

PSALM 93: AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF THE PSALM AND
ITS RELATIONSHIP TO ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN MYTHOLOGY

Geoffrey Randall Kirkland
The Master's Seminary
A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty
In Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of
Master of Theology
In Old Testament
Friday, April 3, 2009

Accepted by the Faculty of The Master's Seminary
in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree
Master of Theology

Adviser

Adviser

ABSTRACT PAGE

Title: PSALM 93: AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF THE PSALM AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN MYTHOLOGY
Author: Geoffrey Randall Kirkland
Degree: Master of Theology
Date: May, 2009
Adviser: William D. Barrick

The student of the Bible endeavors to understand what the Bible meant when the author wrote the text and the readers read and interpreted that text. How did Israel, while living in the midst of the ancient Near Eastern world with all its cultural customs and religious cult practices, understand the biblical texts? Did their knowledge of other pagan, polytheistic, mythological religions influence the way in which they understood the Word of God?

Scholars have long been intrigued by the similarities in cognate languages. This has come to the fore with the discovery and interpretation of the Ugaritic tablets found at Ras Shamra in Syria. Specifically, these Ugaritic texts have some similarities to Hebrew poetry in different aspects: verbal forms, word order, and kingship language. The purpose of this thesis is to examine Psalm 93 and the Canaanite mythological language and see what kind of relationship these have with each other—if there is one at all.

To accomplish this, this thesis provides a brief synopsis of Canaanite mythology with specific emphasis upon El and Baal in the Canaanite pantheon. Baal, though not as lofty as the god, El, is by far the most important deity in the Ugaritic texts and the language of his authority, dominion, and sovereignty resembles that of the Bible, specifically, the book of Psalms.

After the broad overview of the Canaanite cultus, the thesis narrows in focus by observing water mythology in Canaanite texts. This chapter seeks to understand the mindset and understanding of waters and its relationship to chaos in ancient Near Eastern thought. This is appropriately followed by chapter 4 which gives examples of five psalms which OT scholars have been quick to recognize a relationship (dependence or borrowing) between the language of the psalm and that of the Ugaritic texts.

Psalms 93–99 hail the sovereignty of Yahweh and are appropriately termed “kingship psalms” throughout this thesis. When observing the kingship psalms, one must wrestle with Mowinckel’s theory of an Israelite “enthronement festival” which he adapts from the Babylonian culture. Mowinckel’s concept of an enthrone festival in Israel is described and refuted in chapter 5.

Chapter 6 observes Psalm 93 exegetically with specific emphasis on verses 3–4 because of the many similarities to the Canaanite texts. Various interpretations regarding the relationship of Psalm 93:3–4 to the Canaanite texts which scholars have purported in the past are included in this chapter.

Finally, the author of this thesis seeks to show why Psalm 93:3–4 does not require a Canaanite background at all. Acknowledging that there are similarities in the Semitic cognate languages and religious language, the author sees no reason to support a slavish borrowing or direct dependence of Psalm 93 from the Canaanite texts.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT PAGE	iii
CONTENTS.....	iv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE: METHODOLOGY OF THESIS	3
The Big Picture	3
Methodology Described.....	4
Driving Presuppositions.....	6
Biblical Authority	7
Ancient Near Eastern Contribution.....	7
The Authority of the Superscriptions.....	9
A Plain Hermeneutic	10
The Cohesive Theme of God’s Glory.....	10
Limitations of the Thesis	11
Purpose of the Thesis	11
The Need for the Study.....	13
CHAPTER TWO: BAAL AND CANAANITE MYTHOLOGY	16
Introduction.....	16
Baal, El, and the Canaanite Pantheon.....	18
CHAPTER THREE: WATER MYTHOLOGY IN CANAANITE TEXTS	29
Introduction.....	29
The “Waters” in the ANE.....	29
Examples of Water Mythology in ANE Texts.....	33
CHAPTER FOUR: THE PSALMS AND THEIR POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION OF MYTHOLOGY	35
Introduction.....	35
Potential “Mythological” Features in the Psalms	36
Psalm 74:13–14.....	38
Psalm 77:16–20.....	42
Psalm 89:9–10 [MT: 10–11].....	44
Psalm 144:7.....	47
Psalm 29:3–5, 10.....	48
Various Interpretations of Mythological Elements in Selected Psalms.....	54

CHAPTER FIVE: BACKGROUND OF KINGSHIP PSALMS.....	58
Introduction.....	58
The Purpose of the Kingship Psalms	58
The So-Called “Enthronement Festival”	60
CHAPTER SIX: EXEGESIS OF PSALM 93	64
Introduction.....	64
Exegesis	66
The Sovereign Reign of God – Verses 1–2.....	66
The Sinful Rebellion of the World – Verses 3–4.....	86
The Sure Revelation of God – Verse 5	104
Interpretations of Verses 3–4.....	114
CHAPTER SEVEN: THE RELATIONSHIP OF PSALM 93 TO BAAL AND CANAANITE MYTHOLOGY	118
Introduction.....	118
The Relationship of the Canaanite Texts with Psalm 93.....	118
The Ugaritic Texts as a Source for Psalm 93.....	119
Helpful Principles for Comparative Study.....	121
Reasons Why Psalm 93 Does Not Require a Canaanite Background.....	123
CONCLUSION.....	132
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	135

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> , ed. by D. N. Freedman
AnOr	Analecta Orientalia
AOTC	Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries
ATS	Artscroll Tanach Series
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAS	Biblical Archaeological Society
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BCOT	Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament
BCOTWP	Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms
BDB	<i>The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i> , ed. by Brown, Driver, Briggs.
BDS	Bibal Dissertation Series
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BO	Berit Olam
BST	The Bible Speaks Today
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CC	Continental Commentaries
CCL	Classic Commentary Library
COS	<i>The Context of Scripture</i> , ed. by W. W. Hallo and K. L. Younger
DDDB	<i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i> , ed. by K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. van der Horst

<i>DTIB</i>	<i>Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible</i> , ed. by K. J. Vanhoozer
<i>EBC</i>	<i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i> , ed. by F. Gaebelin
<i>EDB</i>	<i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i>
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>HALOT</i>	<i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , ed. by L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner
<i>HOTC</i>	Holman Old Testament Commentary
<i>HSM</i>	Harvard Semitic Monographs
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>IBHS</i>	<i>Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i>
<i>ICC</i>	International Critical Commentary
<i>IDB</i>	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia</i> , ed. by G. A. Buttrick
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>ISBE</i>	<i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i> , ed. by G. W. Bromiley
<i>JATS</i>	<i>Journal of the Adventist Theological Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplemental Series

<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
NAC	New American Commentary
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis</i> , ed. by W. A. VanGemeren
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary
OTS	Old Testament Studies
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review & Expositor</i>
SBL	Studies in Biblical Literature
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
<i>SVQ</i>	<i>St. Vladimir's Quarterly</i>
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> ed. by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren
<i>TLOT</i>	<i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , ed. by E. Jenni and C. Westermann
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
<i>TWOT</i>	<i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i> , ed. by R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, and B. K. Waltke
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
UBL	Ugaritisch-Biblische Literatur
UCOP	University of Cambridge Oriental Publications
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit Forschungen</i>

<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

INTRODUCTION

Does the Bible depend upon ancient Near Eastern¹ literature? Does it need to? If so, how much? If not, why not? These questions evoke much debate among contemporary scholarship. It is often understood that ancient Israel borrowed much from other pagan cultures from that milieu. Does this fact curtail or even make light of the biblical affirmation that all Scripture is “inspired by God” (2 Tim 3:16)?² Some argue that the biblical record only seized ideas rather than entire poems or psalms or phrases. Others take umbrage with this and endeavor to clarify that the biblical writers wrote without any dependence or borrowing whatsoever from the pagan, polytheistic, and syncretistic peoples.

Of late, there are no lack of studies comparing the biblical literature, especially biblical poetry, with other literature whether it be Babylonian, Assyrian, Egyptian, or (as is the case in the present study) Canaanite. One area receiving quite a bit of scrutiny is that of the Hebrew psalms and their relationship with the Ugaritic literature. Much of this study has omitted a very important psalm which may possibly have parallels, namely, Psalm 93.

How does the exegete interpret some of the “mythological elements” in the psalms to seemingly similar occurrences in other pagan, mythological writings? This thesis endeavors to help the Bible student better understand the greatness of God by observing Psalm 93 as well as the historical background of the ANE mythological texts

¹ Hereafter abbreviated ANE.

² All English Scripture citations will be from the New American Standard Bible (1995 Updated Edition), unless otherwise noted.

and their relationship with Psalm 93. In so doing, this thesis will examine Psalm 93 exegetically with specific attention given to the ancient Near Eastern background employed in verses 3 and 4. In short, this study seeks to grasp a more thorough knowledge of the background of Psalm 93. It asks, “What would the original readers have understood?”

Finally, the persuasion of this author is that Psalm 93 does have some similarities to the Canaanite texts yet this does not demand slavish copying or ideological borrowing from an existing Canaanite text. In a word, similarities do exist in religious phraseology and cultural verbage, but this does not reveal that the author of the psalm implemented pagan or mythological elements into his writing. Therefore, as will be shown, the psalmist exalts the utter sovereignty of God and, meanwhile, implements religious phraseology and concepts similar to the religions (and mythological ideologies) which surrounded Israel at that time.

CHAPTER ONE:
METHODOLOGY OF THESIS

The Big Picture

When one comes to a thesis such as this attempting to understand, relate, decipher, and interpret the biblical text and its ancient Near Eastern (ANE) background, it is essential to lay the roadmap in order to keep close to the matter at hand. The interpreter must decide at some point how much ANE background ought to be read *into* the text. Should it at all? Ought it to be completely neglected? And how does pagan religious phraseology incorporate the biblical text? Specifically, how does the pagan mythological background incorporate into the very similar verbage employed in Psalm 93? This thesis will focus upon this very issue.

It can be daunting—and, at times, speculative—to study the background of a psalm and its relationship with the ANE literature. Material on ancient cultures, religious, languages and gods in the ANE abounds. Chapter 1 will pursue an understanding of the background regarding Baal and Canaanite mythology. Of course, this topic requires a study in and of itself, but a brief study will consider pertinent concepts, ideas, and thoughts of Baal, El, and the Canaanite gods.

After briefly discussing a few of the gods in the Canaanite pantheon, the focus will narrow to then examine water mythology in the Canaanite texts. Specifically, materials abound regarding Baal and the Canaanite gods and their triumph over the “waters” which rebel against their god(s).

With the understanding of Baal and the Canaanite references to water mythology, the next chapter will identify various “mythological” features in the psalms. Because this

could consume a treatise in and of itself, only a few texts in the Psalms will be discussed—Psalms 74:13–14, 77:16–20, 89:9–10, 144:7, and 29:3–5, 10. This thesis will then analyze various interpretations as to how the mythological references in the pagan material relate to the biblical material—if even at all.

Next, a study of the background of the kingship psalms will aid the reader to understand the context in which Psalm 93 occurs within the Psalter at large. Psalm 93 is not an isolated reference to the Sovereignty of Yahweh. To support this proposal, an examination of the immediate and surrounding context will result in a greater understanding of the historical background of the psalm.

The exegetical study of the entire psalm serves as the main thrust of this thesis. The theology involved, the flow of thought, the argument of the psalmist, the concepts and phrases incorporated, and the context within the theocratic psalms will come to light throughout the study. Some lexical, morphological, syntactical, and phonetic elements will periodically come into play in order to ascertain the authorial intent of the psalmist and what the original hearers would have understood it to mean.

The final chapter of the thesis will draw the conclusions together and endeavor to determine the relationship of Psalm 93 with Canaanite mythology. That is to say, after looking at both the mythological texts in Canaanite literature as well as the text of Psalm 93, the thesis will draw conclusions to delineate a connection between the two—if there is one at all.

Methodology Described

But how exactly will this thesis attempt to come about with the intended results? First, the research will primarily draw from the Canaanite literature written in Ugaritic

which archaeologists have unearthed at the site of Ras Shamra in Western Syria on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.¹ This thesis will focus almost exclusively on the Canaanite texts because these texts bear such close resemblance to the biblical texts—especially the Psalms. Therefore, this study will help show if Psalm 93 has this specific background in mind.

Most of the help with the Canaanite literature will come from Pritchard's *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*² and Hallo's *Context of Scripture*³ for the English translation of the Ugaritic text. Further help will also come from Cyrus Gordon's *Ugaritic Manual: Newly Revised Grammar, Texts in Translation, Cuneiform Selections*,⁴ N. Wyatt's *Religious Texts from Ugarit*,⁵ and G. R. Driver's *Canaanite Myths and Legends*⁶ to help with the Ugaritic texts to Baal and the Canaanite deities. Examining these texts will facilitate the interpreter to understand the mythological background of these texts and the Canaanite religion which, some have thought, was so prevalent in ancient Israel. The question to be

¹ For a helpful study on the background of the finds at Ras Shamra, see Marguerite Yon, *The City of Ugarit at Tell Ras Shamra* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006); Peter C. Craigie, *Ugarit and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1983), 7–25; Robert A. Oden, Jr., “Myth and Mythology (OT),” in *ABD*, 6 vols, ed. by David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:956–60; Mark S. Smith, *Untold Stories: The Bible and Ugaritic Studies in the Twentieth Century* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001), 13–49; Charles F. Pfeiffer, *Ras Shamra and the Bible*, Baker Studies in Biblical Archaeology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), 9–24; Adrian H. W. Curtis, “Ras Shamra, Minet El-Beida and Ras Ibn Hani: The Material Sources,” in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. by Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 5–27.

² James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969).

³ Dennis Pardee, “Ugaritic Myths: The Ba‘lu Myth,” in *COS*, 3 vols., ed. by William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 1:241–82.

⁴ Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Manual: Newly Revised Grammar, Texts in Transliteration, Cuneiform Selections*, AnOr 35 (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1955).

⁵ N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit: The Words of Ilmilku and His Colleagues*, Biblical Seminar 53 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

⁶ G. R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, OTS 3 (reprint, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1971).

answered is whether or not the religious phraseology used by the Canaanites in ascribing kingship to Baal lies in the background of the psalmist's mind as he penned the verses from Psalm 93, and especially verses 3–4:

The floods have lifted up, O LORD, The floods have lifted up their voice, The floods lift up their pounding waves. More than the sounds of many waters, *Than* the mighty breakers of the sea, The LORD on high is mighty.

The key task is deciphering whether the psalmist composed Psalm 93:3–4 with the Canaanite background in mind. Is the language intended to bring mythological features to the mind of the reader/hearer? With this kind of broad issue in the horizon, inevitable presuppositions exist. Therefore, to eliminate confusion, these presuppositions will be noted.

Driving Presuppositions

It is essential to elucidate various presuppositions that lie in the forefront of the author's mind so that the readers understand the foundation upon which this thesis will be built. First, the Bible claims its own inerrancy, inspiration, and sufficiency and, therefore, these truths of bibliology are unswervingly affirmed.⁷ Paul, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writes in 2 Timothy 3:16–17: “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”⁸

⁷ For a study on this foundational topic, see James R. White, *Scripture Alone* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2004). Also see the great collection of articles in *Inerrancy*, ed. by Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980).

⁸ See also 2 Pet 1:20–21; John 17:17; Matt 5:18; Pss 19:1–9; 119:89, 160; 138:2; 1 Thess 2:13; and James 1:18.

Biblical Authority

In this regard, because the Scriptures claim absolute authority, all other ANE texts (both religious and non-religious) must be subservient to the biblical texts and, consequently, carry less weight.⁹ Indeed, they are to be observed under the greater authority of the written Word of God. The ANE texts must never trump the biblical text for any reason whatsoever. No ANE text is inspired by God; only the biblical text is (2 Tim 3:16–17; Heb 4:12; 2 Pet 1:20–21).

Ancient Near Eastern Contribution

Nevertheless, the ANE texts can definitely *enhance* understanding about a culture, background, nation, or land, and they should be involved in the process, but the ANE texts ought not to be the only guideline to *interpret* the biblical text.¹⁰ It would be easy for a thesis such as this to get lost in the myriad of ANE texts and artifacts that relate to the Bible in some way, but because of the limitations of this thesis, the Canaanite mythological literature primarily relating to waters will prove necessary. John Walton helps in understanding the big picture:

⁹ The ANE texts certainly contribute to understanding the OT. The biblical text does not demand a thorough knowledge of ANE texts in order to attain a proper understanding of a given passage. It may be profitable—and even helpful. And it supplements the background that the psalmist had in his mind when penning the words to the hymn, but in no way does a proper biblical hermeneutic demand this.

¹⁰ Again, this does not mean that the study of the ANE cultures is ineffectual; just that when/if there is a “seeming” contradiction between the biblical text and an ANE text/artifact, the biblical text must trump the ANE find because of biblical inspiration. However, John Walton sees them to be more balanced and equal as he explains: “One of the earliest and most significant correctives was the insistence that neither biblical studies nor ancient Near Eastern studies should be subordinated to the other. Both represent autonomous disciplines, though they can mutually benefit from cross-fertilization. Even as comparative studies are important for those seeking to understand the Bible, study of the ancient Near East is not merely a subservient field to biblical studies. Assyriology, Egyptology, and the like are disciplines in themselves and valid academic, cultural, and linguistic pursuits” (*Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 19).

Ultimately the goal of *background* studies is to examine the literature and archaeology of the ancient Near East in order to reconstruct the behavior, beliefs, culture, values, and worldview of the people. These could alternately be called *cultural* studies. *Comparative* studies constitutes a branch of cultural studies in that it attempts to draw data from different segments of the broader culture (in time and/or space) into juxtaposition with one another in order to assess what might be learned from one to enhance the understanding of another. The range of this understanding can include behavior and belief within the culture, or the ways in which a culture is represented in art or literature. Within the literary category, areas for research include the larger issues of literary genre, the analysis of specific traditions and texts, and the use of individual metaphors, idioms, and words.¹¹

This is precisely what this thesis hopes to accomplish—to help the reader understand the background of Psalm 93. Walton continues by noting four helpful goals which benefit the student/interpreter in doing comparative studies between the biblical text and other ANE documents:¹²

1. Students may study the *history* of the ancient Near East as a means of recovering knowledge of the events that shaped the lives of people in the ancient world.
2. Students may study *archaeology* as a means of recovering the lifestyle reflected in the material culture of the ancient world.
3. Students may study the *literature* of the ancient Near East as a means of penetrating the heart and soul of the people who inhabited the ancient world that Israel shared.

¹¹ Ibid., 18.

¹² Ibid., 28.

4. Students may study the *language* of the ancient Near East as a means of gaining additional insight into the semantics, lexicography, idioms, and metaphors used in Hebrew.

The Authority of the Superscriptions

Third, when observing the psalms, the psalm titles and superscriptions are seen as ancient, accurate, and part of the inspired Hebrew text. Though considerable opinion and debate rage on the issue,¹³ the author's persuasion is that the psalm headings are part of the canonical text as the written Word of God. Though this does not specifically come into play regarding Psalm 93,¹⁴ it relates to similar psalms where an author and an historical reference may exist (i.e., Pss, 29, 74, and 77). This would come into play when, as in the case of Psalm 29, the text regards David as the author and, therefore, this diminishes the possibility of a slavish copying of an already-existing Canaanite text to Baal.¹⁵ Much less, the superscriptions are even in the oldest manuscripts extant today. Therefore, a presupposition of this thesis includes the canonicity of the psalm titles.

¹³ See Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 491–93, who holds that they are ancient and accurate but not part of the inspired text (for this view, see also Steven J. Lawson, *Psalms 1–75*, HOTS [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003], 4). Similarly, Tremper Longman III and Raymond B. Dillard affirm that “the best solution is to regard the titles as early reliable tradition concerning the authorship and setting of the psalms . . . [but] the titles, however, should not be taken as original or canonical” (*An Introduction to the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006], 242).

¹⁴ Except for the LXX superscription: ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυιδ τετράδι σαββάτων ὁ θεὸς ἐκδικήσεων κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἐκδικήσεων ἐπαρρησίατο. For a helpful study on the superscriptions of the kingship psalms, consult David M. Howard, Jr., *The Structure of Psalms 93–100* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 102–4.

¹⁵ This means that David, as the author of Ps 29, authored the psalm apart from *direct* and *slavish* copying off an existent pagan document—for then David would not be the author. However, the implementation of well-known religious phrases, cultural-religious customs, and enthronement phrases does not disallow for Davidic authorship even with *similarities* in other ANE texts.

A Plain Hermeneutic

Fourth, the interpreter must interpret the biblical text with a normal hermeneutic.¹⁶ The allegorical and symbolical hermeneutical methods are subjective and ought to be discarded as a standard or norm when coming to any portion of Scripture—unless it is clear from the biblical text to do so.¹⁷ Of course, one recognizes that the Psalms are poetry and that poetry intends to be imaginative, balanced, and concise. But still the overarching hermeneutical method must implement a plain and normal interpretation.

The Cohesive Theme of God’s Glory

Fifth, the absolute commitment of God to display, protect, and magnify His glory lays as a foundational theme of the entire Bible,¹⁸ and especially of the royal psalms. The Bible exemplifies the utter sovereignty of God as an understood and nonnegotiable reality. The Scripture repeatedly affirms the supremacy and unrivaled glory of God. This thesis comes to the table with the driving presupposition that God always has been, is currently, and forever will be the sovereign King.

