.13b; Ps 146:6b). He is not like a human king who cannot be trusted (146:3). The language of “promise” and “faithfulness” in v. 13b indirectly alludes to the “covenant” and yet in the subsequent verses the king’s sovereign domain surpasses the covenant boundary. He is the ideal—the eschatological cosmic king whom the pious in Israel always believed to be real and ever present. Notice the connection with some other OT texts:

Is 33:22	כִּי יְהוָה שֹׁפְטֵנוּ יְהוָה מְחַקְקֵנוּ יְהוָה מִלְּפָנָיו הוּא יוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ: (For the Lord is our judge, The Lord is our lawgiver, The Lord is our king; He will save us-)
Ps 5:3	הַקְשִׁיבָה לְקוֹל שׁוֹעֵי מִלְּפִי וְאֱלֹהֵי כִּי-אֵלֶיךָ אֲתַפְלֵל (Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, For to Thee do I pray)
Ps 44:5	אַתָּה-הוּא מִלְּפִי אֱלֹהִים צִוֵּה יְשׁוּעוֹת יַעֲקֹב (Thou art my King, O God; Command victories for Jacob)
Ps 84:4	יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת מִלְּפִי וְאֱלֹהֵי (O LORD Almighty, my King and my God)
Ps 144:1	אֲרוּמְנֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ (I will exalt you, my God the King)

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But what about the Davidic king as promised in 2 Sam 7:16? Some conservative scholars agree that Ps 89:38-39 presents the rejection of the Davidic human king, who failed to meet Yahweh's expectations. Israel as a nation was expected to be a theocratic nation, but they desired a human king. In 1 Sam 8:5, we read that Yahweh saw the demand for a human king as his own rejection; however, he granted them their demand. But after the perpetual failures of the human kings, the hope for the restoration of ideal kingship of Yahweh becomes gradually stronger among the godly. In response to this hope and expectation when the psalmist saw the restoration of the temple, law, and the remnant community in the post-exilic period, he saw it as the kingship of Yahweh is restored. The psalmist also sees the future hope for its fuller realization and yet in a strange way, he affirms with confidence the kingship of Yahweh as if it is present and real.

(2) Realized Eschatological Expectations

The mood in this Psalm is apparently one of high optimism and jubilation. Not only does the poet himself exalt and bless Yahweh, but he also anticipates every godly person in the community (v.10, חָסִיד) and ultimately all human beings in the world to bless Yahweh as well (v.21, כָּל־בָּשָׂר). His confidence is empowered by the mighty acts (גְּבוּרָה), the wondrous acts (פְּלֵא), and the awesome acts (יָרָא) of Yahweh in the past and the present (vv.3-6) through which he has shown his great goodness and compassion. Notice them in vv.5-6,

- v.5 תָּדַר כְּבוֹד הַדָּבָר וּדְבַר נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ אֲשִׁיחָה  
(The glorious splendor of your majesty, and upon words of your wonderful works, I will meditate)
- v.6 וְעֹז נֹרְאוֹתֶיךָ יֹאמְרוּ (וְגִדּוֹלְתֶיךָ) [וְגִדּוֹלְתֶךָ] אֲסַפְּרָנָה  
(They will speak of your frightening might and I will recount your greatness)

But what are these great mighty, wondrous, and awesome acts? The poet is not specific about them. Lexically, v.5 connects with v.13 of Ps 77, where Israel’s miraculous experience during the first exodus (vv.15-20) is narrated. And v.6 is connected with v. 4 of Ps 78, which is a long account of God’s favor upon Israel from the exodus to the reign of David. Perhaps these two verses do not allude to a specific event, but to God’s perpetual and persistent faithfulness to his people. This means that this psalm could be considered as pre-exilic composition. But Goulder suggests that these acts may refer to both the first and the second exiles (as Ex 34:6 is cited in v.8) during which Israel experienced the mighty acts of God.<sup>61</sup> Based on this interpretation, he locates this psalm in the period of Ezra when no king existed. He asserts that since the opening verse does not use the standard phrase *my king and God* but אֱלֹהֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ (my God, the King), the kingship of Yahweh is more likely to be a present reality. Leslie C. Allen also places this psalm in post-exilic period.<sup>62</sup> However, some scholars think that this Yahweh kingship affirmation may be because of the failure of the Davidic king.<sup>63</sup> Goulder and Allen’s position seems to be more convincing due to the historical context. Since the temple, city wall, and the laws were restored after Israel’s final return from exile, it is plausible that the community felt that some form of Yahweh’s

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<sup>61</sup>

Goulder, *The Psalms of the Return*, 281.

<sup>62</sup>

Allen points out few words such as *mlkt* and *jkp* in v.13 and v.14 to be dated as post-exilic. I do not subscribe to this argument. I have argued against this in my paper *The Early Composition of the Psalter*—a paper submitted in the History of Bible (DOT 910) class this semester. Nevertheless, it is possible that an older composition may have been redacted for a contemporary situation in postexilic time. See Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150* (WBC 21. Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1983), 371.

<sup>63</sup>

Samuel Terrien Writes, “‘My God, the King!’ is a cry of the heart, possibly a hidden protest against the Davidic dynasty.” See Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 905.

kingship was restored. Goulder insists, “[I]n some sense Ezra did institute a theocracy which has endured through all generations from that to this.”<sup>64</sup> Could it be possible that the editor might have taken a psalm composed earlier and relocated it into its new historical context?

Furthermore, the optimism of the poet seems to surpass the enthusiasm caused by Ezra’s restoration of the law. It is both present as well forward looking. Yahweh has not only become their king but He is also the transcendent king of the cosmos. Undoubtedly, the complete deliverance from the severe suffering that Israel underwent in the captivity has given the psalmist an optimism to see the final fulfillment of God’s promise imminent.

This optimism can be better understood if it is read in connection with the last psalm of book IV, Ps 106, where Israel’s sin and suffering of exile is explained. Notice the following two verses which are lexically connected to v. 1 and 21 of Ps 145.

- Ps. 106: 2      מִי יִמְלֹל גְבוּרֹת יְהוָה יִשְׁמִיעַ כָּל־תְּהִלָּתוֹ:  
 (Who can proclaim the mighty acts of the LORD or fully declare his  
 praise?)
- Ps 106: 47      הוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְקַבְּצֵנוּ מִן־הַגּוֹיִם לְהַדְרֹת לְשֵׁם קִדְשׁךָ  
 לְהַשְׁתַּבַּח בְּתִהְלֹתֶיךָ:  
 (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.)

Israel lived in exile with the constant expectation that Yahweh would one day restore the glory of the Davidic kingdom—that he would gather the remnant in Zion.<sup>65</sup> The reason for the optimism at the end of book V is anticipated at the end of book IV (Ps 106:44-46: *But he took note of their distress when he heard their cry; for their sake he remembered*

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Goulder, *The Psalms of the Return*, 282.

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According to Rose, Israel had such expectation even from the time before the exile. See Walter Rose, “Messianic Expectations in the Old Testament,” *In die Skrifling* 35 (2001): 275-288, 284.

his covenant and out of his great love he relented. He caused them to be pitied by all who held them captive). In Ps 145, the picture is of the godly ones who are now in the city of Zion to worship.<sup>66</sup> The temple is restored, the walls and gates are erected, and the book has been read. When the poet experienced the great moment for which the people have waited for so long, he begins to see the eschatological expectations of the past as partly realized in the restoration of the theocracy and in the return of the captive.<sup>67</sup>

### (3) The Nature of the Kingdom

According to Vos, the content of the Psalter is “eschatological and messianic.” He believes that the eschatological throne is not earthly but heavenly and the kingship of Yahweh is absolutely universal (cf. Ps 47:2; 48; 96-99; 103:19 146; also 2 Kings 11:12).<sup>68</sup> I would like to examine how much of this can be affirmed in Ps 145. A careful exegesis of Ps 145 reveals that the theocratic reign in this psalm is present and real. This is why the praise and exaltation is in effect (v.1-2). The domain of this kingdom is not limited but extended to all (also see Ps 103:19). Nothing is said about its geography or ethnic demography. It stretches from the poet’s individual experience to the chosen ones (v.10) and then to all people. The word כל “all” is repeated 14 times, emphasizing the cosmic nature of his domain.

v.9 טוב־יהוה לְכֹל וְרַחֲמָיו עַל־כָּל־מַעֲשָׂיו  
 v.10 יוֹדוּךָ יְהוה כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂיךָ וְחַסְדֵיךָ יְבָרְכֻכָּה  
 v.13 כָּל־עֲלָמִים וּמְנוֹשְׁלֶיךָ בְּכָל־דּוֹר וְדוֹר:

<sup>66</sup> As discussed earlier, I subscribe to the possibility of inscripturation of an earlier composed psalm to a post-exilic *Sitz im Leben*.