¹⁶ The word “literal” is deliberately omitted here because of the ramifications that some tie to it; namely, if one *really* were to interpret the Bible *literally* that there would be no room for metaphor, simile and other figures of speech which are obviously present in the text. However, it is possible to affirm a literal interpretation of a text while still allowing for the use of figures of speech. Context must be the determiner on where and how these ought to be interpreted (see also Roy B. Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth* [Colorado Springs: Cook Communications Ministries, 1991], 63, 145–48).

¹⁷ Paul incorporates this figure of speech in Gal 4:24–31 when he refers to the two women, Hagar and Sarah, as two covenants. See also Rev 11:8 when the two witnesses are killed in the city which is mystically called Sodom and Egypt. But the rest of v. 8 shows that this city which is “mystically called Sodom and Egypt” is in fact Jerusalem.

¹⁸ For a wonderful study—both exegetical and devotional—see John Piper, *Desiring God* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2003), 31–50 and 308–21.

Limitations of the Thesis

As in every thesis, limitations exist and four are noted here. First, the ANE texts are read and referenced in English translations because the texts were originally written in Ugaritic.¹⁹ Second, a great amount of material abounds on ANE mythology and metaphor relating to various religions, especially the Canaanites. But for the sake of this study, the Canaanite literature that specifically deals with the mythological waters and Baal and his enthronement as king are germane. Third, when observing some of the psalms to see how some interpret the mythological metaphors, many Scriptures—even outside the Psalter—could possibly be discussed. But for the sake of brevity and the focus of this study on Psalm 93, only a handful of verses from the psalms are chosen because of similarity in phraseology.

Purpose of the Thesis

The purpose of this study is fourfold. First, this study wishes to attain a better understanding of the psalms—specifically, the kingship psalms—and their God-exalting nature. These kingship psalms—or, theocratic psalms—contain rich theology which will help the believer to obtain a fuller comprehension of the utter sovereignty of God. The sovereignty of God is, perhaps, one of the most comprehensive attributes of God with which to engage.²⁰ In a word, the sovereignty of God simply means that “God is God.” To explicate briefly, Pink contributes the following:

¹⁹ For the Ugaritic texts, see Gordon, *Ugaritic Manual*.

²⁰ Stephen Charnock states: “God is sovereign Lord and King, and exerciseth a dominion over the whole world, both heaven and earth. This is so clear, that nothing is more spoken of in Scripture” (*The Existence and Attributes of God*, 2 vols. [repr., 1853, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996], 2:363).

To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the Almighty, the Possessor of all power in heaven and earth, so that none can defeat His counsels, thwart His purposes, or resist His will (Ps 115:3). To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is ‘The Governor among the nations’ (Ps 22:28), setting up kingdoms, overthrowing empires, and determining the course of dynasties as pleaseth Him best. To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the ‘Only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords’ (1 Tim 6:15). Such is the God of the Bible.²¹

Additionally, A. W. Tozer writes:

God’s sovereignty is the attribute by which He rules His entire creation, and to be sovereign God must be all-knowing, all-powerful, and absolutely free . . . His sovereignty requires that He be absolutely free, which means simply that he must be free to do whatever He wills to do anywhere at any time to carry out His eternal purpose in every single detail without interference. Were He less than free He must be less than sovereign.²²

Second, this study will contribute to the reader’s ability to understand when a biblical writer employs language and phraseology similar to that of the known religious world in that culture and how the interpreter ought to interpret such concepts while not *imposing* these pagan texts on Scripture.²³ This thesis will survey some of the ancient mythology including some possible occurrences of mythological features in the Psalms. But how does one recognize this background and then how ought he to ascertain its meaning in its biblical context? This thesis seeks to aid the interpreter in such situations.

²¹ Arthur W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God*, rev. ed. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1998), 20–21.

²² A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1961), 108.

²³ There is a possibility of getting lost in this question of how the ANE literature relates to, or supplements, or is irrelevant to, the biblical texts. For a fairly recent study on this issue, see Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 23–70. See also the well-written and thought-provoking book reviews on Enns’ work by G. K. Beale, “Myth, History, and Inspiration: A Review Article of *Inspiration and Incarnation* by Peter Enns,” *JETS* 49, no. 2 (June 2006): 287–312; D. A. Carson, “Three More Books of the Bible: A Critical Review,” *TJ* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 1–62; and Peter Enns, “Response to G. K. Beale’s Review Article of *Inspiration and Incarnation*,” *JETS* 49, no. 2 (June 2006): 313–26.

Finally, this thesis exists to ascribe praise and glory to God by helping the readers grasp a loftier and more magnificent view of God and His unrivaled supremacy in relation to anything and everything. The intended goal is for the reader to think rightly about God. Tozer remarks: “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”²⁴ To think accurately about God and about His unrivaled glory is the highest journey a Christian can embark upon.

The Need for the Study

The need for a study such as this arises because the goal of every Bible interpreter must be to go back into the head of the author and into the culture of the readers in order to understand the full picture and feel the full effect that the writing had in that day. Of course, one may understand the Psalms and “water language” as God being more powerful than the literal seas and rivers, but does this exhaust *all* that the psalmist had in mind?

At this point, John Walton reveals a helpful syllogism:

IF:

- 1) Comparative studies provide a window to the ancient worldview; and
- 2) Israel in large measure shared that ancient worldview; and
- 3) Revelation was communicated through that worldview; and
- 4) That revelation embodies the theological teaching of the text;

THEN: comparative studies become crucial to the theological understanding of the OT.²⁵

²⁴ Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*, 1.

²⁵ See John H. Walton, “Ancient Near Eastern Background Studies,” in *DTIB*, ed. by Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 41.

If this thesis, then, endeavors to prove that Psalm 93 (especially vv. 3–4) is not *dependent* upon the Canaanite texts, but rather extols the unique sovereignty and kingship of Yahweh over and above any other “so-called-god,” then it seems apropos to conclude with Walton:

There is nothing inherently damaging to a high view of Scripture if its authors interacted at various levels with the literature current in the culture. All literature is derivative relative to its culture—it must be if it intends to communicate effectively. For the text to engage in polemic and correction, it must be aware of current thinking and literature.

It must be no surprise then, that areas of similarity will be found. This is far different from the contention of some critics that Israelite literature is simply derivative mythology. There is a great distance between borrowing from a particular piece of literature and resonating with the larger culture that has itself been influenced by its literatures.²⁶

The Bible student has responsibility to choose whether the similarities (a concept which virtually no one would deny) are merely coincidental, intentionally polemical in nature, the everyday “common” religious jargon of the day, or intentional copying from a text to Baal and subsequently attributing it to Yahweh.

Relating to Psalm 93, Theodore Gaster has asserted that “the mythological situation [that is, the god of the weather defeating a rebellious dragon or monster] certainly finds expression in the Old Testament . . . it provides the true interpretation of

²⁶ Walton, “Ancient Near Eastern Background Studies,” 43. It is as Angel Manuel Rodriguez also affirms: “There are ancient Near Eastern parallels for most of the Israelite social and religious institutions and for many of its religious ideas. Those similarities become of critical importance when the question of the revelation and inspiration of the biblical text is raised” (“Ancient Near Eastern Parallels to the Bible and the Question of Revelation and Inspiration,” *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* 12, no. 1 [Spring 2001]: 43). He continues by recognizing that “we should *expect* to find many similarities between Israel and its neighbors. Linguistic similarities are unavoidable because the Hebrew language is a Semitic language closely related to other Northwest Semitic languages” (*ibid.*).

Psalm 93.”²⁷ If this is the case and if one follows Gaster’s assertion to its logical conclusion, then one would be unable to understand Psalm 93 unless a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of the “mythological situation” is grasped. Gaster’s statement requires a rebuttal and a confident and persuasive argument showing that the ANE documents (i.e., the “mythological situation”) can help and supplement biblical study, but it certainly does not provide the only *true* interpretation. And finally, this study focuses on hailing the greatness of Yahweh over the waters and pagan gods by exalting Yahweh’s supremacy which will then enhance one’s view of the sovereignty of God.

²⁷ Theodor H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament: A Comparative Study with Chapters from Sir James G. Frazer’s Folklore in the Old Testament* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1969), 748.

CHAPTER TWO:

BAAL AND CANAANITE MYTHOLOGY

Introduction

For a thesis to center around the relationship between a psalm and pagan mythology, one needs to have a grasp of the pagan mythological culture, pantheon, and mythological metaphors in order to ascertain if they have a function in the biblical text or not. To clarify, Michael Humphreys explains a “myth” as:

A story or narrative that conveys the fundamental structure of knowledge upon which the ideologies and customs of a particular culture rest . . . and myth is frequently invested with elements of the fantastic, and generally associated with religious and ritual practice.¹

¹ See Michael L. Humphries, “Myth,” in *EDB*, ed. by David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 934. Humphries gives a helpful history of the study of myth and mythology through the centuries with a satisfactory bibliography. For another helpful article on myth, mythology and the background of it, see Malcolm J. A. Horsnell, “Myth, Mythology,” in *ISBE*, 4 vols., ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1986), 3:455–63. Horsnell writes saying that: “Ancient mythopoeic thought was influenced by speculative thought, but without the restrictions of scientific, logical thought, so that in the resultant myths we can detect a clear attempt to order and organize the direct mystical experience of transcendent reality. What we perceive as inanimate the ancients perceived as animate. They experienced natural forces as personal and also as transcendent, suprahuman powers. Thus they conceptualized them pictorially through imagination as having personal existence and concrete form as gods, goddesses, and other supernatural beings. They imaginatively conceived of the interaction of these forces with each other and with humanity as mythical events” (ibid., 3:456). To be thorough here, Horsnell gives 11 characteristics of ANE myth which need only to be stated: 1) It is tied to nature and the cosmos; 2) it expresses an experience of nature and the cosmos as personal and animate; 3) it is dynamic by virtue of being tied to nature and natural forces, which are all experienced as personal and pulsating with life; 4) it also expresses the ANE experience of transcendence; 5) it was prescientific and prelogical; 6) it used imagination in producing symbols to represent the natural and cosmic powers and entities; 7) it expressed itself in narrative form as myth; 8) it is intuitive and revelatory; 9) it conveys truth authoritatively; 10) it evidences reflective thought; and finally, 11) it is polytheistic (ibid., 3:456–57); See also the excellent essay by Mark S. Smith, “Mythology and Myth-making in Ugaritic and Israelite Literatures,” in *Ugarit and the Bible: Proceedings of the International Symposium on Ugarit and the Bible*. UBL 11 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1994), 293–341 (esp. 293–307). Nick Wyatt, *The Mythic Mind: Essays on Cosmology and Religion in Ugaritic and Old Testament Literature* (London: Equinox Publishing, 2005), 151–88 provides a very helpful study in which he argues that “myth is not a literary genre at all, but a mind-set . . . It is still emphatically present in all our minds today, as are many other levels of hominid mental development, an ancient substrate on which we draw at every turn, whenever meaning is at issue, or we become emotionally involved in the assessment of our human condition” (ibid., 176).

In a word, then, myths are “stories about gods.”² Dirk Human contributes by saying: “these myths describe their intrigues and interaction, their inner battles as well as their involvement in the human world.”³ Jan Assmann writes regarding Egypt’s conception of myth—which is true across the board:

The theme of myth was not the essence of the deities, but rather . . . the essence of reality . . . Myths establish and enclose the area in which human actions and experiences can be oriented. The stories they tell about deities are supposed to bring to light the meaningful structure of reality. Myths are always set in the past, and they always refer to the present. What they relate about the past is supposed to shed light on the present.⁴

Because this is such a significant issue and the understanding of ancient myth is so pertinent to this study, it is helpful to quote John Walton at length who helps to understand the issue:

Like everyone else in the ancient world, the Israelites believed that everything that happened and everything that existed found its ultimate cause in deity. In this way of thinking, it is irrelevant whether the modern reader believes the gods of the Babylonians or the God of Israel exist. The significance and nature of the literature are not dependent on *our* assessment of their reality. These accounts serve as important sources for coming to understand the worldview of the ancients. For those who continue to accept aspects of that worldview, that is, one in which the role of deity is pivotal, there is added significance. That is why those who continue to believe in the God of Israel would not classify the Old Testament accounts and the ancient Near Eastern myths in quite the same category. But for those who have no convictions concerning the God of Israel the differences fade

² The immediate study of the Canaanite myths and mythology demands the terseness found here. See also Peter Enns’s definition of myth as “an ancient, premodern, prescientific way of addressing questions of ultimate origins and meaning in the form of stories: Who are we? Where do we come from?” (*Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005], 40; cf. 50).

³ See Dirk J. Human, “Psalm 93: Yahweh Robed in Majesty and Mightier Than the Great Waters,” in *Psalms & Mythology*, LHBOTS 462 (New York: T. & T. Clark: 2007), 149.

⁴ Jan Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*, trans. by David Lorton (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 112.

into insignificance, because the God of Israel is just as imaginary as the gods of Egypt or Assyria.⁵

Because there are those who assert that many of the psalms⁶ have allusions to many of the Canaanite myths (and, mythological metaphors), this needs examination. But first, the Canaanite pantheon must be observed.

Baal, El, and the Canaanite Pantheon

Much of the interest and study of myth and the ANE texts has not existed for millennia or even many centuries. In fact, much of the scholarly debate regarding the presence of myth in the Bible sprouted in the late eighteenth century following the recovery of significant ANE texts.⁷ Additionally, scholars were able to compare, contrast, and correlate the Canaanite texts with the biblical text when excavations proved successful.⁸ The Canaanite myths were first uncovered in 1929 at a site known as Ras Shamra in modern Syria. These Canaanite texts reveal myths composed in a language very similar to Biblical Hebrew (and other Semitic languages including Ugaritic)⁹ and

⁵ John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 44.

⁶ For the sake of this study, Scripture passages are limited to the psalms (though there may be related verses in the Torah and the Prophets).

⁷ See Arvid S. Kapelrud, *The Ras Shamra Discoveries and the Old Testament*, trans. by G. W. Anderson (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963); see also Robert A. Oden, Jr., "Myth and Mythology (OT)," in *ABD*, 6 vols., ed. by David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:956.

⁸ Additionally, Baal is attested in the Ebla texts from the second half of the 2nd millennium B.C. as well as from the Egyptian execration texts of about 1800 B.C. See John Day, "Baal [Deity]," in *ABD*, 6 vols., ed. by David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:545.

⁹ For a brief, yet thorough, article on Canaan and the Canaanites, see Anson F. Rainey, "Canaan, Canaanites," in *EDB*, ed. by David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 213–15; W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1968), esp. 110–50.

from the very area in which the Israelites would conquer under the leadership of Joshua.¹⁰ In fact, these finds from Ras Shamra contribute greatly to the understanding of ancient Canaanite culture.¹¹ Further, it appears that a few of the earliest OT poems (Exod 15, Ps 68; Judg 5) are composed in a poetic style that bears great resemblance to the Ugaritic myths.¹² Marvin Pope is not far off when he writes that “students of the Old Testament must reckon with the Ugaritic texts.”¹³

To better understand the connection, one must broadly understand the Canaanite pantheon. In Canaanite thought, El appears as the supreme god in the pantheon with Baal serving as one of his supreme cohorts.¹⁴ El is the mighty and all-powerful one¹⁵ and the

¹⁰ See Helmer Ringgren, *Religions of the Ancient Near East*, trans. by John Sturdy (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973) when he remarks: “Here for the first time authentic religious texts, including myths and lists of sacrifices, were found in the Canaanite area. They are written in a previously unknown alphabetic cuneiform script (in which the vowels are not written) in an archaic form of the Canaanite language, and give an extremely good picture of the religious situation at the height of Ugarit’s prosperity, c. 1440–1360 B.C.” (127).

¹¹ For an excellent and thorough chapter in this regard, see Nicolas Wyatt, “The Religion of Ugarit: An Overview,” in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. by Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 529–85.

¹² See George W. Coats, “The Song of the Sea,” *CBQ* 31, no. 1 (Jan 1969): 1–17; Peter C. Craigie, “The Conquest and Early Hebrew Poetry,” *TynBul* 20 (1969): 76–94.

¹³ Marvin H. Pope, Review of *The Legacy of Canaan. The Ras Shamra Texts and their Relevance to the Old Testament*, by John Gray, *JSS* 11, no. 2 (Autumn 1966): 241. Also, for a very helpful study on the history of study on Ugarit, see the essay by Peter Craigie, “Ugarit and the Bible,” in *Ugarit in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic*, ed. by Gordon Douglas Young (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 99–111.

¹⁴ It is not appropriate here to delve into the debated issue of Baal’s relationship with El; that is, is Baal in conflict with El or are the two gods in harmony with each other? For help here, see Marvin H. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 1955); Day, “Baal (Deity),” 1:546. A simplified study can be found in Michael David Coogan, *Stories from Ancient Canaan* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), 11–14.

¹⁵ Compare with Ps 95:3: כִּי אֵל גָּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמַלְךְ גָּדוֹל עַל-כָּל-אֱלֹהִים

creator of the whole universe.¹⁶ For instance, El is the *bny bnwt*, the “Creator of Creatures,” or, translated more literally, “the Builder of the built.”¹⁷ Regarding El’s supreme power, Ringgren writes: “El has supreme authority among the gods, where he reigns as king ‘at the source of the rivers’, which is perhaps the place where the waters of heaven and earth meet, or a place like biblical Eden.”¹⁸ Furthermore, “It is El who has the decisive authority regarding both gods and men.”¹⁹ El alone can bless humans with children.²⁰

At the same time, Yam, Mot, Baal²¹ and others serve El and exercise dominion over certain aspects of creation entrusted to them by El. For instance, Baal holds power as god of the rain, thunder, lightning, and fire. Baal’s closest consort is the goddess Anat who obeys Baal with loyal and devoted assistance. Anat resides as the goddess of battle whose responsibilities include rousing the combatants for war.²² In addition to Anat, the goddess Astarte proves to be singularly devoted to Baal, but less prominent than Anat in

¹⁶ John Day, “Canaan, Religion of,” in *ABD*, 6 vols., ed. by David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:831.

¹⁷ See J. C. de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism: The Roots of Israelite Monotheism*, BETL 91 (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1990), 69.

¹⁸ Ringgren, *Religions of the Ancient Near East*, 129.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism*, 69; cf. de Moor., “El, The Creator,” in *The Bible World: Essays in Honor of Cyrus H. Gordon*, ed. by Gary Rendsburg, Ruth Adler, Milton Arfa, and Nathan H. Winter (New York: Institute of Hebrew Culture and Education of New York University, 1980), 171–87. He writes: “According to the Ugaritic texts it is El who blesses man with children. No other god is able to do this, not even Baal who can only act as an intermediary between the supplicant who wishes a son and El” (173).

²¹ Often in the Ugaritic texts, Baal occurs as *b’ly*, “my lord” (see J.C. de Moor, “*בַּלְּ*,” in *TDOT*, 15 vols., ed. by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. by John T. Willis et al. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1975], 2:181 for a fuller explanation).

²² See Theodor H. Gaster, “The Battle of the Rain and the Sea: An Ancient Semitic Nature-Myth,” *Iraq* 4 (1937): 23.

the Ugaritic texts.²³ El's closest consort was the goddess Athirat (=Asherah), the "Lady Athirat of the Sea," who was the mother of the gods.²⁴ The sun was even worshipped as a goddess, Shapash, who was the "luminary of the gods."²⁵ In the Ras Shamra texts, the designation "Baal" occurs about 240 times either alone or in a compound.²⁶ "Baal is clearly the most active and prominent of all the Canaanite deities, even though El is technically the supreme god, to whose ultimate authority Baal is subordinate."²⁷ Because of El's supremacy in the Canaanite pantheon, Green remarks that "while there may be allusions to Baal in the imagery of a storm theophany, it is clearly with the mighty El that Yahweh is identified."²⁸

²³ See Day, "Canaan, Religion of," 1:832.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:831.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:832.

²⁶ See Kurt Gerhard Jung, "Baal," in *ISBE*, 4 vols., ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1979), 1:377. W. Herrmann asserts that there are over 500 references to Baal in the Ras Shamra texts ("Baal [בַּעַל]," in *DDDB*, 2nd ed., ed. by Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst [Leiden: Brill, 1999], 134).

²⁷ Day, "Baal (Deity)," 1:545. See the helpful paper by Arvid S. Kapelrud, "The Relationship Between El and Baal in the Ras Shamra Texts," in *The Bible World: Essays in Honor of Cyrus H. Gordon*, ed. by Gary Rendsburg, Ruth Adler, Milton Arfa, and Nathan H. Winter (New York: Institute of Hebrew Culture and Education of New York University, 1980), 79–85.