<sup>67</sup>

Vos, *The Eschatology of the Old Testament*, 143.

<sup>68</sup>

Ibid., 141.

- v. 14 סוֹמֵךְ יְהוָה לְכָל־הַנִּפְלִיִּים וְזוֹקֵף לְכָל־הַכְּפוּפִים  
v.15 עֵינַי כָּל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
v.16 וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ לְכָל־חַי רִצּוֹן  
v.17 וְחֹסֵד בְּכָל־מַעֲשָׂיו  
v.18 קָרוֹב יְהוָה לְכָל־קְרָאָיו לְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאֵהוּ בְּאֵמֶת  
v.20 שׁוֹמֵר יְהוָה אֶת־כָּל־אֲהַבָּיו וְאֵת כָּל־הַרְשָׁעִים יִשְׁמִיד  
v.21 וַיְבָרֵךְ כָּל־בָּשָׂר

The criteria to receive the benefit of this kingdom are surprisingly wide and inclusive. Notice the following list of the beneficiaries of his kingdom.

- (i) The poet himself. The editor ascribes this poem to David (דָּוִד).<sup>69</sup>
- (ii) The generation (דֹּר) in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah (v.4).
- (iii) The remnant and the God fearing gentiles (חֹסֵד) (v.10). They include all those:
  - a. who are fallen (לְכָל־הַנִּפְלִיִּים) and bowed down (לְכָל־הַכְּפוּפִים) (v.14).
  - b. who look up (עֵינַי כָּל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) to Yahweh for food (v.15).
  - c. who call on him in truth (לְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאֵהוּ בְּאֵמֶת) (v. 18).
  - d. who fear him (יִרְאָיו) and cry out to him (v.19).
  - e. who love him (אֶת־כָּל־אֲהַבָּיו) (v.20).
  - f. who (כָּל־בָּשָׂר) will praise his name (v.21).

The poet testifies that the king has already extended his benefits to him and to a group of people in his generation. According to him, the favor is extended to the people because they are God-fearing, fallen and bowed down. They look up with hope to Yahweh, they call upon him in truth, they fear him, they love him, and they praise his name. The criteria for the Yahweh's favor are remarkably generic, moral, and spiritual. The diminishing language of the covenant and particularism is certainly upsetting to those who insist on particularism.

This language of universalism reappears Ps 146:7-9. In this passage, the favor of the king is

<sup>69</sup>

The polemic discussion on date and authorship of this psalm is difficult to resolve. It is commonly agreed that the authorship is attached only to ascribe authority, a common practice in biblical writings. See J. H. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms* (London: SCM Press, 1976), 86.

extended to the oppressed (עֲשֻׁק), the hungry (רָעֵב), the prisoner (אֲסֹר), the blind (עִוֵּר), the bowed down (כִּפְּרִי), the righteous (צַדִּיק), the alien (גֵּר), the fatherless (יָתוֹם), and the widow (אַלְמָנָה).

Furthermore, there is no place for the wicked in this kingdom, for the king will destroy all of them (v.20; 146:9). The future kingdom, without the wicked, is not temporal but eternal (v.13; 146:10). The identity of the “wicked” is generic, permeating across ethnic or religious boundaries. Whether the wicked are inside the covenant relation or outside; he will destroy all of them. This implies that the particularism in this psalm now seems to be focused on moral and spiritual character, rather than covenant or ethnic identity—such an emphasis on moral and spiritual character could be defined as particularism of righteousness.

#### (4) Forward Looking Eschatological Expectations

Besides the fact that the kingdom is perpetual and universal in nature, the language of future hope sets this psalm into forward looking. Notice the following verses:

- v.15 עֵינֵי־כָל־אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁבְּרוּ וְאַתָּה נֹתֵן־לָהֶם אֶת־אֲכָלָם בְּעֵתוֹ  
 (The eyes of all look to you and you give them their food in due time)
- v.20 וְאַתָּה כָּל־הָרָשָׁעִים יִשְׁמֹד  
 (But all the wicked, He will destroy)
- v.21 וַיְבָרֵךְ כָּל־בָּשָׂר שֵׁם־קָדְשׁוֹ  
 (And all flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever)

In above verses, the psalmist anticipates an eschatological expectation that is not yet realized but imminent in near future. He is looking forward for the food in due time. He is looking forward for the complete destruction of the wicked, and he is also looking forward for all flesh to bless Yahweh forever and ever.