²⁸ Green, *Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, 246. This is not the place to argue that Yahweh is/is not the El of the Canaanite literature. For a study here, see Green's study when he asserts: "Yahweh's identification with the most important god in the region underscores the overwhelming importance of Canaanite mythical influence on formative Yahwism. Simply put: the Canaanite El, under the name of Yahweh, was the original god of Israel; Yahweh was an "El" figure" (*Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, 246). Then later in his work, "the attributes of the god El became the characteristics of Yahweh for the earliest Yahweh-warrior groups around Canaan. El, the ancient god of the patriarchal tribal league, became Yahweh/El of the warrior groups toward the end of the Late Bronze Age" (253). One final quote will suffice from Green: "Yahweh . . . by the fourteenth/thirteenth century B.C.E. . . . had merged completely with the god El (254); cf. de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism*, 11–34. This is part of the reason why the Israelites are commanded repeatedly to be done away with the worship of Baal (e.g. Judg 6:25; 2 Kgs 3:2; 10:27; 11:18; 2 Chron 23:17; Zeph 1:4). However, one argument in favor of Yahweh being totally *distinct from* (or other than) the Canaanite "El" is that "El, the head of the pantheon, is sometimes portrayed as a weak and frightened character who cannot control the deities he sires" (Elmer B. Smick, "Mythopoetic Language in the Psalms," *WTJ* 44, no. 1 [Spring 1982]: 93). Smick continues: "Upon hearing of Baal's

The Canaanite literature does not present the same idea of a monotheistic God as the Bible does.²⁹ Rather, the Canaanite religion constructed quite a pantheon of gods and goddesses who exercised various roles and dominions.³⁰ At this point, a clashing of the polytheistic Canaanite religion and that of the unwavering, monotheistic faith in Yahweh occurs.³¹ The notion that the chief god of the Canaanites, El, is synonymous with and, therefore, must be equated to the biblical Yahweh must be rejected because this hypothesis is highly speculative and, most importantly, it cannot be found in Scripture.³² Yahweh, God of Israel, has always existed and must be diametrically opposed to the pagan, mythological god of the Canaanites, El.

demise El is helpless and goes into mourning pouring dust on his head and gashing himself with a stone” (ibid.).

²⁹ The OT is replete with references from Yahweh Himself and the biblical writers that He is the “only God” (Deut 4:35, 39; 10:17, Isa 44:8; 45:5, 14, 21, 46:9; Joel 2:27). It is helpful to be reminded by G. K. Beale that in Deut 10:17 (“For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality, nor take a bribe”), “Here, Moses is not assenting to the existence of other deities, but affirming Yahweh’s supremacy over all spiritual and heavenly powers” (“Myth, History, and Inspiration: A Review Article of *Inspiration and Incarnation* by Peter Enns,” *JETS* 49, no. 2 [June 2006]: 295). To support this further, Smick writes: “The OT reveals no theological inhibition about imputing personality to false gods . . . term “the God of gods” is just a Hebrew superlative” (“Mythopoetic Language,” 95).

³⁰ For a lengthy treatment on this topic, see Conrad E. L’Heureux, *Rank Among the Canaanite Gods: El, Ba’al, and the Repha’im*, HSM 21 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979).

³¹ As Human notes in this regard: “By defining myth as a “history of the gods,” the Israelite faith – at least its later development – would show a form of discomfort. Because of the monotheistic character of the Yahweh-faith, this understanding of myth is unacceptable, because only one God, namely Yahweh, is revered in Old Testament faith. Nevertheless, Old Testament narratives and poetry reflect traces of ancient Near Eastern myths” (“Psalm 93,” 149).

³² Day notes that some arguments against this are: 1) The formula in question is nowhere attested and is highly speculative; 2) the character of El is uniformly benevolent in the Ugaritic texts, whereas Yahweh has a fierce side as well as a kind one; 3) this view presupposes that the name Yahweh means “he creates” whereas it most certainly means “he is/exists” (See Day, “Canaan, Religion of,” 1:835).

However, most pertinent to this study is the Canaanite god Baal.³³ Preeminent in the Canaanite/Syrian pantheon of gods, his rise to kingship and divine authority did not come through hereditary succession but rather by means of his own divine power exemplified through various conquests and victories.³⁴ Baal's earliest identifying characteristic is that of a powerful warrior.³⁵ Interestingly enough, El did not choose Baal as residing as the preeminent one in the Canaanite pantheon. Baal neither inherited nor earned his right to kingship. Baal proved his potency by taking it by force and, hence, imposing himself as champion of the gods and king of the whole mythological cosmos.³⁶

Baal's most distinguishable characteristic is his dominion over rain and fire. The Ugaritic texts verify this by depicting him primarily "as the great storm god: the fertility of the land depends on the rain Baal supplies."³⁷ The power inherent in bringing rain, thunder, or lightning which Baal provides fits well with the description of Baal being a warring prowess.³⁸ It is understandable, then, that in many of the steles found, in his left

³³ Though Baal will be observed below, for a lengthy and thorough treatment on Baal, see Alberto R. W. Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003); see also Norman C. Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal: A Conflict of Religious Cultures* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1964).

³⁴ See Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, 176.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 177.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 182. On a slightly different note, however, Gaster sees that "Ba'al has annually to fight and conquer the lords of sea and river before ever he can ascend the throne and reaffirm his dominion over the earth" ("Battle of the Rain and the Sea," 25).

³⁷ Day, "Baal (Deity)," 1:545.

³⁸ Mark Anthony Phelps, "Baal Deity," in *EDB*, ed. by David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 134.

hand he grasps a thunderbolt, which at one end of the thunderbolt then converts into a spearhead, and in his right hand he swings a club overhead.³⁹

Just as any other god or deity has his place of residence, Baal's dwelling resides upon Mt. Shaphan, about 25 miles North of Ugarit.⁴⁰ The texts depict him as the one who dwelt on high as king and supreme judge.⁴¹ After Baal conquers his enemies in battle, he takes his seat on the throne of the gods on "the mountain in North."⁴² Some of the most well-known epithets for Baal are "the victor Baal," "rider of the clouds," "the prince lord (Baal) of the earth."⁴³ Excavators recently uncovered two temples situated close to each other at Ugarit. These temples are identified with the worship of Baal and Dagan.⁴⁴ Dagan has a temple, but his prominence is minimized in the texts. On the other hand, Baal not only has a temple, but finds prominence as the key figure in the "extensive collection of religious and literary texts found."⁴⁵

As lord of all the earth, Baal's activity as storm-god intertwined with such atmospheric elements as thunderstorms, lightning, rains, mist, and dew, which all

³⁹ Jung, "Baal," 1:377.

⁴⁰ Though this is not directly pertinent to this study, note the similarities of Baal's abode on Mt. Shaphan with the "echoes of mythological sense" found in the Hebrew בַּשָּׁפָן or בְּשָׁפָן (See Ps 48:3 [Eng 48:2] and Isa 14:13).

⁴¹ See Arvid S. Kapelrud, *Baal in the Ras Shamra Texts* (Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad Publisher, 1952), 145.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *ANET*, 130; see Day, "Baal (Deity)," 1:545.

⁴⁴ See Craigie, *Ugarit and the Old Testament*, 61.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

fertilized the earth.⁴⁶ All of Baal’s envoys were associated with moisture in some form or another. Furthermore, whenever Baal “uttered his holy voice,” the earth convulsed, and his foes fled into the deep recesses of the forest.⁴⁷ To bring about additional fear in the foes, lightning struck in the skies whenever he raised his right hand.

Even though Baal was a lord over the cosmos and, eventually, was the most prominent figure besides El among the gods, the Canaanite mythology still tends to point out certain weaknesses in his character. For instance, Baal’s reliance on others to mediate his problems before the lofty El draws attention to flaws in his “sovereignty.”⁴⁸ Baal’s position as king is only secure through his abilities as a Divine Warrior.⁴⁹ If he wins, he is king. If he loses, he is not proclaimed as king.⁵⁰

Specifically, Baal’s battle with Yamm can be studied in text *UT 68* (KTU 1.2), lines 1–40. After Baal was victorious in battle against Yam,⁵¹ Baal sent both Athirat and Anat as his emissaries to El as mediators, requesting El’s permission to build his temple:⁵²

⁴⁶ See Green, *Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, 258.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁴⁹ See Harold Wayne Ballard, Jr., *The Divine Warrior Motif in the Psalms*, BDS 6 (North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press, 1999), 13–14.

⁵⁰ This is an important truth to note because of the comparison with Yahweh later on in the exegetical chapter on Ps 93. Yahweh never has to “secure” any position as King. He never has the option of “losing” thus forfeiting his status as Sovereign King.

⁵¹ For a thorough study of this battle and an attempt to reconcile the “alleged” inconsistencies in the Baal cycles attributing victory over Yam to Athirat, Anat, and Baal, see Nick Wyatt, *The Mythic Mind: Essays on Cosmology and Religion in Ugaritic and Old Testament Literature* (London: Equinox Publishing, 2005), 18–37.

⁵² Green, *Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, 227n29.

*He [Baal] cries to Athirat and her sons,
To the goddess and the band of her kinsmen:
“There is no house for Baal like the gods,
Nor dwelling like the sons of Athirat.
El has a home,
His sons have shelters;
The Great Lady-who-tramples-Yam has a home,
The perfect brides have a home.”*⁵³

Also, because of his victory, Baal was proclaimed King:

*Our king is Valiant,
Baal is our ruler
There is none (who is) above him
We should all carry his chalice,
We should all carry his cup.*⁵⁴

And again, one finds similar phraseology elsewhere:

*Our king is Valian[t]
Baal is our lord:
And there is none above him!*⁵⁵

His dominion and sovereignty are noted:

*Take your everlasting kingdom,
Your eternal dominion!*⁵⁶

Baal is declared to be king:

*Then B[aal] went out
Valiant Baal dried him [Yam] up,
And
‘Yam is indeed dead!
Baal will rul[e].*⁵⁷

⁵³ Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 100; *KT* 1.4iv:50ff.

⁵⁴ Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 87; *KT* 1.3v:30ff

⁵⁵ Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 100; *KT* 1.4iv:40ff.

⁵⁶ Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 65; *KT* 1.2iv:10ff.

⁵⁷ Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 69; *KT* 1.2iv:30ff. See Craigie, *Ugarit and the Old Testament*, who translates this phrase as: “Yamm is dead! Baal shall certainly *become* king” (63).

One may understand how some scholars affirm that the OT ascribes features and characteristics of Baal to Yahweh—because of such similarities found in the OT and the Ugaritic texts.⁵⁸ At the same time, however, one need not go so far as to propose with Libolt that “the distinctiveness of Israel’s conception of God, society, and time are most clearly seen against the backdrop of Canaanite culture in which they shared.”⁵⁹ Kapelrud also hypothesizes that there are some biblical passages employing divine epithets which had previously been attributed to Baal.⁶⁰ Kapelrud concludes: “There can be no doubt that Yahweh is here identified with Baal. This means that the worship of Baal was so deeply rooted in this early period of Israel’s history that the only way to master it for the Israelites was to identify Yahweh with Baal.”⁶¹ But is it necessary to make such a claim on the Israelites? Were they really this *dependent* on the pagan nations for understanding Yahweh?

Obviously both pagan nations surrounding Israel and Baal worship featured prominently during the Israelite period. But does one need to assert the proposal that the *only* way to understand Yahweh was to attribute everything originally to Baal?

Similarities in religious phraseology do not necessitate an identical source. Ascribing

⁵⁸ For example, Yahweh’s conflict with the dragon and the sea (e.g. Ps 74:12–14, see below for this study); Isa 27:1; Job 7:12), the idea of the “Son of Man” coming with the clouds of heaven (Dan 7:13; and perhaps Ps 68:5 [Eng 68:4]) and the close similarities to the Ugaritic literature of Baal being the “rider of the clouds” (See Driver, *Canaanite Myths & Legends*, 87). The argument goes as follows: Because the Canaanite texts are from an earlier time period and because the Canaanites were in the land long before Israel was, the Israelites came along at a later time period and merely “took and incorporated” Canaanite phraseology and applied it to Yahweh.

⁵⁹ See Clayton G. Libolt, “Canaan,” in *ISBE*, 4 vols., ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1979), 1:590.

⁶⁰ Kapelrud, *Baal in the Ras Shamra Texts*, 43–44.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

kingship and sovereignty to Baal at an earlier time in no way requires the conclusion that Yahweh—because He is ascribed as *the* Sovereign One in the OT—assumed all his characteristics from Baal.

CHAPTER THREE:
WATER MYTHOLOGY IN CANAANITE TEXTS

Introduction

Though the Canaanite texts are replete with metaphors and images that hail their deities as supreme gods, for the purposes of this thesis, the only metaphor to be analyzed will be that of water mythology to assist in understanding the cultural milieu of the ANE documents.

The “Waters” in the ANE

Throughout the ANE water was recognized as a primal element of creation and as an indispensable part of the process by which life came into being.¹ Instead of being thought of as a created element formed by the mouth of divine utterance, it became regarded as constituting a cosmic power within itself.² Therefore, it is possible to construct the formation of this cosmic power rising up in rebellion and challenging Yahweh’s sovereignty and authority.

Similarly, Ugaritic mythology reflects the notion of a conflict between Baal and the power of the cosmic seas, Yam.³ The circumstance leading to this war consisted of the god Yam sending messengers to El, the supreme deity to demand that Baal be given

¹ R. E. Clements, “מַיִם,” in *TDOT*, 15 vols., ed. by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. by Douglas W. Stott et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 8:282.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, 8:283. Jacob H. Grønbæk notes that in both the Enuma Elish and in Genesis 1 there is a reference to a principle of chaos, namely, the chaotic bodies of water, תְּהוֹם which must be battled against and defeated *before* creation can take place (see Jacob H. Grønbæk, “Baal’s Battle with Yam—A Canaanite Creation Fight,” *JSOT* 33, no. 3 [Oct 1985]: 28–29); Loren R. Fisher, “Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament,” *VT* 15 (1965): 313–24.

up to him as his servant. Baal refused to be given up to Yam to be subservient to him and, hence, war broke out.⁴ As it appears on the Ugaritic tablets, the central theme of the conflict is a context for “the divine kingship over gods and men.”⁵ Though for much of the war, Yam seemed to be victorious, Baal finally defeated Yam with the help of two clubs which Kothar-and-Hasis fashioned. Consequently, Baal was exclaimed as King.⁶ This triumphant victory of Baal the warrior over Yam shows why he is installed in the cosmos as king of the pantheon.⁷ In other words, the conflict here focuses on the emergence of kingship among the gods.⁸

In similar literature, the *Enuma Elish* is a Babylonian account of Marduk, a young and active god, who wants to create heaven and earth, but first he must destroy the chaos monster, Tiamat, whose corpse provides the material from which everything is created.⁹ Hence, it is easy to see why this battle motif is so prominent in the theme of creation.

The region of the sea was considered by the Canaanites to be the battleground between Yam, the god of the sea and of chaos, and Baal, the god of fertility and

⁴ See John Day, “Baal (Deity),” in *ABD*, 5 vols., ed. by David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), Day, 1:545–46.

⁵ See Kenton L. Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 333.

⁶ Though at this point, admittedly, the texts are incomplete; cf. Helmer Ringgren, *Religions of the Ancient Near East*, trans. by John Sturdy (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), 145–46.

⁷ Alberto R. W. Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 176–77.

⁸ See Frank Moore Cross, *From Epic to Canaan: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 80–81.

⁹ Grønbæk, “Baal’s Battle with Yam,” 29.

thunderstorms.¹⁰ It was the pattern of thought to the inhabitants of the ANE that the primeval chaos is present in the sea.¹¹ In this ANE mindset, “the sea represents chaos and disorder, as to the sea monsters that live there.”¹² In Ugaritic myth, Yam, “the sea,” is the great antagonist of Baal. Baal finally receives the victory which results in his enthronement as king.¹³ Consequently, it is understandable to see how these peoples came to realize that the waters represented some sort of chaos or rebellious nature rising up against the deity.

The discovery of the Ras Shamra texts exposed the Canaanite “architecture” of Ugaritic poetry and has led some to see similarities between Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry.¹⁴ For instance, it has been proposed that the similarities between Psalm 29 and the Ugaritic literature are too similar to merely be two distinct documents composed at

¹⁰ See Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *EBC*, 12 vols., ed. by Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 5:255.

¹¹ Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: ANE Iconography and the Book of Psalms*, trans. by Timothy J. Hallett (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 49; cp. Pss 74:13 (אֲתָהּ פִּוּרְרַת בְּעִזֵּי יָם) and 89:9 (אֲתָהּ מוֹשֵׁל בְּגִמְוֹת הַיָּם).

¹² John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 547.

¹³ Grønbæk, “Baal’s Battle with Yam,” 33.

¹⁴ See Peter C. Craigie, “Parallel Word Pairs in Ugaritic Poetry: A Critical Evaluation of their Relevance for Psalm 29,” *UF* 11 (1979): 135–40; Peter C. Craigie, “The Poetry of Ugarit and Israel,” *TynBul* 22 (1971): 3–31 (esp. 15–31); B. Margulis, “A Ugaritic Psalm (RŠ 24.252),” *JBL* 89, no. 3 (Sept 1970): 292–304. Margulis concludes his article by saying that this evidence for the “ritual enthronement” from the Ras Shamra texts are the *linchpin* of both Canaanite and Israelite divine kingship ideology and practice, binding the mythic with the ritual and the Canaanite with the Israelite on the phenomenological and historical planes respectively (*ibid.*, 304); and Fisher, “Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament,” 313–24.

different times for different purposes to different gods/deities.¹⁵ Furthermore, the parallels with Ugaritic are so close that many psalms have been described as originally a hymn to Baal which has been slightly revised in terms of Yahwism.¹⁶ John Day proposes that the concepts of “waters,” “the sea,” “rivers,” or “floods” are *all* expressions which prove to be Canaanite in origin.¹⁷ G. K. Beale similarly notes,

It is apparent that Israel intentionally alluded to facets of the pagan religion surrounding them (e.g., Egyptian, Canaanite and Babylonian) in order to affirm that what the pagans thought was true of their gods was true only of Israel’s God (e.g., Ps 29 is a well-known example of applying the sovereign attributes of the fertility god Baal to Yahweh in order to demonstrate that only Yahweh possesses such characteristics).¹⁸

Gerald Wilson seems to believe that the Genesis accounts of the creation and Flood share with similar ancient Near Eastern texts a focus on chaotic waters that must be controlled within boundaries before secure human existence can be assured.¹⁹ Most victoriously, therefore, in the Psalter, Yahweh subdues the violent power of the waters of chaos is broken. In this respect Yahweh has taken over the function of Baal.²⁰ “Once again, it is simply the voice of Yahweh that executes his sovereign intentions over the

¹⁵ See Frank M. Cross Jr., “Notes on a Canaanite Psalm in the Old Testament,” *BASOR* 117 (Feb 1950): 19–21; cf. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I: 1–50*, AB (Garden City: NY: Doubleday & Company, 1965), 175–80.

¹⁶ See Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Wales: University of Wales Press, 1967), 62. Johnson continues by noting: “This is an important concept, for it admits the possibility that we have here a hymn of the early Jebusite cultus of Jerusalem which was adapted to the worship of Yahweh after the capture of the city of David” (*ibid.*).

¹⁷ See Day, *God’s Conflict With the Dragon and the Sea*, 7.

¹⁸ G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, *New Studies in Biblical Theology*, ed. by D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 30.

¹⁹ See Wilson, *Psalms*, 503n2.

²⁰ Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 48.

watery elements rather than some violent confrontation. Yahweh is, indeed, superior to Baal!”²¹

Examples of Water Mythology in ANE Texts

So how does this rising up of rebellious waters play itself out in some of the Canaanite literature to Baal? A few examples will suffice:

*What enemy rises up against Baal,
What adversary against Him who Mounteth the Clouds?
Have I not slain Sea [Yam], beloved of El?
Have I not annihilated River [Nahar], the great god?
Have I not muzzled the Dragon [Tannin], holding her in a muzzle?
I have slain the Crooked Serpent [Lotan – Leviathan],
The foul-fanged with Seven Heads.*²²

Another text reads:

*I tell thee, O Prince Baal,
I declare, O Rider of the Clouds
Now thine enemy, O Baal
Now thine enemy wilt thou smite
Now wilt thou cut off thine adversary.
Thou’lt take thine eternal kingdom,
Thine everlasting dominion . . .
Chase Yamm from his throne,
[Na]har from his seat of dominion.
Do thou swoop in the hand of Baal,
Like an eagle between his fingers;
Strike the back of Prince Yamm,
Between the arms of [J]udge Nahar . . .
Drive Yamm from his throne,
Nahar from his seat of dominion
Do thou swoop in the hand of Baal,
Like an eagle between his fingers
Strike the pate of Prince Yamm,*

²¹ Michael A. Grisanti, “בַּיָּם,” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 5 vols., ed. by Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 2:932.

²² See *ANET*, 137; *UT*, ‘Anat: III; 37–38.

*Between the eyes of Judge Nahar
Yamm shall collapse
And fall to the ground . . .
Baal would rend, would smash Yamm,
Would annihilate Judge Nahar.²³*

With the obvious exception of Yahweh, Baal finds himself the most significant deity in the OT. For this reason, it is appropriate to evaluate how some have interpreted some of the psalms with this Baalistic, Canaanite background in mind.

²³ ANET, 130–31; Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 65–67.

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE PSALMS AND THEIR POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION OF MYTHOLOGY

Introduction

The royal psalms¹ are among some of the most magnificent praise choruses ascribed to Yahweh in all of Scripture. Certainly all of the Psalms are beautiful, poetic, and doxological, but these royal psalms are among the foremost of those ascribing glory and sovereignty to Yahweh alone. The royal psalms² are also termed theocratic psalms,³ enthronement psalms,⁴ and kingship psalms⁵ because of the obvious phraseology employed hailing Yahweh as the reigning King. But in order to better understand the kingship psalms a few selected portions of some psalms will need to be observed to see if there are any mythological features found in the psalms. For, indeed, it cannot be denied that the ancient psalmists knew the religious world of their day and used language that the people would understand. Along the same vein, Heidel believes that “we have . . . good reasons for believing that at least some of the authors of the Old Testament *were*

¹ Here seen as Pss 93–99.

² See Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, trans. by Keith Crim (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 107–23 who refers to these psalms as the “Royal Psalms.” Cf. Gerald H. Wilson, “The Use of Royal Psalms at the ‘Seams’ of the Hebrew Psalter,” *JSOT* 35 (June 1986): 85–94; Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I, 1–50*, AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1981), 7.

³ See Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, ed. by Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, trans. by Francis Bolton, in BCOT (repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1968), 3:73. He notes that the phrase *יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ* is a “watchword of the theocratic Psalms” (ibid.).

⁴ See Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, 2 vols., trans. by D. R. Ap-Thomas (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 1:106; cf. Loren R. Fisher, “Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament,” *VT* 15 (1965): 322; Patrick D. Miller, Jr., “‘Enthroned on the Praises of Israel:’ The Praise of God in Old Testament Theology,” *Interpretation* 39, no. 1 (Jan 1985): 17; John Day, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament*, UCOP 35 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 35–36.

⁵ Howard, *Structure of Psalms 93–100*, 41; VanGemenen, “Psalms,” 5:91–96, 607, 617.

acquainted with foreign literature and that in certain cases and to a certain degree they actually made use of it in the composition of their own books.”⁶

Potential “Mythological” Features in the Psalms

“In certain respects, no Near Eastern texts are so close to the biblical psalms as the literary texts from Ugarit.”⁷ With a statement such as this, it is essential to observe some of the psalms and their alleged “mythological” features that some have proposed as backgrounds—and, as some propose, sources—to the Psalms. The issue at hand is not so much the background of mythology and the ancient texts but rather whether mythological features exist in the Psalter. Because this has been such a lively topic of discussion in scholarly circles, it is imperative to touch upon the issue. With that said, however, the interpreter must realize that “no psalms similar to those in the Old Testament have been discovered at Ras Shamra; but since practically all the Ugaritic texts are in poetical form

⁶ Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of Creation*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 137. He explains: “Hardly anyone will deny that in these three biblical passages [Ps 74:4; Isa 27:1; Ps 92:10] the sacred writers took over figures of speech derived from foreign literature and that they patterned their lines after those from Ras Shamra, just as certain of the classical writers of the Christian Era patterned some of their finest literary productions after Greek and Roman masterpieces. Since the Old Testament was intended also for the gentile world, it is but natural that the biblical authors availed themselves of figures of speech and imagery with which also Israel’s neighbors were familiar, or which were at least easily understandable to them. It may be added, however, that identical phraseology does not necessarily imply identical theology” (ibid., 138). As Rodríguez remarks even with regard to the scapegoat in Lev 16 and the similar religious rites of other religions in that day: “It is obvious that God was employing a common ritual practice from the ancient Near East to convey a truth that was not expressed through the performance of the ritual itself in any other religion. In other words, God selected a ritual practice and invested it with a particular meaning that was foreign to it. God was mediating new knowledge using structures of knowledge already present. He condescended to use what was available to the Israelites in order to lead them beyond their cognitive limitations into a better understanding of His plan for them” (“Ancient Near Eastern Parallels to the Bible,” 61–62).

⁷ Kenton L Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 116. Furthermore, “Ugaritic texts were written in a West Semitic language that was closely related to Hebrew, and their poetic parallelism is very much like the parallelism of Israelite hymns and prayers” (ibid.).

it is possible to compare them with the Old Testament psalms.”⁸ Because of time and space, only a few texts⁹ shall be observed in attempting to realize some scholarly opinion¹⁰ regarding the connection between the two: Psalms 74:13–14; 77:16–20; 89:9–10; 144:7; and 29:3–5, 10. To begin the study, the immediate concern may be aptly summarized in that:

Israel’s dominant metaphor for this threat of chaos, which is both cosmic and intensely existential, is “the mighty waters” that surge out of control so that the life of Israel and the life of the world are under threat. In the liturgy of Yahweh’s kingship, worship is the drama wherein the waters are driven back, defeated, and contained.¹¹

Each will be examined in turn below.¹²

⁸ Kapelrud, *The Ras Shamra Discoveries and the Old Testament*, 79. Later in his chapter he concludes: “It is instructive to examine individual psalms from the standpoint of their relationship to Ugaritic motifs, expressions, and details of cultic practice. The psalms are firmly rooted in the Yahwistic faith and the Jerusalem cult; but this does not mean that they do not contain many elements derived from Canaanite religion. The recognition of these elements can help to shed fresh light on details in the religion of Israel . . . It would be a mistake to disregard the rich material provided by the Ras Shamra texts” (ibid., 81).

⁹ Obviously the author has chosen only a handful of the many texts that could be studied in depth; and even at that, these four examples are only from the Psalter. For instance, Ps 104 is an ancient hymn which is, according to Kapelrud, “full of mythological elements similar to those found in the Ras Shamra texts.” He continues: “Yahweh is described here in vivid terms as the creator and sustainer of the world. It is said that He established the earth upon its foundations (v. 5), with the primeval sea, *tehom*, around it (v. 6). He makes the clouds his chariot and travels on the wings of the wind (v. 3). He sends the rain and the streams, makes the grass and plants grow, ripens the corn and the grapes, and provides olive oil and bread (vss. 10–17). Here Yahweh has taken over the role of the god of fertility; and this was of the utmost moment if He was to take the place of Baal” (Kapelrud, *Ras Shamra Discoveries and the Old Testament*, 52).

¹⁰ For a very helpful survey of scholarship in the past, refer to Yitzhak Avishur, *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1994), 13–36.

¹¹ See Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 656.

¹² Again, it is not appropriate here to exegete every feature of these examples, for that has been sufficiently accomplished elsewhere (see footnotes at appropriate locations). But what is pertinent to the matter at hand are the various interpretations of these specific verses and their relevance—if any—to the ANE mythological literature.

Psalm 74:13–14

- אֶתְּךָ פִּוֶרְרַת בְּעֹזֶךָ יָם שִׁבְרַת רֵאשֵׁי תַנִּינִים עַל־הַמַּיִם: ¹³
 אֶתְּךָ רִצַּצְתָּ רֵאשֵׁי לִוְיָתָן תִּתְּנֶנּוּ מֵאֵל לְעַם לְצִיִּים: ¹⁴
- ¹³ As for You, You divided the Sea by Your strength;
 You shattered the heads of the dragons upon the waters;
- ¹⁴ As for You, You crushed the heads of Leviathan;
 You gave him as food to the people who dwell in the desert
 places.¹³

Psalm 74 is commonly known as a lament psalm where the nation of Israel laments the present circumstances after Babylon has invaded and destroyed the city of Jerusalem and left it in ruins (v. 3). The title for Psalm 74 reads: מִשְׁכִּיל לְאַסָּף. But Asaph, one of David's choirmasters and a descendant of Gershon the son of Levi (1 Chron 6:39; 15:17; 2 Chron 5:12), was appointed by King David and obviously could not have penned this song for the Babylonian captivity did not come about for another four hundred years.¹⁴ In putting the facts together, then, it seems that this refers to a descendant of Asaph who lived during the time of the Babylonian exile. The psalm contrasts the present distress with Yahweh's past deliverance (vv. 12–17).¹⁵ The nation beseeches Yahweh in a desperate time of need, when their holy city has been demolished, to remember His covenant (v. 20). But in the midst of this psalm recalling Yahweh's past deliverance are these verses which many believe incorporate mythological connotations.

¹³ Author's translation.

¹⁴ See Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *EBC*, 12 vols., ed. by Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 5:34–35, and 484.

¹⁵ Notice in the MT, all of the 2ms pronouns, אַתָּה, in vv. 13–17. In fact, the sevenfold repetition of אַתָּה has led some to think that these verses compile a separate unit which were later compiled into this psalm (cf. Avishur, *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms*, 208–9).

With such verses as these (vv. 13–14), it is clear that they have ANE mythology and culture in mind because of the references to יָם, תַּנִּינִים, and לְיַתָּן.¹⁶ This is not the place to delve into an exegetical look at these verses, but rather to understand how scholars have seen the relationship between these verses and ANE mythology.

John Day merely sees this as a reference to Baal’s victory with the psalmist attributing the victory to Yahweh. He states that “the OT appropriates the motif of Baal’s conflict with Leviathan (“dragon”) and Yam and applies it to Yahweh (Ps 74:12–17) and this can also be demythologized so that it is simply a case of God’s controlling (rather than fighting with) the waters, as in Genesis 1.”¹⁷ Day continues: “A related theme to that of the divine victory over the waters is divine kingship. Just as Baal became king following his victory over Yam, so the OT associates Yahweh’s kingship with his defeat of the chaos waters (Ps 74:12; 93:1–2).”¹⁸

Cyrus Gordon believes that “[Ps 74] was taken over from ancient Canaan and transformed by the Hebrews.”¹⁹ Ballard concurs: “the use of imagery depicting Yahweh

¹⁶ Avishur notes that “the mythical description [here] is juxtaposed to a description of creation, and a similar phenomenon is encountered elsewhere in the Bible (see Ps 89) and in the Babylonian creation epic, *enuma elis*. Ps 74:13–17 describes God’s victory over the sea and its assistants Leviathan, and the monsters” (ibid., 209).

¹⁷ Day, “Canaan, Religion of,” 1:835; cf. John Gray, “The Kingship of God in the Prophets and Psalms,” *VT* 11 (1961): 5 who adds that here it refers to “God’s triumph over the monsters of the primeval deep, Tannin and Rahab” (ibid.). Elsewhere, Gray continues: “Leviathan, of course, is *ltn* of the Baal-myth of Ras Shamra, with *ttn* a monster slain by Baal in his conflict with the powers of chaos as a prelude to the assumption of his Kingship. The actual adjectives qualifying Leviathan are precisely the epithets of *ltn* in the Ras Shamra texts, a striking instance of Canaanite influence on Hebrew thought and religion” (ibid., 23).

¹⁸ Day, “Canaan, Religion of,” 1:835.

¹⁹ Cyrus H. Gordon, “Leviathan: Symbol of Evil,” in *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations*, Philip W. Lown Institute of Advanced Judaic Studies: Studies and Texts 3, ed. by Alexander Altmann (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 1.

defeating enemies in Psalm 74:12–17 borrows heavily from the ancient Near Eastern motif of Divine kingship.”²⁰ Part of the reason they are so confident in seeing this connection is because of a verse from the following Ugaritic myth from the fourteenth century BC:

*Though thou didst smite Lotan the writhing serpent
Didst destroy the crooked serpent
The ruler of seven heads.*²¹

And again:

*I muzzled Tunnanu . . .
I crushed the writhing serpent
Ruling-one of seven heads.*²²

As Avishur deduces from the similarities found in the phraseology, “these Ugaritic texts shed light on the biblical verses. The juxtaposition of the verb *pr* to *ym* (v. 13) reflects the influence of Ugaritic myth: the sea is depicted as a persona here . . . the same way it is described in the Ugaritic myth.”²³ He continues: “The references to the ‘heads of the monsters’ in v. 13 and the ‘heads of Leviathan’ in verse 14 clearly allude to the Ugaritic myth about the seven heads of the *tnn*.”²⁴ Luyster speaks to this issue by saying that “Yahweh is king due to his triumph over the waters, in all their monstrous

²⁰ Ballard, *Divine Warrior Motif in the Psalms*, 63.

²¹ CTA 5 [67] I:1–3; Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 115; cf. Avishur, *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms*, 210; ANET, 138.

²² CTA 3 [‘nt] III: 32–34; cf. Avishur, *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms*, 211.

²³ *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms*, 211.

²⁴ *Ibid.* He does acknowledge that there are still some obscure phrases even after the discovery of so many of the Ras Shamra texts (*ibid.*). John Goldingay also sees the seven heads possibly being personified as a sea monster in the Ugaritic story of Baal and Anat where Leviathan/Lotan has seven heads, which corresponds to the sevenfold “you are the one who . . .” in vv.13–17 (*Psalms: Volume 2, Psalms 42–89*, BCOTWP [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 431).

forms. Because he is able to divide and dry them up, the cosmic structure is allowed to emerge: the earth, the heavenly bodies, and all the times and seasons.”²⁵ Though not so bold as to assert a direct borrowing, Wakeman recognizes a “faint echo of battle myth.”²⁶

However, it may not be necessary to demand such a “borrowing” from the pagan literature of the day. In fact, Heidel—though commenting on Psalm 74’s “connection” with the Babylonian literature as opposed to the Canaanite literature—comments by saying that “when the Old Testament speaks of a conflict of Yahweh [or Jehovah] against creatures resembling serpents and crocodiles, there is no occasion to assume, with Delitzsch and an imposing number of other Assyriologists, a connection with the Babylonian myth of the Ti’amat conflict.”²⁷

More along the lines of the specific Canaanite texts is Smick’s viewpoint as he believes that the biblical “contexts prove the authors were not committed to myth but were keenly aware of contemporaneous mythology from which they drew colorful figures to enrich their theological expression.”²⁸ He then reminds the interpreter that “Israelite religion . . . at its worst had no nature myths but at its best it did not hesitate to use the language of the Canaanite myths.”²⁹ In further explicating on this issue, Smick

²⁵ Robert Luyster, “Wind and Water: Cosmogonic Symbolism in the Old Testament,” *ZAW* 93, no. 1 (1981): 3.

²⁶ Mary K. Wakeman, *God’s Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 96. She continues later on: “Since there are a great many more passages which speak of the sea that are evocative of the myth than there are direct references to the battle with the monster, we will have gained a great advantage toward appreciating the powerful use to which the myth is put in Israel, as proof of God’s sovereignty” (*ibid.*, 105).

²⁷ See Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis*, 112 (see esp. 82–140 for a detailed chapter on these issues).

²⁸ Smick, “Mythopoetic Language,” 88.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

writes: “the mythopoetic language about the many-headed Leviathan is historicized and used metaphorically to describe Yahweh’s great victory in history, at the Red Sea.”³⁰

“Therefore,” says Smick, “the monster is Egypt.”³¹

Curtis also sees Psalm 74 as “polemical in nature” (cf. 74:18, 22–23).³² The psalmist here in this psalm recites Yahweh’s powerful acts; included among the acts are the very things Baal is reputed to have done. Consequently, the psalmist unequivocally demands that Yahweh alone is King for He has crushed the Leviathan and is the only sovereign King over the waters.

Psalm 77:16–20

נִאֲלַת בְּזִרְוֹעַ עֲמֹךְ בְּנֵי־יַעֲקֹב וַיּוֹסֶף סֵלָה׃¹⁶
 רָאוּךְ מַיִם | אֱלֹהִים רָאוּךְ מַיִם יַחֲלוּ אֶף יִרְגְּזוּ תְהַמּוֹת׃¹⁷
 זָרְמוּ מַיִם | עֲבוֹת קוֹל נִתְנוּ שְׁחָקִים אֶף־חֲצֹצִיף יַתְהַלְכוּ׃¹⁸
 קוֹל רַעְמֶךָ | בְּגִלְגָּל הָאֲיֵרוֹ בְּרָקִים תִּבְלַרְגְּזָה וַתִּרְעַשׂ הָאָרֶץ׃¹⁹
 בְּיָם דְּרָכֶךָ וּשְׁבִילֶיךָ בְּמַיִם רַבִּים וְעַקְבוֹתֶיךָ לֹא נִדְעוּ׃²⁰

16	You redeemed Your people with Your strength; The children of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.
17	The waters saw You, O God, The waters saw You, <i>and</i> trembled Yes, the depths trembled!
18	The clouds poured forth water The skies thundered; Yes, your arrows flashed back and forth!
19	The sound of Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind; The lightnings gave light to the world;

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² A. H. W. Curtis, “The ‘Subjugation of the Waters’ Motif in the Psalms; Imagery or Polemic?” *JSS* 23, no. 2 (Autumn 1978): 255. Curtis clarifies: “Again, the fact that our writer is consciously combating the views of the enemies of Yahweh suggests that the references to the great ‘mythological’ acts are more than mere imagery. Imagery could have little value as polemic. Rather, it was necessary to claim that Yahweh could do all that his rivals could do” (ibid.).

20 The earth trembled and it quaked!
 Your way is in the sea;
 And Your path was in the many waters;
 But your footsteps were not known.

Psalm 77³³ is Asaph's heart-felt cry to Yahweh to hear his prayer and to remember to be gracious to him. Asaph, David's choirmaster, composed this psalm with incredible transparency. At the end of the psalm, four verses composed of tricola reveal the theophany of Yahweh in the past.³⁴ Much discussion relates to the authorship and unity of Psalm 77. Many scholars attest that verses 17–20 form a unit of its own disconnected from the rest of the psalm.³⁵

John Gray sees a clear connection between Psalm 77:16–18 and the ANE literature when he writes:

In Ps. lxxvii, a public thanksgiving after relief from distress, which reflects the experience of the Kingship of God, though not actually mentioning the title, there is a similar mixture of Canaanite and native tradition. God's victory over the waters and his control of rain, thunder, and lightning, all the province of Baal, are mentioned.³⁶

Curtis concurs: "the vivid description of the Exodus in Psalm lxxvii must surely have brought to mind the conflict of the storm god with the sea monster."³⁷

Green asserts that "Ps 77 . . . is yet another ancient poem that attributes the functions of the ancient Near Eastern Storm-god to Yahweh."³⁸ In fact, much of the

³³ For a helpful study here, see Moshe Weinfeld, "Divine Intervention in War in Ancient Israel and In the Ancient Near East," in *History, Historiography and Interpretation: Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures*, ed. by H. Tadmor and M. Weinfeld (repr., Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1986), 142–43.

³⁴ See Avishur, *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms*, 212–30 for an excellent and detailed study of this topic.

³⁵ Dahood, *Psalms II: 51–100*, 2:224.

³⁶ Gray, "Kingship of God in the Prophets and Psalms," 9.

³⁷ Curtis, "Subjugation of the Waters," 251.

phraseology found in verses 16–20 closely resemble the mythopoetic language of the storm-god, Baal—e.g. Yahweh’s roaring theophany in the storm, evoking the tempestuous showers, his bolts of lightning shooting back and forth, and the earth trembling and shuddering.³⁹

Albright advocates that verses 17–20 are tricolon verses structured as A+B+C//A+B+D//E+F+G which corresponds to, and finds its source in, Ugaritic literature.⁴⁰ However, it seems that the bicolon at the end of the psalm (v. 21) is connecting the psalm together as a whole. Verses 17–20 must be, then, part of the original composition by Asaph deliberately portrayed to remind himself of the power and might of Yahweh in the midst of his time of desperate need.

But here in these verses, “Yahweh’s historical intervention on behalf of his people is expressed in terms of the cosmic theophany of the storm god, who strikes fear into the chaotic waters who stand in opposition to him.”⁴¹

Psalm 89:9–10⁴² [MT: 10–11]

אַתָּה מוֹשִׁיל בְּגִּמְלוֹת הַיָּם בְּשׂוּא נְלִיֹּ אַתָּה תִּשְׁבַּחַם: ¹⁰
 אַתָּה דִּכְבַּאתָ כַּחֲלָל רָהֵב בְּזִרוּעַ עֵזְךָ פִּזְרַתָּ אוֹיְבֶיךָ: ¹¹

³⁸ Green, *Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, 271.

³⁹ See *ibid.*, 272.

⁴⁰ See W. F. Albright, “The Psalm of Habakkuk,” in *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy Presented to Professor Theodore H. Robinson by the Society for Old Testament Study*, ed. by H. H. Rowley (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1950), 3. However, Avishur says that this theory is based “entirely on unfounded conjecture” (*Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms*, 213).

⁴¹ Curtis, “The ‘Subjugation of the Waters’,” 249.

⁴² English verse numbers.

John Gray says that in Psalm 89 “are all the essential features of the Canaanite myth contained in the text.”⁴⁶ In this specific psalm, Gray sees a “sublimation of the ancient Canaanite theme and even of its current Hebrew adaptation.”⁴⁷

The concepts and terminology in Psalm 89 resonate closely with the ANE literature. Not only is the sea personified in this passage, but it is also described as a physical object.⁴⁸ The monsters of the sea—familiar from the Ugaritic texts—are found here in this psalm. In verse 11, Rahab is mentioned which Dahood suggests is a “mythological monster representing the restless waters of the ocean.”⁴⁹ Furthermore, even at the end of the psalm, the נְהַר is found in the plural (נְהַרִּים). Dahood believes this reflects the feminine singular of the Phoenician type (cf. Pss 53:7 and 58:3).⁵⁰ “The power and faithfulness of God is maintained throughout the Psalm. Yahweh is king and the key to his sovereignty is his rule over the raging sea.”⁵¹

John Day regards Psalm 89 and “the motif of Yahweh’s victory over the dragon and the sea here as . . . an appropriation to Yahweh of a theme originally associated with

⁴⁶ See John Gray, “The Hebrew Conception of the Kingship of God: Its Origin and Development,” *VT* 6 (1956): 276.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 277.