Such forward-looking eschatological theme is not only confined to this psalm but also in other psalms. For our discussion, let us consider the “royal psalms” of book IV, where the royal king is also projected as the coming judge who will destroy the wicked.

- Ps 93:1      יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ גִּבּוֹר לְבָשׁ  
 (The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty)
- Ps 94:2      הִנְשֵׂא שֹׁפֵט הָאָרֶץ הַשֹּׁב גְּמוּלָה עַל-גֹּאֲוִים  
 (Rise up, O Judge of the earth; pay back to the proud what they deserve)
- Ps 94:3      עַד-מָתַי רְשָׁעִים יְהוָה עַד-מָתַי רְשָׁעִים יַעֲלִזוּ  
 (How long will the wicked, O LORD, how long will the wicked be jubilant?)
- Ps 94: 23      וַיִּשָּׁב עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת-אוֹנָם וּבִרְעָתָם יַצְמִיתָם וַיְצַמִּיתָם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ:  
 (He will repay them for their sins and destroy them for their wickedness; the LORD our God will destroy them.)
- Ps 95:3      כִּי אֵל גָּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל עַל-כָּל-אֱלֹהִים  
 (For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods)
- Ps 96:13      כִּי בָא לְשַׁפֵּט הָאָרֶץ יִשְׁפֹּט תִּבְלַל בְּצַדִּיק וְעַמִּים בְּאֱמוּנָתוֹ  
 (for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth.)
- Ps 97:1      יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ תִּגְלַל הָאָרֶץ יִשְׂמְחוּ אֵימִים רְבִים  
 (The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice)
- Ps 98:9      כִּי בָא לְשַׁפֵּט הָאָרֶץ יִשְׁפֹּט תִּבְלַל בְּצַדִּיק וְעַמִּים בְּמִישָׁרִים:  
 (for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.)

Notice that in above references, Yahweh is projected as king as well as judge. His kingship is referred to as present reality but his role as a judge is placed in the future. In Ps 94:2-3, the psalmist pleads Yahweh to rise up as judge because the wicked are jubilant. In Ps 96:13 and 98:9 that hope is sustained. This same hope is furthermore affirmed in Ps 145: 20, *but all the wicked, he will destroy*. The poet sees the role of Yahweh as the judge not yet fulfilled but he eagerly expects it to happen in the future—which supports the notion of forward looking eschatological expectations. Such future expectations are affirmed in other OT passages:

- 1 Sam 2:10bcd      יְהוָה יִדְּוֶן אֶפְסֵי-אָרֶץ וַיִּתֶּן-עֹז לְמִלְכּוֹ וַיְרַם קַרְן מְשִׁיחוֹ  
 (The Lord will judge the ends of the earth. “He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.”)

1 Ch 16:33	יְהוָה כִּי־בָא לְשִׁפּוֹט אֶת־הָאָרֶץ: (For he is coming to judge the earth)
Ezek 34:20	הִנְנִי־אֲנִי וְשִׁפְטִיתִי בֵּין־שֵׂהָ בְרִיָּה וּבֵין שֵׂה רָזָה: (Behold, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep)
Zech 14: 9	וְהָיָה יְהוָה לְמֶלֶךְ עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ (The LORD will be king over the whole earth.)

(5) Ps 145 and the Doxology of the Psalter

Wilson claims that the juxtaposition of Pss.145-150 demonstrates the editorial technique that highlights the programmatic grouping of themes.<sup>70</sup> In Wilson's opinion, the doxology of the Psalter is a response to v.21. (*And all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever*). I agree with Wilson on this point as I see the explicit correspondence of the structural pattern of this grouping with that of the internal structure of Ps 145 (see Figure 2).