⁴⁸ See Avishur, *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms*, 230–34.

⁴⁹ Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 314.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 317.

⁵¹ Luyster, “Wind and Water: Cosmogonic Symbolism in the Old Testament,” 2.

the Canaanite god Baal.”⁵² He considers the possibility that this portion of Psalm 89 may evidence a polemical element against Baalism.⁵³

Psalm 144:7

שֶׁלַח יָדְךָ מִמְּרוֹם פָּצְנִי וְהַצִּילֵנִי מִמַּיִם רַבִּים מִיַּד בְּנֵי נֹכְרִי׃⁷

⁷ Stretch out your hand from on high;
Deliver me;
Rescue me from the many waters;
from the hand of foreigners.

King David composed Psalm 144⁵⁴ recognizing the omnipotent power of Yahweh and beseeching Him for help against the always impending enemies.⁵⁵ He recognizes the refuge he has in Yahweh (vv. 1–2, 11) and he prays for blessing upon himself, his nation, and his people (vv. 12–15). But sandwiched in the middle of the psalm resides a beautiful chorus worshipping God because of His power over His creation. Crim notes that this appearance of God (theophany) is the defeat of the king’s enemies. Hence, the *mayyim rabbim* are the enemies of the king.⁵⁶ Though the phrase does occur in the Scriptures referring to people, context must always be the deciding factor (cf. Isa 17:12–13). But

⁵² John Day, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament*, UCOP 35 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 27.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ See Herbert G. May, “Some Cosmic Connotations of *Mayim Rabbim*, ‘Many Waters,’” *JBL* 74, no. 1 (Mar 1955): 14 where he identifies Ps 144 as a royal psalm.

⁵⁵ VanGemeren, “Psalms,” 5:856.

⁵⁶ See Crim, *Royal Psalms*, 120.

from the context of this psalm specifically, the “‘many waters’ are the foes of the psalmist; that is, the demonic power which would threaten to drown the righteous.”⁵⁷

Psalm 29:3–5, 10

קוֹל יְהוָה עַל-הַמַּיִם אֱלֹהֵי-הַכְּבוֹד הִרְעִים יְהוָה עַל-מַיִם רַבִּים: ³
 קוֹל-יְהוָה בְּכַח קוֹל יְהוָה בְּהַרְרָ: ⁴
 קוֹל יְהוָה שֹׁבֵר אֲרָזִים וַיִּשְׁבֵּר יְהוָה אֶת-אֲרָזֵי הַלְּבָנוֹן: ⁵
 יְהוָה לַמַּבּוּל יֹשֵׁב וַיֹּשֶׁב יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ לְעוֹלָם: ¹⁰

3	The voice of Yahweh ⁵⁸ The God of glory Yahweh	is upon the waters thunders is upon many waters
4	The voice of Yahweh The voice of Yahweh	with strength with majesty
5	The voice of Yahweh	breaks cedars
Yes,	Yahweh	breaks the cedars of Lebanon
10	Yahweh sits enthroned Yahweh sits	over the Flood as King forever

Psalm 29⁵⁹ asserts the unrivaled power of God as displayed in His creation. David composed this song acclaiming Yahweh, God of Israel, as the victorious King. Yahweh’s voice thunders most powerfully as He reveals Himself in this theophany. Indeed, Yahweh has revealed Himself in many aspects of creation. One of the wonderful aspects of this psalm is that it reveals one of the most glorious and awesome pictures of the supreme

⁵⁷ May, “Some Cosmic Connotations of *Mayim Rabîm*, 14.

⁵⁸ Gerald Wilson rightly remarks: “The central focus of the psalm is on the revealing voice of Yahweh, who makes his glorious kingship over the whole earth known through this powerful display. In the face of this disturbing display of the power of God who sits enthroned as king, the faithful can only bow in worship (29:1–2) and proclaim along with the thunderous voice of God, Glory! (29:9) (*Psalms: Volume I*, in NIVAC [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002], 503).

⁵⁹ Perhaps one of the most helpful resources on this psalm and its relationship with the Ugaritic literature may be found in Avishur, *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms*, 39–110 who covers topics such as the origin of Ps 29: Canaanite or Hebrew; Ps 29 and its relationship to ancient Hebrew poetry; the date of Ps 29—early or late; the structure of Ps 29—uniform or complex; some detailed explanatory notes on the psalm; as well as a section discussing various repetitions in Ps 29.

majesty and strength of Yahweh. However, here in Psalm 29, many see a close connection—if not a “slavish copying”—from the Canaanite, Baalistic literature. In fact, no other psalm in the Hebrew Bible has been critiqued and analyzed as thoroughly as Psalm 29.⁶⁰ John Day notes: “The description of Yahweh’s manifestation in the thunderstorm tends to echo that of the storm god, Baal, and this is particularly striking in Psalm 29.”⁶¹ To aid in observing some similarities, three Ugaritic texts provide the following readings:

*Baal uttered his holy voice,
 Baal repeated the issue of his lips,
 (Even) his holy voice; the earth quaked
 the rocks were dismayed
 were perturbed,
 East (and) west the high places of the earth
 Rocked. The foes of Baal did occupy
 The forests, the enemy of Hadad the innermost parts
 Of the rock(s). And the victor Baal
 Answered: “Foe of Hadad, why art thou dismayed?”⁶²*

And again:

*. Mot roused himself,
 Rose up from his fall [and cried: ‘El]
 will make Baal to sit [on the throne]
 of his kingdom, on the resting place, [on the seat]
 of his dominion.⁶³*

⁶⁰ See *ibid.*, 39–110 for an excellent and thorough discussion on this psalm and its relationship to the Ugaritic literature. Avishur rightly concludes by recognizing that, “despite [certain] affinities, however, Ps 29 differs from Ugaritic literature in certain respects. Some words of fundamental importance in Ps 29 do not occur in the known vocabulary of Ugaritic or Phoenician. Roots corresponding to the central theological concepts in this psalm—*kbwd*, *kbwd šmw*, *hđrt qđš*, and *mbwl*—are found in Ugaritic, but not in the same forms or usages as in Ps 29. The stylistic patterns and literary forms in Ps 29 . . . are variegated, and far more complex and well-developed than those appearing in Ugaritic literature” (110).

⁶¹ John Day, “Canaan, Religion of,” in *ABD*, 6 vols., ed. by David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:835.

⁶² This partially corrupted text is from Driver, *Canaanite Myths & Legends*, 101; cf. Pritchard, *ANET*, 135; *CTA* 4 vii:29–35; Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 109–10.

Perhaps even most significantly:

*He [Baal] will give abundance of rain,
Abundance of moisture with snow,
He will utter his voice in the clouds
And his flashings and lightnings on the earth.*⁶⁴

At first glance, it seems clear that similarities do exist between Psalm 29 and the poetic literature ascribing kingship to Baal. But some helpful background regarding Psalm 29 and its relationship to the supposed Canaanite elements found in Ugaritic literature must be noted.

First, in 1935, Harold Ginsberg proposed that Psalm 29 was originally a Phoenician hymn which eventually found its way into the biblical book of Psalms.⁶⁵ Perhaps the driving force behind Ginsberg's hypothesis consisted of the repetition of קוֹל יְהוָה, "The voice of YHWH," which indicated that the original version had been composed in honor of the Canaanite storm god, Baal.⁶⁶ Also, a number of scholars think that Psalm 29 is indeed a Canaanite psalm with the sheer substitution of the divine Yahweh wherever Baal was found.⁶⁷ Essentially,

⁶³ See Driver, *Canaanite Myths & Legends*, 115; Pritchard, *ANET*, 141. Once again, the text is only partially preserved.

⁶⁴ See Ringgren, *Religions of the Ancient Near East*, 132; Pritchard, *ANET*, 133.

⁶⁵ See Craigie, *Ugarit and the Old Testament*, 70.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ See Aloysius Fitzgerald, "A Note on Psalm 29," *BASOR* 215 (Oct 1974): 62–63. Fitzgerald writes: "Ps 29 in substantially its present form was written by a Canaanite, that the original divine name in the psalm was 'Baal,' and that the Israelite adaptation of the psalm involved simply the substitution of 'Yahweh' for 'Baal'" (*ibid.*, 62); cf. Theodor H. Gaster, "Psalm 29," *JQR* 37, no. 1 (July 1946): 55–65.

Psalm 29 would be a typical “hymn of laudation” detached from its mythical context, *Yahwized*, and preserved as an independent liturgical composition.⁶⁸ Although it may be “Yahwized,” the changes may not be as significant as one may suspect. Albright confidently proposes that “there can be no doubt that [Ps 29] is a relatively little changed adaptation of a Baal hymn to the cult of Yahweh, probably in or about the tenth century B.C.”⁶⁹ Furthermore, Psalm 29 would be this kind of Ugaritic and Canaanite psalm were the author consciously and deliberately “Yahwized” extant “pagan” compositions.⁷⁰ According to Dahood, the discovery of the tablets at Ras Shamra enhance the verdict that nearly every word in the psalm can now be duplicated in older Canaanite texts.⁷¹ Further supporting this proposal as to the origin of Psalm 29 is Gaster’s proposal that Psalm 29 should be detached from its mythic context, *Yahwized*, and preserved as an independent liturgical composition.⁷²

Kloos advances this proposal with her detailed study of Psalm 29 where she claims in her introduction that Psalm 29 shows that “Baal traits were an essential element

⁶⁸ Gaster, “Psalm 29,” 57. What Gaster means by “Yahwized” is that the name of Baal had been removed from the original and the person name of the biblical God, Yahweh, had been inserted in its place (See Craigie, *Ugarit and the Old Testament*, 70).

⁶⁹ W. F. Albright, “The Psalm of Habakkuk,” in *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy Presented to Professor Theodore H. Robinson by the Society for Old Testament Study*, ed. by H. H. Rowley (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1950), 6.

⁷⁰ See Gaster, “Psalm 29,” 64.

⁷¹ Dahood, *Psalms I*, 175. To be sure, the Hebrew and Canaanite similarities extend to word pairs, phrases, and prepositions. But Dahood limits it to words and word pairs in his commentary.

⁷² See Theodor H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament: A Comparative Study with Chapters from Sir James G. Frazer’s Folklore in the Old Testament* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1969), 748.

of Yhwh's character."⁷³ She regards Psalm 29 as an original Hebrew composition, not as a mere slavish translation of a Ugaritic hymn, and she recognizes its dependency on Canaanite literary forms—just as its contents show common religious conceptions.⁷⁴

Second, it has been advanced that Psalm 29 is of purely Israelite origin with very little Canaanite background at all in the psalm, hence proposing it as a non-Canaanite background.⁷⁵ Many modern commentators (and especially scholars engulfed in the Ras Shamra texts) refuse to see this as a viable option because of the all-too-clear “similarities” between Psalm 29 and the Canaanite texts to Baal.

Third, still others recognize that the power of God over the waters does not derive its source from a Canaanite *Chaoskampf*⁷⁶ myth. However, these adherents are quick to assert that Psalm 29 does, in fact, implement a number of allusions to Ugaritic mythology

⁷³ See Caroline Jacoba Louise Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat with the Sea: A Religio-Historical Investigation into the Myth in Psalm XXIX and Exodus XV 1–18* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 12. See this work for a thorough, detailed, and comparative study between Ps 29 and the Ras Shamra texts (esp. 15–124). At the end of her very lengthy chapter on Ps 29, Kloos clarifies: “As I have rejected the idea, that the attribution of Baal qualities to Yhwh resulted from a hostile attitude towards Baalism, I do not believe that Yhwh acquired his Baal traits after the prophets started their denouncements of the Baal religion. This particular conception of Yhwh must surely date from earlier times” (124).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 107–8.

⁷⁵ This view is advanced by Malamat and Mittmann quoted in Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven*, 94n222. B. Margulis also hints at this when—at the beginning of his article—he declares his four-fold intention: (1) to demonstrate that the psalm is composed basically in a (4+3) metre, a liturgical metre par excellence; (2) that its central theme is the enthronement of the *gravitas dei* (*kebod Yahwe*); (3) that both composer and composition are *ab origine* Yahwistic; and (4) that the *terminus a quo* for the composition is the 10th cent. B.C.E. He later concludes the article by noting: “the author of Ps 29 . . . leaves no room for doubting that the original subject of the poem was *Yahweh*, not Baal, and that its author was accordingly a Yahwist” (“The Canaanite Origin of Psalm 29 Reconsidered,” *Bib* 51, no. 3 [1970]: 333–47).

⁷⁶ Dennis McCarthy defines *Chaoskampf* as having three major themes: (1) the fight against chaos often represented by or personified as a monster of the waters; (2) the conquest of this monstrous force by a god who is consequently acclaimed king; (3) the giving of a palace (temple) to the divine king (“‘Creation’ Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry,” *CBQ* 29 [1967]: 87).

in similarities in wording, style, and phraseology.⁷⁷ In so doing, it does direct a scathing indictment against any such notion of the psalm's derivation from existing hymns to Baal.⁷⁸ As Grisanti states, "what Baal could only claim in mythology, Yahweh actually performed in history!"⁷⁹ Craigie concurs in observing that "it may be at that [Ps 29] deliberately parodies the Canaanites, describing the victorious Yahweh with the language and epithets normally used of Baal; the technique thus consciously elevates Yahweh's power in direct contrast to that of the defeated Canaanites and their god."⁸⁰

Psalm 29:10 notes that Yahweh sat enthroned (יָשָׁב) at the flood (לַמַּבּוּל).

Brueggemann states that: "Yahweh places Yahweh's throne *on the flood*. That is, the waters are so tamed and obedient to Yahweh in this moment that what was threatening chaos becomes an adequate locus for the power of Yahweh."⁸¹

The fact that Yahweh sat enthroned at the Flood (cf. Gen 6–9) reveals the truth of his eternity. Kloos rejects this though she acknowledges that Yahweh is said to have

⁷⁷ Grisanti, "מִיָּם," 2:932. See Craigie's article dealing with the parallels: "Parallel Word Pairs in Ugaritic Poetry," 135–40; Peter C. Craigie, "The Poetry of Ugarit and Israel," *TynBul* 22 (1971): 15–19 (esp. 18); Peter C. Craigie, "Parallel Word Pairs in Ugaritic Poetry: A Critical Evaluation of their Relevance for Psalm 29," *UF* 11 (1979): 135–40 where he concludes after his examination of the Ugaritic parallels in Ps 29: "insofar as an argument rests upon the evidence of common parallel word pairs, the evidence contained in Psalm 29 does not compel one to postulate a Canaanite or Ugaritic background to the psalm" (139).

⁷⁸ See Grisanti, "מִיָּם," 2:931.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* In this regard, see Steven J. Lawson who writes: "As a polemic against pagan gods who competed with one another over land and sea, Psalm 29 magnifies the true God who rules over all creation" (*Psalms 1–75*, HOTC [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003], 156).

⁸⁰ Peter C. Craigie, "Psalm XXIX in the Hebrew Poetic Tradition," *VT* 22, no. 2 (Apr 1972): 149–50.

⁸¹ Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 656.

reigned from eternity.⁸² She points to the fact that this reference to Yahweh derives from Baal's kingship text when he is called "eternal" in his texts.⁸³

But because of the veracity of God's Word, the phrase **יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ לְעוֹלָם** is absolutely unmistakable. In the psalmist's mind, Yahweh, God of Israel is *the only* King throughout all the ages. In this regard, no one concludes better than Craigie:

[Psalm 29 was not] taken over, lock, stock, and barrel, from Phoenicians or Canaanite, and merely "Yahwized." The evidence, under close examination, is rather too slender to support such a view. On the other hand, it does seem to have been established beyond reasonable doubt that Canaanite poetry has exerted some kind of influence on the writer or composer of Psalm 29. It is possible that the Hebrew poet found a Canaanite hymn which deeply impressed him and that then he modified it slightly to express more clearly his own understanding and praise of the God of the Hebrews. But it is perhaps more likely that the psalmist engaged in deliberate imitation for *religious* purposes. He desired to convey to his audience, or to the worshippers who would employ his psalm, the greatness of God. But he wanted to make a theological point as well. God was not only the Lord of history . . . God was also the Lord of nature . . . Language normally employed to worship Baal for the awesome might of the thunderstorm did not rightfully belong to him who was no true god. Such language belonged to the God of Israel alone. And so in Psalm 29, imitating so closely the language of the Canaanites, we receive an insight vital to the religion of the Hebrews.⁸⁴

Various Interpretations of Mythological Elements in Selected Psalms

To some, the similarities are too close to be coincidental and, consequently, the Israelite Hebrew poetry must have borrowed from the already pervasive Canaanite cultus at that time. John Gray hints at this view when he proposes:

The borrowing from Canaan was the natural result of the adoption of the settled way of life of the peasant, who observes the crisis of the seasons with great punctilio. The conflict between God and the forces of chaos expressed in ritual and in myth reflected and relieved the emotional tension of the peasants, and such

⁸² **יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ לְעוֹלָם** ("Yahweh sits as King forever").

⁸³ Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat with the Sea*, 52; *KTU* 1.2:iv 10

⁸⁴ Craigie, *Ugarit and the Old Testament*, 71.

observances were as vital to the parvenu Israelites as the new techniques of agriculture.⁸⁵

Gray continues to assert that “the main motifs of the Baal and the Waters myth are reproduced in the OT, notably in such psalms as assert or imply the kingship of God—e.g. Pss 9; 29; 46; 88; 93; 96–98.”⁸⁶ Strikingly, these similarities must mean that the psalms were composed after the Canaanite texts and, because of the pervasiveness of the Canaanites and their religious system, that “Yahweh is depicted with the attributes of Baal. In this matter the influence of Canaan on Israel seems to have been at its strongest, with Israel appropriating, though adapting, Canaanite thought as well as external forms and imagery.”⁸⁷ However, Gray’s proposal severely diminishes the biblical depiction of Israel as a sophisticated nation.

Because there are so many similarities in the psalms, Parker believes that, even though it is not a slavish copying, the material traditionally associated with Baal was eventually *applied* to Yahweh.⁸⁸ Furthermore, the political function of the West Semitic

⁸⁵ Gray, “Kingship of God in Prophets and Psalms,” 24. However, later in his article, it seems that he restrains from such a bold declaration of slavish borrowing when he writes: “If, however, the Hebrew borrowed the ideology of the Kingship of God from the Canaanites, we should note with emphasis in conclusion how selectively they borrowed and how practically they adapted what they did borrow. In certain externals and in imagery they made use of the Canaanite ideology of the seasonal conflict between Baal as the spirit of vegetation and Mot the Power of death and sterility, but Jahweh was never a dying and rising deity. On the other hand the part of the Baal-ideology which the Hebrews really did appropriate was that of the primeval conflict of Cosmos and Chaos, the triumph of God, his assumption of his Kingship and his judgment, the formal consigning of the defeated forces to their proper fate” (ibid., 27–28).

⁸⁶ John Gray, “Baal (Deity),” in *IDB*, 4 vols., ed. by George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 1:328.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ See Simon B. Parker, “The Baal Cycle,” in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, trans. by Mark S. Smith (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 86.

conflict (the mythology of the Canaanites) story was inherited by ancient Israel's monarchy.⁸⁹

Another way of seeing the similarities of the ANE literature is to come alongside of Clifford: "A dichotomous distinction between history and myth in the ancient Near East is a mistake. Biblical authors have employed the language and imagery of their day to describe their God, Yahweh."⁹⁰ This does not confirm the notion of the Israelites "borrowing" from the Canaanite religion. Rather, Clifford attempts to show that this religious "phraseology" stems from a similar ANE mindset extant at that time. This does not undermine the use of the ANE *Sitz im Leben* to more fully understand the cultural context. Accordingly, Kraus writes that "Together with the question about the 'situation' ('Sitz im Leben'), the essential connections and backgrounds that are essential for understanding the psalm are to be determined."⁹¹

Certainly there are those who wholeheartedly refrain from seeing any relationship whatsoever between these passages in the Psalms and the Ugaritic texts to uphold the distinctive character of the Israel religion and, therefore, the biblical text. Rodríguez correctly observes that "some consider the similarities between the ANE and Israel to be so serious that they find it difficult to speak of the 'uniqueness' of Israel."⁹²

At this point, it must be affirmed that the Scriptures avow that Israel is a distinct, or a "set apart," people for Yahweh and that Yahweh Himself is the only *True* and *Living*

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Richard J. Clifford, *Psalms 73–150*, AOTC (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 64.

⁹¹ See Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, trans. by Hilton C. Oswald, CC (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 232.

⁹² Rodríguez, "Ancient Near Eastern Parallels to the Bible," 48.

God. As Moses and the Israelites sing: “Who is like You among the gods, O LORD? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders?” And again in Isaiah 46:5 and 9, Yahweh says: “To whom would you liken Me And make Me equal and compare Me, That we would be alike? . . . Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; *I am* God, and there is no one like Me.”

But how do the kingship psalms portray Yahweh, the God of Israel? What is the immediate nature of Psalm 93 and its placement within the fourth book of the Psalter? To this it is now necessary to turn.