FIGURE 2  
STRUCTURAL PATTERN OF THE DOXOLOGY AND PS 145

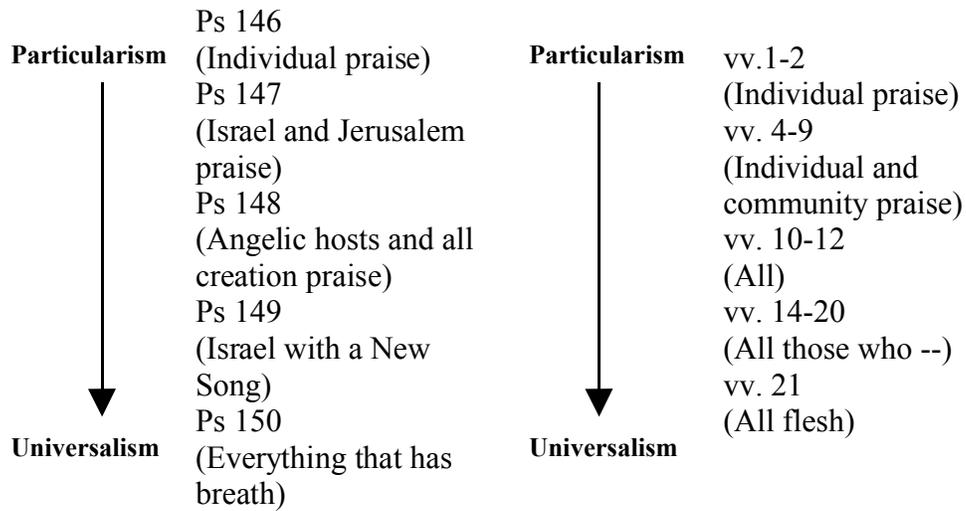
**Ps 146-150**  
**The Doxology**

**Ps 145**

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70

Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 193.



This correspondence in the patterns, especially at the end of the Psalter, underpins its significance. John S. Kselman also sees such correspondence in an alternative pattern.<sup>71</sup> According to him, the movement from David’s praise to the praise of all flesh in Ps 145:21 previews not only the beginning and end of the *hallel* sequence in Psalms 146 and 150, but also the alternating sequence that moves from David’s and Jerusalem’s praise (Ps 146-147) to the praise of all creation (Psalm 148), and again from David’s and Israel’s praise (Ps 149) to the praise of all that have breath (Ps 150).<sup>72</sup> Gowan rightly states that the tension between universalism and particularism is heightened “in subsequent Jewish experience;”<sup>73</sup> however, in Ps 145 it is evident that this tension is shifting more towards

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71

John S. Kselman, “Psalm 146 in its Context.” *CBQ* 50 (1998): 598.

72

*Ibid.*

73

Donald E. Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress/Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000), 55.

universalism. The picture become even more explicit in Rev 7:9 where after describing the specific number of the tribes of Israel, John goes on to say:

Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ (After these things I looked, and behold)  
 ὄχλος πολὺς, (a great multitude)  
 ὃν ἀριθμῆσαι αὐτὸν οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο, (which no one was able to count)  
 ἐκ παντὸς ἔθνους καὶ φυλῶν καὶ λαῶν καὶ γλωσσῶν  
 (from every ethnic group and tribe and people and language)  
 ἐστῶτες ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου)  
 (standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb.)

#### (6) Patterns in the NT

Although Ps 145 is not directly quoted in the NT, its patterns of the realized kingdom and the forward-looking kingdom have continuity in the NT. For brevity of space I will discuss only a few NT passages.

- Matt 3:2 [καὶ] λέγων· μετανοεῖτε· ἤγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.  
 (Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand)
- Matt 4:17 μετανοεῖτε· ἤγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.  
 (Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.)
- Mark 1:15 ὁ καιρὸς καὶ ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ· μετανοεῖτε καὶ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ  
 (The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel)
- Matt 10:7 ὅτι ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.  
 (The kingdom of heaven is at hand)
- Luke 10:9 ἤγγικεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.  
 (The kingdom of God has come near to you.)
- Luke 10:11 ὅτι ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.  
 (that the kingdom of God has come near)

I have chosen the above passages because Stanley D. Toussaint uses these passages to argue against the “already” aspect of kingdom. According to Toussaint the word ἤγγικεν in these verses is comparable to the Hebrew verb **בִּרְקַ** (Isa 13:6; Ezek 30:3; Joel; 1:15; 2:1; 3:14; Obad.15; Zeph 1:7, 14), which means “near.” Toussaint asserts that in the

above passages it is the idea of imminence that is being proclaimed rather than the nuance of “here.”<sup>74</sup> Toussaint fails to consider the rhetoric behind the persuasion in the Gospel. How is the gospel “good news” if the kingdom is “near” rather than “here”? How did the story of redemption progress from the OT (בִּיָּקָר) to the NT (ἤγγικεν) if they are one and the same in its historical meaning? Toussaint’s argument in favor the millennial concept of kingdom is not persuasive. The verb ἤγγικεν is made explicit in the statement of Jesus in Luke 21:8.