CHAPTER FIVE:
BACKGROUND OF KINGSHIP PSALMS

Introduction

Could it be that because of a lack of intellectual genius Israel could not have “invented” a kingship motif within her worship cultus and, therefore, must have “borrowed” this from other religions at that time? Frank Moore Cross seems to adhere to this ideology as he states: “With the institution of kingship in Israel and temple cultus, both institutions of Canaanite *origin*, the old myths became resurgent—like Psalm 93.”¹ To take this one step further, because ancient Israel was engulfed in a cultural milieu which celebrated the enthronement of various “gods” or “deities,” the question is raised: “A cultic enthronement of God . . . was not only in Mesopotamia . . . but also in ancient Ugaritic. . . . Should we not expect to find a similar festival in the worship at Jerusalem?”²

The Purpose of the Kingship Psalms

“The foundational truth of all Christian theology is that bedrock doctrine of all doctrines, the sovereignty of God.”³ This is the thematic connection intertwining the kingship psalms. The kingship psalms are a wonderful segment within the fourth book of

¹ Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 144.

² Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Worship in Israel: A Cultic History of the Old Testament*, trans. by Geoffrey Buswell (Oxford: Alden Press, 1966), 205.

³ Steven J. Lawson, *Psalms 76–150*, HOTC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 100.

the Psalter.⁴ The fourth book in the Psalter composed of Psalms 90–104 provides various comforts for the believer in God as it reveals Yahweh as refuge and as King.⁵ Human suggests that Psalms 93 and 95–99, within this fourth book in the Psalter, hold the “key to the theological meaning of the entire Psalter.”⁶ Though one may conclude with Human, it seems more profitable to say that the theological meaning begins with Psalm 93 and includes Psalm 94.⁷ Psalm 93, specifically, is the first of eight psalms within this community.⁸ It is here that this cluster of psalms extolling the glorious sovereignty of Yahweh takes shape within the book of Psalms as a whole. These psalms “affirm YHWH’s kingship, sovereignty, and everlasting presence.”⁹ The royal reign of Yahweh is “the actual subject of the glorification and praise.”¹⁰ Briggs takes this thought and appends one further remark by saying that these were songs of praise celebrating the

⁴ For a helpful study on the issue of the Kingship of God in Israel’s culture, see John Gray, “The Hebrew Conception of the Kingship of God: Its Origin and Development.” *VT* 6 (1956): 268–85.

⁵ Dirk J. Human, ed. “Psalm 93: Yahweh Robed In Majesty and Mightier Than the Great Waters,” in *Psalms and Mythology*, LHBOTS 462 (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 154.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ There has been some debate as to whether Ps 94 ought to be included in the kingship psalms. For a helpful study, see David A. Howard Jr., “Psalm 94 among the Kingship-Of-Yhwh Psalms,” *CBQ* 61, no. 4 (Oct 1999): 667–85.

⁸ If the Kingship Psalms include Pss 93–100.

⁹ David M. Howard Jr., *The Structure of Psalms 93–100* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 171. See Howard’s work for a wonderful and detailed treatment of each of these “enthronement psalms.” In this work, Howard spends a great deal of time analyzing every enthronement psalm exegetically in addition to examining the relationship of each psalm in its immediate context (both the preceding and following psalm) and the relationships existing therein; cf. J. J. M. Roberts, “The Enthronement of Yhwh and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language in the Psalms,” *CBQ* 64, no. 4 (Oct 2002): 675–86.

¹⁰ See Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, CC, trans. by Hilton C. Oswald (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 232. To the list of Kingship Psalms (along with Howard, *Structure of Psalms 93–100*), Kraus also adds Ps 45.

advent of Yahweh *for the purpose* of judgment.¹¹ This, of course, makes sense when one considers the awesome holiness and impeccable righteousness of this sovereign King.

Clifford helps as he gives three points to bear in mind when observing the royal psalms.¹² First, kingship was understood concretely as resulting from a specific victory, in this case a victory that established the world. Second, kingship is depicted by means of the combat myth. And third, the enthronement was celebrated liturgically.¹³

The So-Called “Enthronement Festival”

The kingship psalms extol the magnificent and splendid grandeur of the Most High King, Yahweh Himself. A theory regarding their origin has been proposed by fairly recent scholarship as being related to an “Enthronement Festival.” This Enthronement Festival originates not from the Hebrew Scriptures, but from other ANE cultures and religions. For example, there is a tablet from Ugarit which proves to be important in this regard.¹⁴ This text shows that there was an annual festival hailing Baal’s enthronement as King. Fisher and Knutson supply this insight when they write “[this Ugaritic text] is important for Biblical studies because Enthronement hymns have sometimes been denied their cultic setting, and anyone who is interested in the cultic setting should look to the

¹¹ See Charles Augustus Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Psalms*, 2 vols., ICC (repr., Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960), 2:296–97.

¹² See Richard J. Clifford, *Psalms 73–150*, AOTC (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 108.

¹³ Clifford proposes that Ps 93 was one such psalm which seemed to be derived from such a celebration—most likely the New Year festival correlating it with Mowinckel’s festival theory (ibid.).

¹⁴ See Loren R. Fisher and F. Brent Knutson, “An Enthronement Ritual at Ugarit,” *JNES* 28, no. 3 (July 1969): 157–67.

Baal cult for comparative material.”¹⁵ Mowinckel purports a theory and, consequently, the whole kingship motif, in light of examples from the ANE, especially from Babylon.¹⁶ Mowinckel supports this festival when he proposes that these psalms were originally meant for the Enthronement Festival. Snaith helps summarize the birth of this hypothesis:

Since Mowinckel published in 1922 his *Psalmenstudien II* with the subtitle *Das Thronbesteigungsfest Jahwas und der Ursprung der Eschatologie*, following on Volz’s *Das Neujahrsfest Jahwes* (1912), it has been accepted, practically without question, that Pss. xciii, xcv–xcix with xlvii formed the central part of the liturgy of a Coronation Feast of Jehovah celebrated at the New Year, and dramatically represented in the ritual after the general pattern of the Babylonian New Year liturgies.¹⁷

In other words, Sigmund Mowinckel conjectured a theory from the ancient cultures where the people enthroned their deity—often on New Year’s Day.¹⁸ Because of these royal psalms (or as Mowinckel would phrase it, “enthronement psalms”), Mowinckel sees the same festival being practiced by the Israelites and that this is the immediate background of these psalms where Yahweh is declared to be (or “become”) king. Yet, Mowinckel’s hypothesis that “Yahweh was declared to have *become* king” is the proper translation *because of* other cultures in the ANE and the way that they

¹⁵ Ibid., 166.

¹⁶ Kraus has an excellent discussion here on the issue of kingship and the “Enthronement Festival” (*Theology of the Psalms*, 107–23).

¹⁷ Norman H. Snaith, *The Jewish New Year Festival: Its Origins and Development* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1947), 195.

¹⁸ See Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, 2 vols., trans. by D. R. Ap-Thomas (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 1:115–30 as he believes that when Yahweh becomes king, he shows himself as king and proves it by his kingly deeds. He further clarifies: “Exactly the same logically undeveloped mode of conception obtained in the Babylonian religion [sic]. There also Anu, or Enlil, or Marduk, or Ashur, *is* king; but the sources prove that the cultic feast celebrated him as the one *now becoming* king; the New Year festival marked his enthronement. So also in Israel” (ibid., 1:115); cf. W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Psalms: Translated with Text-Critical and Exegetical Notes*, 2 vols. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1939), 1:46–55.

worshipped their deities on the New Year festival presupposes—if one is consistent with other ANE Enthronement Festivals—that the deity actually loses for a period of time.

Schmidt adheres to this view by asserting that the God of Israel—like all other vegetation deities—seems to be defeated and his supremacy in the natural rhythm of the season, and declares that ‘This is a myth similar to that of the periodic descent of the gods to the underworld and their resurrection.’¹⁹ Yet, the unambiguous chorus of the kingship psalms refutes any notion that Yahweh has failed or has had any period of defeat whatsoever.

Therefore, this hypothesis is totally speculative and must be discarded.²⁰ Snaith concurs by intelligently recognizing that:

¹⁹ H. Schmidt, *Die Thronfahrt Javwes am Fest der Jahreswende im alten Israel*, 26, quoted in Kraus, *Worship in Israel*, 206–7.

²⁰ It is not the purpose and intent of this thesis to carefully evaluate every nuance of Mowinckel’s Enthronement Festival proposal. For his own very thorough description, see Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, 1:106–92. Mowinckel sees the “Royal Psalms” as those psalms with the image of kingship being at the forefront. It is the king who is praying, or the one who is spoken of, or who is prayed for. According to Mowinckel, the Royal Psalms are Pss 2; 18; 20; 21; 45; 61; 63; 72; 89; 101; 110; 128; and 132 (ibid., 47). Other critiques prove to be helpful in this regard. According to Randy Haney noting Mowinckel’s proposal, “Mowinckel’s ‘definition’ of the Enthronement psalms . . . centers on the ones that he perceived as containing the elements praising Yahweh as king. The presupposition in back of these Psalms is that Yahweh has just ascended the throne. Characteristically, these Psalms employ *YHWH mlk* (in 47:9; 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1), which Mowinckel rendered as ‘Yahweh has just now become king.’ As a consequence, the enthronement of Yahweh is depicted in the Enthronement Psalms as being analogous to the enthronement of the Israelite-Judean kings. Yahweh has come to establish his kingdom and this kingdom will be a kingdom that extends throughout the entire world” (*Text and Concept Analysis in Royal Psalms*, SBL 30, ed. by Hemchand Gossai [New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2002], 33). Cf. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, 65n1 who writes: “The present writer is not convinced by Mowinckel’s argument that the expression *יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ* in this and the other passages to be discussed must mean that Yahweh *has become* King, and that we should think in terms of an annual enthronement of Yahweh (ibid.). Kraus makes an observation that many seem to neglect. How would it have been possible for the Israelites to act out the enthronement festival of Yahweh if there was never any picture or statue of God that could have been placed on a throne; nor was there any other cultic emblem known which portrayed Yahweh (*Theology of the Psalms*, 88)? An excellent summary and critique may also be found in Robert D. Culver, “*יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ*,” in *TWOT*, 2 vols., ed. by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 1:507–10, esp. 508; cf. Kloos, *Yhwh’s Combat with the Sea*, 112–23; Michael Wilcock simply notes: “Special occasions for which [the royal psalms] may have been intended, such as ceremonies re-enacting the enthronement of Israelite kings, are largely the fruit of learned guesswork. Something Scripture does say, however, relates to the future day when ‘the LORD will be king over the whole earth’” (*The Message of Psalms 73–150: Songs for the People of God*, BST, ed. by J. A. Motyer [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001], 86).

It needs to be pointed out that, even if there was such a festival in Old Israel (and this has been surmised rather than proved), there has never been produced, except in one instance . . . one shred of evidence that any of the Psalms, other than xlvii, has ever been associated with Tishri 1 or indeed any of the festivals of Tishri. No theory has ever received such a measure of general approbation with so little critical examination.²¹

One has to wonder if these psalms were, in fact, integral to the New Year Feast why there is such a lack of evidence. For, “if this feast was particularly concerned with the Kingship of Jehovah, then we should surely expect to find that they had an important, if not a pre-eminent place in the liturgy of Rosh haShanah.”²² To the present, no such evidence exists.

Contrariwise, rather than attempting to reconstruct a purely hypothetical festival which has no biblical support, it is best to maintain the objective truth that the kingship psalms focus on the “immovable mountain that towers above all theology,” namely, the sovereign reign of God.²³ These psalms do speak of the absolute and exclusive reign of God representing his undisputed and unrivaled right to govern over all that he has created.²⁴

²¹ Snaith, *The Jewish New Year Festival*, 195. Later, Snaith concludes: “It has to be said that apart from xcvi . . . there has never been produced any direct evidence whatever which would connect any or all of these psalms with the New Year Festival. The whole of what evidence there is, is of that subjective kind which seeks references to a problematic liturgy which itself is built up almost entirely from non-Palestinian sources. No one who has ever sought to break new ground can fail to realize that such a course is fraught with peril, and without the greatest care serious and false deductions may ensue. Our charge is that the whole of Mowinckel’s position in respect of these Coronation Psalms has been built up independently of any definite evidence either from the Old Testament or from Jewish sources generally” (196).

²² *Ibid.*, 198.

²³ Lawson, *Psalms 76–150*, 100.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER SIX:
EXEGESIS OF PSALM 93

Introduction

Psalm 93 is strategically placed in the Psalter. Psalm 93 seems to be a “bridge psalm” between Psalms 90–92 and 94.¹ “Being situated between Psalms 92 and 94, where both psalms anticipate the destruction of the enemies, Psalm 93 proclaims Yahweh’s superiority over all chaos powers.”² Interestingly, the Mishnah agrees with the LXX that Psalm 93 was to be sung for the sixth day of the week.³ Also, in terms of introduction, Briggs sees Psalm 93 being “dependent” on Isaiah 2, but this is unconvincing.⁴

However, Claus Westermann believes that Psalm 93 is totally disconnected from its context. He writes: “Ps 93 is already different from all others (enthronement psalms) in that the imperative (or jussive) call to praise is totally missing.”⁵ But it seems abundantly clear that these psalms do, in fact, form a unit within the Psalter as a whole. They are strategically placed and obviously extolling the Kingship of Yahweh alone. As

¹ Dirk J. Human, ed., “Psalm 93: Yahweh Robed In Majesty and Mightier Than the Great Waters,” in *Psalms and Mythology*, LHBOTS 462 (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 154.

² *Ibid.*; cf. Michael D. Goulder, *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah*, JSOTSS 20 (Sheffield: JSOT Press), 137.

³ “This was the singing which the Levites used to sing in the Temple . . . On the sixth day they sang *The Lord is king, and hath put on glorious apparel*” (*Tamid* 7:4; see Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933], 589). The LXX has **εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ προσαββάτου ὅτε κατώκισται ἡ γῆ αἰῶνος ὠδῆς τῶ Δαυιδ.**

⁴ Charles Augustus Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Psalms*, 2 vols., ICC (repr., Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1960), 2:299.

⁵ See Claus Westermann, *The Praise of God in the Psalms*, trans. by Keith R. Crim (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1965), 150 for more on the section of so-called “Royal Psalms.”

shall be observed, “The central theological affirmation of the Psalter is this: The Lord reigns!”⁶

Therefore, the matchless Kingship of Yahweh is beautifully revealed in Psalm 93. Human assesses that “Psalm 93 emphasizes Yahweh’s eternal and universal kingship and its consequences for the cosmos and the Israelite faith community.”⁷ And, because the reign of Yahweh is established, one can concur with Angel Rodríguez that:

The meaning of a biblical text is, then, determined by its own biblical context because it is only there that we are informed about the way God used the ancient Near Eastern background. By acknowledging that God was directly involved in the process of rejecting, polemicizing, adapting, reformulating, and incorporating some of the cultural, religious, cultic, and legal practices of the ancient Near East, we can honor the divine nature of Scripture and justify the need to submit to its authority.⁸

Perowne has aptly summarized Psalm 93: “His [Yahweh’s] Majesty and His Glory are seen, not only in controlling the powers of nature, and whatsoever exalteth and opposeth itself against Him, but in the faithfulness of His word, and in the holiness of His house.”⁹ But to see this in its fullest degree, the psalm itself must be closely analyzed.

⁶ J. Clinton McCann, Jr., *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 44.

⁷ Human, “Psalm 93,” 157.

⁸ Angel Manuel Rodríguez, “Ancient Near Eastern Parallels to the Bible and the Question of Revelation and Inspiration,” *JATS* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 64.

⁹ J. J. Stewart Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2 vols. (repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1966), 2:182.

Exegesis

Though verses 3–4 are specifically apropos to the Canaanite literature and mythological texts relating to water metaphors, the entire psalm must be analyzed to understand the flow of thought, the emphases, and the arguments made by the psalmist.

The Sovereign Reign of God – Verses 1–2¹⁰

Scripture repeatedly affirms that Yahweh has always existed and is therefore proper to suggest that the first phrase of this psalm encompasses the biblical truth that Yahweh is indeed enthroned on high!

It is clear that verse 1 consists of a tricolon.¹¹ Each of the three cola is balanced beautifully. The words compose a 4:4:3 pattern:¹²

יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ גָּאוֹת לְבַשׁ לְבַשׁ יְהוָה עַז הַתְּאֵזֶר אֶף־תְּכוּן תִּבְל בַּל־תִּמְוֹט:

Perhaps the atypical pattern on the final cola is leading into verse 2 which is a bicolon and the first cola in verse 2 is composed of three words.

The first phrase מֶלֶךְ יְהוָה has been subject to overwhelming study and critique.¹³ Simply put, the first word is the noun יְהוָה and the second word is the

¹⁰ This three-point outline of Ps 93 is adapted from Steven J. Lawson and his commentary on the Psalms (*Psalms 76–150*, HOTC [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006], 101–3).

¹¹ See Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51–100*, trans. by Linda M. Maloney, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 447.

¹² Assuming the two *maqfefs* in the final cola each connect the words together (as in אֶף־תְּכוּן and בַּל־תִּמְוֹט). If, however, the syllables are counted, it is 8:8:8.

¹³ See Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 vols., trans. by D. R. Ap-Thomas (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 1:107; Mowinckel also has a helpful study “note” in 2:222–24 where he concludes that this refers to an activity and not a state; cf. A. Gelston, “A Note On מֶלֶךְ יְהוָה,” VT 16

verb מָלַךְ. Though the word order is not as regular in Hebrew poetry as it is in Hebrew narrative, it is significant that the psalm begins with the covenant name of Yahweh. The reason for this irregular syntax is to show the supremacy of Israel's God against other gods or powers. The verb מָלַךְ is a Qal perfect third masculine singular from מָלַךְ.

The interpretive question is whether the Qal verb is to be translated as a characteristic present (“reigns”), as an inceptive/ingressive (“has begun to reign”), or even expressing continuous action (“is reigning”).¹⁴ Of course the exegesis must be based upon context and, of course, the context of the royal psalms and of Psalm 93 points to the eternal sovereignty of God. Obviously, if the English rendered it in the past, “Yahweh reigned,” that would connote that Yahweh has ceased reigning and is, thus, impotent as the Sovereign King.¹⁵ However, contextually this is not a viable solution. If someone

(1966): 507–12 who has an excellent little note on this phrase as he concludes that the best way to translate this opening phrase in Ps 93 is “Yahweh is King” or “Yahweh reigns” (512); Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 86–90; K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1966), 103–4n63; Human, “Psalm 93,” 155–59; Paul Nadim Tarazi, “An Exegesis of Psalm 93,” *SVQ* 35, nos. 2–3 (1991): 137–48; Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, 65–68; J. A. Soggin, “מָלַךְ,” in *TLOT*, 3 vols., ed. by Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, trans. by Mark E. Biddle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 2:672–80; J. H. Eaton, *Psalms: A Historical and Spiritual Commentary with an Introduction and New Translation*, (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 331–32.

¹⁴ However, Feuer sees this psalm as reflecting the various pronouncements that will be voiced in the Messianic era and, therefore, the past tense is syntactically uttered in the psalm in retrospect (see Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, *Tehillim: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources*, ATS, trans. by Abrohom Chaim Feuer and Nosson Scherman, ed. by Nosson Scherman and Meir Zlotowitz [Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, 1985], 2:1158); cf. Jarl H. Ulrichsen, “*JHWH Mālāk*: Einige Sprachliche Beobachtungen,” *VT* 27 (1977): 365–66 for a study on the verb *malak* in context. Ulrichsen goes through the OT and shows where various Scriptures occur with the durative and the ingressive (each having examples of the subject-predicate and the predicate-subject word order).

¹⁵ John Goldingay states this when he says “the qatal verb ‘Yhwh reigned’ points to something that happened, as is the case when the verb refers to a human king beginning to reign” (*Old Testament Theology*, 3 vols. [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003], 1:70). However, Goldingay continues later with a diatribe conversation: “So was there a time when Yhwh did not reign? Psalm 93:2 safeguards that point by declaring that Yhwh is/was from of old” (*ibid.*).

were to assert that this simply means “Yahweh is King,” then the question arises as to why the psalmist did not write the noun מֶלֶךְ instead of the verb מָלַךְ. If one translates the phrase as “Yahweh has begun to reign,” then the emphasis seems to shift away from the action of reigning as the Sovereign Ruler in substitute for the mere abstract notion of being a king. Given the immediate context of Psalm 93, however, the stress rests on the “completeness” of the action as opposed to its specific temporal connotations as being a “past action.”¹⁶ Therefore, the characteristic present provides the best translation.

But, it seems that a large quantity of commentators see this phrase as referring to a sort of “coronation” of Yahweh similar to that of other OT events and ANE cultures. This is where Mowinckel asserts that the phrase ought to be rendered “Yahweh has become King.”¹⁷ He sees the “older translation” of “the LORD reigns” as misleading.¹⁸ Briggs concurs with Mowinckel for he believes that the opening phrase is “not the assertion of His everlasting royal prerogative, but the joyous celebration of the fact that He has now shown Himself to be king by a royal advent, taking His place on His throne

¹⁶ See Tarazi, “Psalm 93,” 139.

¹⁷ See Mowinckel, *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1:107. He elaborates later in the chapter, “To the interpretation that the enthronement psalms on a special festival state that Yahweh has become king, it is not a valid objection to say that Yahweh had, according to the Israelite view, always been king. The latter statement is correct enough . . . but in the cult the fact of salvation is re-experienced as a new and actual reality. Yahweh is ever anew witnessed as ‘coming’, ‘revealing himself’, and doing works of salvation on earth. The Israelite idea of God was not static but dynamic. Israel did not regard the Lord principally as sitting in calm possession and execution of his divine power, but as one who rises and seizes the power, and wields it in mighty works. And this is as a rule concretely pictured; from the ‘mythical’ side this is seen epically and dramatically: at a certain time Yahweh *became* king. To the Israelite way of thinking there is no contradiction between this and that he is king for ever; such a contradistinction is modern and rationalistic” (ibid., 1:114–15). Marvin Tate also agrees with this aspect of Mowinckel’s argument when he asserts: “The idea that Israel celebrated the enthronement of Yahweh made sense. The problem is, we don’t know what they did and how they acted in those festivals” (Marvin Tate, interview by author, Los Angeles, July 31, 2008); cf. Perowne, *Psalms*, 2:182–83.

¹⁸ Mowinckel, *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1:107

to govern the world Himself, and no longer through inefficient or wicked servants.”¹⁹

Hossfeld and Zenger propose as ingressive-durative meaning that Yhwh has entered upon his royal throne and has governed ever since that time as the king.²⁰

Contrary to Mowinckel and a host of others who see the opening phrase,

יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ, as referring to a “coronation-type ceremony,” Johnson rightly concludes:

I find no evidence to show that the form מֶלֶךְ is ever used in the Old Testament of anything but an existent condition, whatever the temporal circumstances may be. This is not to deny that the form is sometimes used in circumstances which give it an inchoative colouring; but, as I see it, such colouring is not inherent in the form but is due to the light which is shed upon the form by its context.²¹

Kraus pulls the rug out from underneath Mowinckel’s theory when he also adds that “even the translation of יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ in the sense of an enthronement formula is questioned . . . many arguments support the idea that this call at the beginning of the psalm should be rendered ‘Yahweh is King.’”²² Therefore, it seems most appropriate to

¹⁹ Briggs, *Psalms*, 2:301; cf. Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3:74.

²⁰ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 448.

²¹ Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, 65n1. Johnson elaborates on this matter: “Thus is such a case as אֲבִשָׁלוֹם מֶלֶךְ (2 Sam. xv. 10:cf. 2 Kings ix.13) the Hebrew simply means ‘Absalom is king’ or, more forcefully, ‘Absalom reigneth’; but we gather from the context that the exercising of this function by Absalom is something new, the addition of the words ‘in Hebron’ (as compared with the simple form of the corresponding statement in 2 Kings ix.13) indicating the temporary seat of government under what is intended to be a new régime. On the other hand, the context of the statement אֱלֹהֵיךָ מֶלֶךְ, meaning quite simply ‘Thy God is King’ or, more forcefully, ‘Thy God reigneth’, with which the great prophet of the Exile sums up the good news now on its way to Zion (Isa. lii. 7), does not require one to think in terms of a formal proclamation to the effect that, with the overthrow of Babylon, Zion’s God has become King; rather, it offers Zion the glad assurance that, despite possible appearances to the contrary during the long years of exile, the evidence is now at hand to prove that Yahweh is still King, the order of the words also showing the point at issue to be the reality of Yahweh’s Kingship rather than any question as to who among the gods is King” (65–66n1).

²² See Kraus, *Psalms* 60–150, 233.

translate this phrase as “Yahweh reigns” as opposed to “Yahweh has *begun* to reign” for the following four reasons:

First, although the verbal statement מִלְכָּה יְהוָה can refer to a lively and stirring event as in the act of enthroning a person²³—such as may be found in 1 Kings 1:11 when Adonijah “becomes king” ($\text{מִלְכָּה יֵאָדָנְיָהוּ}$).²⁴ And though Isaiah 52:7 ultimately points to that Messianic age when the Messiah will reign from Zion and to the declaration that God has begun to reign ($\text{אָמַר לְצִיּוֹן מִלְכָּה אֱלֹהֵיךָ}$), it must be stated that the grammar and syntax do not *require* this kind of interpretation. In short, the meaning of the perfect verb (מִלְכָּה) with Yahweh as subject is the same as the normal meaning, generally circumscribed by “to be king, become king, rule as king, reign,” without any partial aspect (e.g., “to become”) exhibiting any discernible priority or becoming fixed in any specific contexts.²⁵ Therefore, this expression should not be seen as an “enthronement cry” (cf. Mowinckel) but rather like the frequently cited parallels from the Babylonian Marduk rituals as a “cry of acclamation or proclamation.”²⁶ Therefore, the psalmist is acclaiming Yahweh’s reign as *already* existing (and continuing to exist forevermore).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Along these lines, the x-*qatal* (=subject-*qatal*) formulation should be distinguished from all *qatal*-x analogies (see K. Seybold, “מִלְכָּה,” in *TDOT*, 15 vols., ed. by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. by Douglas W. Stott et al. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997], 8:370).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 8:370–71.

Second, the word order of יהוה מלך seems to indicate a statement of “condition.”²⁷ It is *Yahweh* who is emphasized as being *the* King (fronted for emphasis). In other words, the psalmist appears to stress that *Yahweh*, and no other deity, exercises kingship.²⁸ As Seybold clarifies: “The *x-qatal* formulation (inverted verbal clause or compound nominal clause) accentuates *x*, i.e. ‘*Yahweh*, which—especially at the beginning of a psalm—generates strong emphasis. It is *Yahweh* who . . . ; *Yahweh*—He . . .”²⁹ This is contrary to Kidner who asserts that this is an announcement rather than a timeless statement. Then he quickly glosses over the issue by saying: “but in the Psalms the word-order is reversed.”³⁰ Therefore, it is clear that this statement is not “a cry announcing the periodic reinstatement of *Yahweh* as king but a cultic-kerygmatic proclamation of the eternal kingship of *Yahweh*!”³¹

Third, verse 2 debunks the notion that verse 1 could even hint at the reality of *Yahweh* ever *not* reigning as it clearly says, “Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting.” God was never *off* the throne and so he could not ever be “enthroned.”³²

²⁷ Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 233.

²⁸ Dahood, *Psalms II*, 2:340.

²⁹ Seybold, “מלך,” 8:370; Soggin, “מלך,” 2:679 who clearly speaks to this issue as well; and Gelston, “יהוה מלך,” 512.

³⁰ See Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150: An Introduction and Commentary on Books I and II of the Psalms*, TOTC (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975), 337.

³¹ Soggin, “מלך,” 2:679.

³² See Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*, 103–4n63.

Finally, the overall context of Psalm 93 (and the royal psalms) points, rather emphatically, to the proclamation that “Yahweh, and no other deity, is king/reigns.”³³ Psalms 95:3, 96:4, and 97:7–9 represent Yahweh as being the King of the gods!

Regarding the ANE literature, at first glance, the first phrase of this psalm may appear similar to the Ugaritic text to Baal when it exclaims:

*Ba’lu [takes his place] on his royal throne,
[on (his) resting-place], on the seat of his Dominion.*³⁴

The beginning of Psalm 93, then, has somewhat of a polemical note, emphasizing the fact—as in the case of Psalm 29—that it is the God of Israel who is supreme and He shares his throne with no other gods.³⁵

After beginning the psalm with the exclamatory phrase of Yahweh’s reign, the next phrase **לְבַשׁ יְגָאוֹת** is the conclusion to the first part of the tricolon in verse 1. The ‘ole-w^eyored (disjunctive) accent on **לְבַשׁ** shows that this is the major division in the verse.³⁶

What the psalmist emphasizes with this short phrase is that Yahweh is not only the everlasting King but he is also clothed with royal and divine apparel. Feuer poetically contributes by saying that “this psalm describes God as robbing Himself in grandeur like one dressing in His Sabbath finery.”³⁷

³³ Gelston, “יהוה מלך,” 512.

³⁴ See CTA 5 v:6; COS, 1:272

³⁵ See Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, 66.

³⁶ See Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3:74.

³⁷ Feuer, *Tehillim*, 2:1157.

The noun **גְּאוּרָה** frequently occurs in the OT specifying arrogance (Ps 17:10; Prov 29:23; Isa 28:1). Obviously the connotation here is that Yahweh is clothed in utter loftiness and grandeur. As Smith and Hamilton rightly assess, this term “refer[s] to his majesty or excellence . . . and to God’s majestic power that was revealed through his acts of redemption . . . when all earthly foes were powerless before him (Ex 15:1, 7, 21).”³⁸ His splendor is spectacular. His majesty is matchless. The point is that it is Yahweh who is metaphorically covered with the most exalted, divine, lofty, and excellent garb. **גְּאוּרָה** occurs in Psalm 89:10 when Ethan writes **מִזִּשְׁלֵךְ אֲתָהּ בְּגְאוּרָתְךָ הַיָּם**. He says that Yahweh has ruled over the “loftiness”³⁹ of the sea. Therefore, in each of the occurrences where God is the reference in connection with **גְּאוּרָה**, there is a contrast (implicit or explicit) between God’s majesty and the wickedness of nations or forces of nature.⁴⁰ Feuer distinguishes between human and divine loftiness: “In man, arrogance is a contemptible trait, because man’s power is limited at best. But to God, **גְּאוּרָה**, *grandeur*, is becoming because all forces owe their existence to Him while He is dependent on nothing.”⁴¹ There may also be the allusion to the potential and actual capabilities

³⁸ Gary V. Smith and Victor P. Hamilton, “גְּאוּרָה,” in *NIDOTTE*, 5 vols., ed. by Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 1:787.

³⁹ Cp. KJV: “raging of the sea”; NIV: “surging sea”; NET: “proud sea”.

⁴⁰ See Howard, *Structure of Psalms 93–100*, 36–37 for a helpful study; cf. H.P. Stähli’s helpful article (“גְּאוּרָה,” in *TLOT*, 3 vols., ed. by Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, trans. by Mark E. Biddle [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997], 1:285–87).

⁴¹ Feuer, *Tehillim*, 2:1158.

(readiness and ability to fight) of the reigning divine king.⁴² Tarazi makes an interesting connection when he observes:

Isaiah 9:18 refers to the *ge'ut* (height) of smoke, while Isaiah 12:5 speaks of God's deeds as *ge'ut* (LXX ὑψηλὰ). Most interesting is the psalm recorded in Isaiah 26:10 after saying that the wicked deal perversely because they do not see the *ge'ut* (majesty) of the Lord (v.10), the author says they do not *see* His lifted (*ramah* [LXX ὑψηλός]) hand that is going to hurl consuming fire over them (v.11) and bring peace (v.12) and blessings (v.15) to His people. Thus, *ge'ut* reflects the actual power to rule and is not just external apparel; it is, as it were, “implemented majesty.”⁴³

שָׁבַץ⁴⁴ may, in fact, picture a royal king girding himself⁴⁵ with colorful, beautiful, ornate apparel for all to see and know that he is the king. Similarly, Yahweh has *put this on himself*. Young's translation renders שָׁבַץ נָאֵת: “Excellency He hath put on” whereas almost every other translation has this phrase in the passive voice (“is robed”). The Lord robes himself which is the outward manifestation of God's glory and he displays the fact that He has the strength to control all forces of nature and to subdue every one of his foes.⁴⁶ Gaster sees this “playing upon the fact that at the autumn festival the statues of the gods were habited in ceremonial dress and paraded through the streets.”⁴⁷

⁴² Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 448. They continue: “Psalm 65:7 (מִכֵּין הַרְיִים בְּכַחוֹ נִאֲזָר בְּגִבּוֹרָה) confirms the impression that YHWH is enthroned in the garments of the divine warrior” (ibid.).

⁴³ Tarazi, “Psalm 93,” 140.

⁴⁴ For a study on this word, see J. Gamberoni, “שָׁבַץ,” in *TDOT*, 15 vols., ed. by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. by David E. Green et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 7:457–68.

⁴⁵ Contra Waltke and O'Connor who say that שָׁבַץ is a stative (*qatal*) verb (*IBHS*, 367).

⁴⁶ See Feuer, *Tehillim*, 2:1158.

⁴⁷ See Gaster, “The Battle of the Rain and the Sea,” 24.

There is a chiasmic arrangement in verse 1 which may be brought out at this point (A+B//B+C):⁴⁸

גִּאֲוֹת
לְבַשׁ
לְבַשׁ
יְהוָה

Then the final colon **לְבַשׁ יְהוָה עִז הַתְּאֵזֶר** in the tricolon of verse 1 is essential to study. The exact same Qal verb, **לְבַשׁ**, which occurs in the previous colon now appears again. The syntax is a bit tricky here because of the beginning Qal verb and the concluding Hithpael verb. This colon both emphasizes and explicates what has already been said in the hymn. Like an ANE king, Yahweh has clothed himself and he has girded himself with **עִז**.

It seems appropriate here to see the Qal perfect having a reflexive nuance for a couple of reasons. First, the next Hithpael verb, **הִתְאֵזֶר**, clearly has the reflexive nuance so it would make sense in this context for the Qal perfect verb to take on the reflexive nuance.⁴⁹ Second, in the previous phrase, **לְבַשׁ** is translated, “Yahweh *clothes himself* with majesty” as a reflexive and thus, it would make sense for the exact same verb in the next phrase to have similar (or even identical) grammatical meaning.

⁴⁸ See Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 340.

⁴⁹ See Joseph Addison Alexander, *The Psalms Translated and Explained*, CCL (repr., 1864, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1955), 389; cf. Waltke and O’Connor, *IBHS*, 430.

The Hithpael **הִתְאַזַּר** has a military background as it appears in Isaiah 8:9.⁵⁰ Also, the verb **לְבַשׁ** is used twice in Isaiah 59:17⁵¹ to signify the putting on of military apparel in preparation for victory. It may, then, be appropriate to see similar connotations here in this context of Yahweh as the Sovereign Ruler.⁵² Like any ANE king who girds himself with royal robes day by day as a symbol of power and kingship, so also Yahweh—God of Israel—appears in royal war-dress.⁵³

The phrase **אֵי-תִכּוֹן תִּבְלַל בַּל-תִּמּוֹט** is further defining what has been said already. The **אֵי** highlights and elaborates on the previous cola by a declarative “Indeed!”⁵⁴ Dahood states that **אֵי** is an emphatic conjunction in Ugaritic.⁵⁵ But again, this does not have much weight upon the text at all because **אֵי** is found in many of the ancient Semitic languages in addition to the 61 times that this particle occurs in Job, Psalms and Proverbs alone!⁵⁶ In this context, however, **אֵי** simply reemphasizes what

⁵⁰ **לְעוֹ עַמִּים וְחָתוּ וְהִאֲזִינוּ כָּל מְרֻחְקֵי-אָרֶץ הַתְּאַזְרוּ וְחָתוּ הַתְּאַזְרוּ וְחָתוּ:** (“Be pained, O peoples! Be shattered! And give ear! All you distant places of the earth! Gird yourselves and be shattered! Gird yourselves and be shattered!”).

⁵¹ **וַיִּלְבַּשׁ צְדָקָה כְּשֵׂרָף וְכֹבֵעַ יְשׁוּעָה בְּרֹאשׁוֹ וַיִּלְבַּשׁ בְּגָדָי נֶקֶם חֲלָבֶשֶׁת וַיַּעַט כְּמַעֲיֵל קִנְאָה:** (“And He put on righteousness as his body armor and the helmet of salvation upon his head. And he put on garments of vengeance for clothing. And he wrapped himself with zeal as a mantle”).

⁵² See Tarazi, “Psalm 93,” 140.

⁵³ Human, “Psalm 93,” 158.

⁵⁴ Waltke and O’Connor, *IBHS*, 300.

⁵⁵ Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 340.

⁵⁶ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, eds., *HALOT*, 5 vols., rev. by Walter Baumgartner and Johann Jakob Stamm, trans. and ed. by M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 1:76.

was stated earlier in verse 1 rather than Dahood's proposal of the emphatic use of אָיִן as is often found in Ugaritic.

The verb יָכֹן is a Niphal⁵⁷ imperfect third feminine singular⁵⁸ from כָּן. In the Niphal, כָּן has the nuance of something able “to stand firm; stand fast; be stable; be ready.”⁵⁹ Because the inhabited world has been standing firm because of the sovereign decree of Yahweh, it cannot be moved. It is also the first word in a structure including verse 2 known as assonance where there are similar sounds in a word or words. Notice the phonetic assonance in יָכֹן . . . תְּמוֹט . . . יָכֹן for added emphasis upon the hearer or reader.⁶⁰ The feminine noun תְּבִילָה refers to the inhabited world.⁶¹ In the ANE mindset, תְּבִילָה referred to the “solid earth of ancient Near Eastern cosmology, whether bipartite (heaven and earth), tripartite (heaven, earth, sea), or even quadripartite (heaven, earth, waters above, waters below [including the netherworld]), often depicted

⁵⁷ Most English translations are unanimous in having this be a passive: “The world *is established*.” But Briggs sees the active as better suited for the context. He translates it: “He hath *adjusted* the world” (Briggs, *Psalms*, 2:301).

⁵⁸ Though by its form it could be a 2ms but because of context and the feminine subject תְּבִילָה, it is clearly 3fs.

⁵⁹ See Elmer A. Martens, “כָּן,” in *NIDOTTE*, 5 vols., ed. by Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 2:615.

⁶⁰ Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 340.

⁶¹ See Tarazi, “Psalm 93,” 141–42 for a good discussion of תְּבִילָה as it occurs in the OT. He concludes: “that *tebel* is to be understood in that way [“inhabited world”] here is further confirmed by the use of the *nip'al nakon/yikkon* (is established) in the Old Testament. This verb usually refers to human beings: God's hand through David, David, David's throne, the king's throne, David's house, David's kingdom, man, man's seed, man's ways, man's lips, man's thoughts, man's purpose, the slanderer, the congregation of Jacob, the inhabited mountain of the Lord's temple” (141). Human sees this as having “an allusion to the mythological worldview of a three-tiered cosmos, which views the earth as founded on its pillars (subterranean mountains)” (“Psalm 93,” 159).

visually.”⁶² When talking about the world having been firmly established, it refers to the divine power of God to create a universe and an inhabited world from his own power. This “omnipotence” phraseology is similar to the language of that day, for “the appellations ‘eternal’ and ‘creator,’ and ‘eternal or ancient creator’ are thus characteristic designations of the great god ‘El in Canaanite myths and liturgies.”⁶³

The phrase בַּל-תִּמְזוֹט may come across as obscure because of the rare negative particle, בַּל. Waltke and O’Connor remark that this particle can be used as equivalent to לֹא תִמְזוֹט.⁶⁴ Koehler and Baumgartner recognize that this particle mostly occurs in poetical texts.⁶⁵ In other words, it is a negative particle often found in Hebrew poetry to negate a phrase. The end of verse 1 speaks of Yahweh’s royal grandeur.⁶⁶

Because the weight of evidence favors the translation of the beginning phrase in verse 1 “Yahweh *reigns*” as opposed to “Yahweh *has become* King,” de Moor’s suggestion is to be rejected that Yhwh-El must have acquired the characteristics of Baal

⁶² See H. J. Fabry and N. van Meeteren, “תִּבְלֵ,” in *TDOT*, 15 vols., ed. by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. by David E. Green et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2006) 15:559.

⁶³ See Frank Moore Cross, Jr., “Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs,” *HTR* 55, no. 4 (Oct 1962): 241. Later in the article, Cross writes: “That ‘El was the creator god *par excellence* of Ugarit and Canaan is patent from the [Ugaritic texts]” (ibid., 243). Of course, many of the ancient Canaanite deities had powers of creation, but El was at the forefront of the pantheon in this regard.

⁶⁴ Waltke and O’Connor, *IBHS*, 567n6.

⁶⁵ Koehler and Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 1:131.

⁶⁶ Contra Gaster who argues that “Yahweh becomes king, just as Ba’al becomes king in our text. Yahweh dons grandeur and might as his royal robe and cincture. This verse evidently plays upon the fact that at the autumn festival the statues of the gods were habited in ceremonial dress and paraded through the streets” (“Battle of the Rain and the Sea,” 24).

because it was he who became King of the Gods.⁶⁷ Therefore, to affirm the unambiguous meaning of the verse it is necessary to conclude with Johnson that “the thought which dominates these psalms is that of Yahweh’s Kingship from the beginning to the end of time, the emphasis rests upon the thought that it is Yahweh who *is* King.”⁶⁸

Verse 2 actually is the most atypical verse in the psalm because it is the only bicolon in the psalm. This is ironic because one of the defining marks of Hebrew poetry is its parallelism and bicolon-type structure. But verse 2 breaks the pattern of tricolons—most certainly for emphasis—and draws attention to the rich and incomprehensible theology contained in this short five-word Hebrew verse. There may even be phonetic parallelism in this verse:

כִּסְאֵךָ
נִכּוֹן
מֵאֵז
אַתָּה
מֵעוֹלָם

Not only might there be phonetic parallelism, there is also inverse parallelism in the A+B//B+A pattern:⁶⁹

B	A
מֵאֵז	כִּסְאֵךָ נִכּוֹן
B	A
אַתָּה	מֵעוֹלָם

⁶⁷ de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism*, 106.

⁶⁸ Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, 65.