Notice the parallel:

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν·  
 βλέπετε μὴ πλανηθῆτε || πολλοὶ γὰρ ἐλεύσονται ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου  
 λέγοντες· ἐγὼ εἰμι, (I am He) || καὶ ὁ καιρὸς ἤγγικεν. (The time is near/come)  
 μὴ πορευθῆτε ὀπίσω αὐτῶν.

The parallel between “I am He” and the word ἤγγικεν unequivocally affirms the factual reality of present rather than future. The parallelism in the above sentence suggests that the meaning of the word ἤγγικεν connotes the “present” aspect of time rather than future. If this is so then in above NT passages the word ἤγγικεν need not be pointing only to the future millennium kingdom but also to a kingdom that was actualized in the arrival of Jesus. What about the meaning of ἤγγικεν in Rom 13:12 (ἡ νύξ προέκοψεν ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν, the night is nearly over and the day is at hand)? Surely, Paul does not imply an imminent future here. Notice how Paul describes the time aspect of the kingdom in the following text.

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74

Toussaint, “Israel and the Church of Traditional Dispensationalist,” 232.

Col 1:13 ὃς ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκούτου καὶ μετέστησεν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ,  
(For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son)

Paul saw himself and the believers already transferred into the kingdom. Also John, while he was on the island of Patmos, saw himself as a companion in the kingdom (Rev 1:9, συγκοινωνὸς ἐν τῇ θλίψει καὶ βασιλείᾳ, companion in the suffering and kingdom). I, therefore, agree with Darrel Bock and Walter Kaiser, who claim that on one hand, the kingdom of God in the NT is realized in the arrival of Jesus, on the other hand, it is an imminent future.<sup>75</sup> Believers are informed that they are already the citizens of the kingdom of God and yet they are warned or encouraged to look for a future entrance into the kingdom of God.

Matt 7:21 Οὐ πᾶς ὁ λέγων μοι· κύριε κύριε, εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν,  
(Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven)  
1 Cor 15:24 εἶτα τὸ τέλος, ὅταν παραδιδῶ τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί  
(then *comes* the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father)

Furthermore, the kingship of God in the NT is also cosmic. His dominion is beyond ethnic and geographical boundaries.

Matt 24:14 καὶ κηρυχθήσεται τοῦτο τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ εἰς μαρτύριον πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καὶ τότε ἔξει τὸ τέλος.

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75

Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 40-41; Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "Kingdom Promise as Spiritual and National" in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspective on the Relationship Between Old and New Testaments in Honor of S Lewis Johnson Jr.* (ed. John S. Feinberg, Westchester: Crossway, 1988), 304.

(And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.)

Rev 11:15 ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ κόσμου τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ, καὶ βασιλεύσει εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.  
(The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord, and of His Christ; and he will reign forever and ever)

There are several passages in the NT, which specifically indicate the widening nature of Yahweh's domain. The language of particularism in the NT excludes ethnic, national or geographical particularity. Emphasis is more on the penetrating power of the Gospel that has broken all barriers between Jews and Gentiles. A comprehensive discussion on this colossal topic is not possible in this paper. Nevertheless, it has been made clear that the eschatological expectations of Ps 145 have overt correspondences in the NT. Therefore, even from the canonical perspective the pattern of eschatological expectations observed in Ps 145 is affirmed.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the macro and micro level examination of the text in Ps 145, I have argued that the kingship of Yahweh is both a “realized” and a “forward looking” eschatological phenomena. In other words, the eschatological expectations of Ps 145 are both “already and not yet.” The eschatological expectations of the kingdom, in some sense, are already realized during the time of the poet, but at the same time they are also anticipated for their fuller actualization. I have also demonstrated that the forward-looking eschatological expectation of the poet is progressively cosmic rather than confined to a geographical or ethnic boundary. There is inbuilt tension between universalism and particularism; however, the tension favors universalism.

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