⁶⁹ For a helpful study on this phrase, see Howard, *Structure of Psalms 93–100*, 37–38. Regarding this parallelism, he writes: “The chiasmic pattern now is apparent in v.2, whereby *ks’k* and *’th* (both referring to YHWH’s throne) bracket *m’z* and *m’wlm* (both laying out the time frame of the throne’s existence), with the verb doing double duty for both lines of the verse” (ibid., 37).

A merism⁷⁰ may also be found as one looks at Psalm 93:1c–2. At the end of verse 1, the psalmist employs Yahweh has establishing the תִּבְלָל (inhabited world). Then in verse 2, he notes that Yahweh’s כִּסֵּא (throne) has been established from of old. Yahweh’s throne is in the heavens. The merism here, then, signifies that “YHWH’s sovereignty is over all things, both the world and the heavens. The establishment of his throne likely refers to the heavens, which complements the establishment of the world.”⁷¹

Verse 2 extols the eternity of Yahweh and His everlasting reign. Maclaren writes that verse two expresses the truth of Yahweh’s reign “by going deep down, high up, traveling into the dim, unbounded past, and there seeing one shining, solid substance, namely, Jehovah’s throne.”⁷² It begins with the dramatic description of kingship,

נִכְוֶן כִּסְאֵי נֹאֲזָן. What a short, concise, yet clear, statement of God’s everlasting

kingship! The verb נִכְוֶן beckons the reader to recall what was just said at the end of

verse 1, אֶרֶץ-תְּכֹן תִּבְלָל. Here in verse 2, נִכְוֶן is a Niphal participle masculine singular.

What the psalmist is exclaiming—or, rather, affirming—to Yahweh,⁷³ is that the royal throne has been fixed and established. The Niphal participle here, grammatically, is a

⁷⁰ A merism (sometimes referred to as merismus) is a figure of speech in which a subject is broken into two or more essential (usually complementary) parts, which nevertheless signify the whole (see Howard, *Structure of Psalms 93–100*, 37n4).

⁷¹ Ibid., 37.

⁷² See Alexander Maclaren, *The Psalms*, Limited Classical Reprint Library (repr., Minneapolis: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1981), 35.

⁷³ This is because of the 2ms suffix on the noun, כִּסֵּא. See Human, “Psalm 93,” who writes that “Yahweh is addressed in prayer-like fashion in descriptive and hymnic nominal clauses” (159).

predicate adjective.⁷⁴ The verb with the Niphal describes “fixed” entities like “full daylight (Hos 6:3).”⁷⁵ God is eternal in essence, so he has always been invested with power and majesty.⁷⁶

The כִּסֵּא of Yahweh is a key aspect to His Kingship. This throne refers to his “permanent control of the universe.”⁷⁷ The use of כִּסֵּא may also have the connotation that Yahweh has established his throne not only as King but also as Judge.⁷⁸ Surely, however, the judgment of God is enveloped within the scope of the sovereignty of God. In short, God can judge because He is the sovereign King. He has all rights to execute perfect judgment and righteousness because He is the all-sovereign ruler of all.

Regarding Yahweh’s established throne, Calvin is accurate when he writes:

The term *throne* signifies, by the figure synecdoche [*pars pro toto*], righteousness, and office or power of government; it being customary to transfer such images taken from men to God, in accommodation to our infirmity. By this ascription of praise the Psalmist effectually disposes of all the absurd ideas which have been broached, tending to deny or disparage the power of God, and declares, upon the matter, that God may sooner cease to be, than to sit upon his throne in the government of this world.⁷⁹

In Ugaritic, *ks’* appears 30 times in the corpus of texts. It is because of such occurrences that Fabry rather strongly asserts that Yahweh’s kingship is borrowed from

⁷⁴ See *IBHS*, 619.

⁷⁵ See K. Koch, “כִּסֵּא,” in *TDOT*, 15 vols., ed. by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. by David E. Green et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 7:90.

⁷⁶ See John Calvin, *Commentary on The Book of Psalms*, 5 vols., trans. by James Anderson (reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1963), 4:7.

⁷⁷ Feuer, *Tehillim*, 2:1158.

⁷⁸ Martens, “כִּסֵּא,” 2:616.

⁷⁹ Calvin, *Psalms*, 4:7.

Canaanite tradition.⁸⁰ Specifically in Psalm 93, Fabry believes that the phrase “Yahweh’s throne from of old” “is to be explained as an amalgamation of the royal titles borne by El and Ba‘al in Ugaritic.”⁸¹

יָנִיִּי has received some debate considering its relationship with Ugaritic literature. Dahood asserts that this preposition and adverb corresponds to the יָנִיִּי in verse 5 and, hence, it ought to be vocalized as *me’ad* and explained as a Canaanite form.⁸² To be sure, this phrase יָנִיִּי is fairly rare in the OT, the same root letters are found in other Semitic languages. It is no wonder that there are similarities. The point is simply that Yahweh’s throne was established and reaches back to the most distant past.⁸³ There is special emphasis here on יָנִיִּי being used to refer to an eternal past.⁸⁴ It is a recurring phrase in

⁸⁰ See Fabry’s article for more study here (H.J. Fabry, “יָנִיִּי,” in *TDOT*, 15 vols., ed. by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. by David E. Green et al. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995], 7:232–59).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 7:253. Part of the reason why Fabry is so strong in this regard is because of the correlation between Yahweh being on His royal throne and Baal being on his royal throne on Mt. Saphon. He writes: “Here in Ps 93:2, we find clear echoes of the Canaanite myths of Ba‘al’s battle with chaos and enthronement, in which Ba‘al’s throne on Mt. Saphon constitutes the focal point of the action” (*ibid.*, 7:255).

⁸² Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 340. Human writes that יָנִיִּי does contain “mythological terms which express a time dimension that is inexplicable and indeterminable . . . This time category can only be expressed in mythical language” (“Psalm 93,” 159); cf. Nick Wyatt, *Space and Time in the Religious Life of the Near East* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 210.

⁸³ See Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3:75.

⁸⁴ See Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds., *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 23 who note that this refers to time in the distant past; contra. Koch who seems to believe that Yahweh’s throne was established at a certain point in the past and that the intended meaning is to portray his reign from *that point forward*: “Yahweh established his throne from the beginning (lit. ‘from then on’ [not ‘from the first’])” (K. Koch, “יָנִיִּי,” in *TDOT*, 15 vols., ed. by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. by David E. Green et al. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995] 7:100).

Isaiah's prophecy. For instance, speaking for Yahweh, Isaiah proclaims: "Do not tremble and do not be afraid; Have I not long since (יְנִינִי) announced *it* to you and declared *it*? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, Or is there any *other* Rock? I know of none" (44:8). Again in Isaiah 45:21, Yahweh declares: "Declare and set forth *your case*; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old (יְנִינִי)? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me." Finally, Yahweh alone declares: "I declared the former things long ago (יְנִינִי) And they went forth from My mouth, and I proclaimed them. Suddenly I acted, and they came to pass" (48:3).⁸⁵ This clearly states (in more ways than one) that God's sovereignty has endured through the ages and shall endure forevermore! No other monarch can ever claim this.

Verse 2 concludes with an emphatic restating of the reality already declared, מִמְּעוֹלָם אַתָּה. The phrase "you are from everlasting" immediately calls one's attention to Psalm 90:2, "Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God."⁸⁶ In fact, the inversion "From everlasting are You" puts the emphasis on the Lord Himself (אַתָּה) at

⁸⁵ See Isa 48:5, 7, and 8 also.

⁸⁶ Heb: וּמִמְּעוֹלָם עַד-עוֹלָם אַתָּה אֵל:

the end).⁸⁷ Perhaps this construction may form a divine inclusio formed by יהוה and

אתה.⁸⁸

יהוה מלך גאות לבש לבש יהוה עז התאזר אף־תכון תכל בל־תמוט:

נכון כסאך מאז מעולם אתה

Next, the prepositional phrase מעולם occurs 16 times in the Hebrew Bible.⁸⁹ The Targum includes the vocative, אלהא, “O God” probably to balance out each of the cola in verse 2.⁹⁰ This would then balance the verse to a 3:3 structure. But this insertion ought to remain omitted from the MT. The point is that Yahweh alone (אתה) has existed from all past ages. Genesis 1:1 (בראשית ברא אלהים) expresses the same concept and assumes God’s existence. After reading this opening phrase in the Bible, one might ask, “Where did God (אלהים) come from?” “When was *His* beginning?” The obvious answer from the whole testimony of Scripture is that He has no beginning.

⁸⁷ See Tarazi, “Psalm 93,” 143. Cf. v.1a: יהוה מלך.

⁸⁸ See Tarazi, “Psalm 93,” 143 who seems to allude to an inclusio in his description of the syntax in v. 2.

⁸⁹ Gen 6:4; Josh 24:2; 1 Sam 27:8; 1 Chron 29:10; Pss 25:6; 93:2; 103:17; 119:52; Prov 8:23; Isa 42:14; 46:9; 63:16, 19; Jer 2:20; 5:15; and Ezek 26:20.

⁹⁰ W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Psalms: Translated with Text-Critical and Exegetical Notes*, 2 vols. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1939), 2:415 does a similar change when he simply adds יהוה to the end of v. 2 for balance in rhythm.

Some have seen the possible connection to the Ugaritic texts with this phrase referring to Baal as *mlk 'lm* (King of Eternity).⁹¹ Dahood sees that the roots **לְמַלְכֵךְ** and **עֹלָם** are also found in the Baal texts:

*Indeed our creator is the Eternal,
Indeed the Everlasting is He
Who brought us into being.*⁹²

Elsewhere the texts read:

*Our king is Baal
Our sovereign second to none.*⁹³

It should also be noted that verse 2 is the only verse in the entire psalm where the name **יְהוָה** is omitted. Perhaps it was a deliberate omission by the psalmist because he knew that the ways that he described the King in this psalm could refer to no one other than the True and Living God of Israel, **יְהוָה**. Additionally, perhaps the psalmist knew that the readers and singers would expect Yahweh's name to be found in this verse and, consequently, when they would not find it, it would provoke them to take a closer look at this crucial verse. Howard proposes regarding the omission of Yahweh's name: "The

⁹¹ de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism*, 72; cf. *KTU* 1.108:1. Similarly, Seybold notes that "within the Ugaritic pantheon El is the only real king (*mlk*) . . . and he is king in the larger sense, indeed, he can be called 'king of eternity'" (Seybold, "גִּלְגַּל," 8:351).

⁹² *UT* 76:iii:6–7; cf. Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 340.

⁹³ See *ANET*, 133; *KTU* 1.3 v: 32; see Wyatt's translation (*Religious Texts*, 87):
*Our king is Valiant,
Baal is our ruler,
There is none (who is) above him.*

phenomenon may be nothing more than a stylistic variation, a deliberate variation from the norm, for added emphasis, as is common in Hebrew poetry.”⁹⁴

In conclusion, Yahweh has always existed. He has always been the King. He has always been on the Sovereign throne. The point is that the throne and nature of Yahweh are not incipient in time—they are timelessly eternal!⁹⁵ If there is one thing this verse points to, it is the theme of Yahweh’s permanence as King!⁹⁶ In no way can this be “copied” from the Baal texts for they are decisively different. Baal became *a* king. Yahweh has always existed as *the* King. Yahweh needs no one to copy. He needs no attributes from another god or deity. Yahweh surely does not need to usurp Baal’s functions in any way.⁹⁷ As Psalm 95:3 confirms: “For the LORD is a great God And a great King above all gods.”

The Sinful Rebellion of the World – Verses 3–4

Verse 3 is a tricolon where each colon is very similar in nature. Obviously, as all commentators agree, verse 3 employs the Hebrew poetic feature of repetition for added

⁹⁴ *Structure of Psalms 93–100*, 38. He gives an excellent example of this in his article: “The most dramatic example of this (omission) occurs in Amos 1–2, where in six of the seven oracles the verb used for the promised destruction is *slh* ‘to send’ and in the seventh (the oracle against the Ammonites) the verb is *yst* ‘to kindle’, reflecting either a special outrage at the sins of Ammon (or a special hatred for the nation in general) or simply a variation for stylistic reasons” (ibid.).

⁹⁵ See Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3:75; Kraus similarly states: “מֵעוֹלָם and מֵאֲדָמָה point to primeval time. מֵעוֹלָם does not mean an eternity which, being timeless, would be unchangeable, but—as also מֵאֲדָמָה shows: the most remote time—both regarding the past and also the future (*Psalms 60–150*, 234). That is to say, it encompasses all of human history—past, present, and future! Contra Hossfeld and Zenger who confusingly say that the temporal dimension of Yahweh’s rule does indeed have a beginning, but no time before. They continue by saying that “the accent in the statement lies not on *creation prima*, but on the *conservation* that exists from an immeasurable time past . . . the existence of God is coextensive with the extent of time (i.e., his way of being is not at all a negation of the course of time). The world shares in the stability and the endurance of God’s existence and rule” (*Psalms 2*, 448).

⁹⁶ See Wilcock, *Psalms 73–150*, 88.

⁹⁷ Contra de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism*, 106.

emphasis.⁹⁸ It is, though, the nature of—or the purpose of—that emphasis which is at question. Regardless, the parallel structure in verse 3 is unmistakable.⁹⁹ It is an A+B+C//A+B+D//A+B+E pattern:¹⁰⁰

נְשֹׂאֵי נְהַרֹּתַי יִהְיֶה | נְשֹׂאֵי נְהַרֹּת קוֹלָם | יִשְׂאוּ נְהַרֹּת דְּכִיָּם:

The psalmist first declared the sovereignty of Yahweh in verse 1. Then he asserted the eternity of Yahweh in verse 2. Here in verse 3 he will prove the utter omnipotence of Yahweh. The first colon in verse 3 is נְשֹׂאֵי נְהַרֹּתַי יִהְיֶה. “The נְהַרֹּתַי have lifted up against Yahweh.” “The rivers have נְשֹׂאֵי.” נְשֹׂאֵי is a Qal perfect third masculine plural from נָשָׂא.

The middle colon in verse 3 is נְשֹׂאֵי נְהַרֹּת קוֹלָם. It is identical to the first colon except for the change in the final word. Here, instead of the vocative יִהְיֶה, the psalmist uses the accusative קוֹלָם. Obviously, the noun קוֹל refers to the great sound of the rivers lifting up. Dahood translates קוֹלָם as “thunderous roar.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ For help on repetition in Hebrew poetry, see M. O’Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 361–70 and Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques*, JSOTSS 26, ed. by David J. A. Clines, and Philip R. Davies (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 274–82. Watson gives various forms of repetition and begins the section saying a bit hyperbolically: “Repetition is the verbal device under which the technical devices of poetry can all be subsumed” (ibid., 275).

⁹⁹ Briggs calls this kind of construction a “stairlike parallelism” (*Psalms*, 2:302).

¹⁰⁰ See Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 341. He believes that this kind of stylized tricolon has Canaanite origins.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 339.

The third and final colon in the verse is **יְשֹׁאֵי נְהַרְוֹת דְּכִיִּים**. Once again, there is remarkable similarity in repetition in this phrase except for two noticeable factors. First, the object is changed from **יְהוָה** in the first colon and **קוֹלָם** in the second colon to **דְּכִיִּים. דְּכִיִּים**. This has been an enigma to scholars since it is a hapax legomena in the OT. Perhaps this is why the LXX completely omits this phrase.¹⁰² Part of what makes **דְּכִיִּים** such a controversial word is because there are a variety of suggested ANE cognates which make the etymology and formation of this root fairly questionable.¹⁰³ However, with similar roots occurring elsewhere in the OT,¹⁰⁴ it seems that **דכא** denotes oppression and connotes the sense of oppressing in the sense of smashing something.¹⁰⁵ Brown, Driver, and Briggs note that **דְּכִי** refers to the crushing, crashing, or dashing of the ocean waves.¹⁰⁶ This would seem to make perfect sense in the immediate context here

¹⁰² LXX: ἐπήραυ οἱ ποταμοὶ κύριε ἐπήραυ οἱ ποταμοὶ φωνὰς αὐτῶν. There is also a textual variant regarding **יְשֹׁאֵי** where there is another reading which has the perfect **יְשֹׁאֵי** most certainly for the purpose of balance.

¹⁰³ See W. R. Dömeris, “דכא,” in *NIDOTTE*, 5 vols., ed. by Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 1:943.

¹⁰⁴ **דכא** is found 22x in the OT, almost all of which are in the Writings (Deut 23:2; Job 4:19; 5:4; 6:9; 19:2; 22:9; 34:25; Pss 34:19; 72:4; 89:11; 90:3; 94:5; 143:3; Prov 22:22; Isa 3:15; 19:10; 53:5, 10; 57:15; Jer 44:10; and Lam 3:34).

¹⁰⁵ Dömeris, “דכא,” 1:944; cf. H. F. Fuhs, “דכא,” in *TDOT*, 15 vols., ed. by G. Johannes Botterweck, and Helmer Ringgren, trans. by John T. Willis and Geoffrey W. Bromiley et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1978), 3:195–208.

¹⁰⁶ BDB, 194.

in Psalm 93. It could also be rendered “tumult” which implied more of a blow or collision expressed by the thud of the ocean waves against an obstacle.¹⁰⁷

It seems that **דְּכִיָּם** is in wordplay with **יָ** of verse 4—both phonetically and in parallelism with each other.¹⁰⁸ Delitzsch sees **דְּכִיָּם** as referring to a “noise” which seems to fall short of the intended power which the psalmist intends to portray.¹⁰⁹ Tarazi aligns more with how similar verses read when he asserts **דְּכִיָּם** is to be understood as “their pounding waves.”¹¹⁰ The third masculine plural suffix **ם** is referring to the masculine plural **נְהַרְוֹת**,¹¹¹ but Dahood sees **דְּכִיָּם** as referring to a plural of majesty, which doesn’t seem to make much sense in the context.¹¹²

The root **נָשַׁא** is found repeatedly in the Hebrew Bible and also occurs over 60 times in the Ugaritic texts.¹¹³ Note, however, how the verb has changed from a perfect (*qatal*), as in the previous two cola, to an imperfect (*yiqtol*), **יִשְׁאַר**. Therefore, the verbal construction in this verse is as follows:

¹⁰⁷ Maclaren, *Psalms*, 3:36.

¹⁰⁸ See Human, “Psalm 93,” 160; Alexander, *Psalms*, 389.

¹⁰⁹ Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3:76.

¹¹⁰ Tarazi, “Psalm 93,” 145.

¹¹¹ Though **נְהַרְוֹת** is a masculine noun, in the plural it takes a feminine ending (BDB, 625).

¹¹² Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 341.

¹¹³ See D. N. Freedman and B. W. Willoughby, “נָשַׁא,” in *TDOT*, 15 vols., ed. by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. by Douglas W. Stott et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 10:24–27.

imperfect
perfect
perfect
 נִשְׁאָפוּ נְהַרֹתַי יְהוָה | נִשְׁאָפוּ נְהַרֹת קוֹלָם | יִשְׁאָפוּ נְהַרֹת דְּכָיִים

Why did the psalmist change the pattern of verbal forms from the perfects (*qatals*) to an imperfect (*yiqtol*)? Howard suggests that this is a “prime datum used to make the case for a ‘preterite’ aspect for some cases of prefixing [*yiqtol*] verbs.”¹¹⁴ Most commentators acknowledge that the entire psalm is concerned with Yahweh’s sovereignty over the world (v. 2) and over the waters (vv. 3–4), indeed, his sovereignty was established in ages past, and the rebellious waters are no longer any threat (if indeed they ever were).¹¹⁵ So, Yahweh’s established throne prevents the rebellious waters from lifting up their voices in opposition to him (which, if יִשְׁאָפוּ were translated with present habitual or durative connotations, would denote).¹¹⁶ Fensham contributes to this discussion when he says “the noise made by the water streams can be regarded as habitual. Both the suffix and prefix conjugation can give expression to this function. The choice of the specific conjugation is in the hands of the poet, although it seems that the typical pattern is to place the suffix conjugation first and not last.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Howard, *Psalms 93–100*, 38.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 38–39.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 39. He acknowledges that “an alternative would be to read *ys’w* as a past habitual. The verbs would then read ‘lifted up . . . lifted up . . . used to lift up’. This sense is little different from reading the verb as a preterite. Another alternative would be to explain the form as indicating that even if the waters that have been rebellious in the past (v. 3a–b) should be so in the future (v. 3c), YHWH still remains stronger. This reading must be admitted as a possibility, especially if v. 4 may be read as stating that the waters continue to be rebellious but that YHWH, nevertheless, is greater than they are” (*ibid.*).

¹¹⁷ See F. C. Fensham, “The Use of the Suffix Conjugation and the Prefix Conjugation in a Few Old Hebrew Poems,” *JNSL* 6 (1978): 17.

As one could foresee, many scholars identify here a close resemblance to the Ugaritic mythological texts that show that Baal was supreme over the “waters” (Yam).¹¹⁸ Tarazi believes that an overview of the OT would lead one to recognize that the “rivers” here symbolize the “primeval Sea,” also known under its mythological figure of Leviathan/Rahab/dragon.¹¹⁹ This viewpoint can be obtained by understanding Psalms 74:12–16 and 89:9–13 and their parallelism, the similar phraseology employed in those psalms with Psalm 93, and how one must see that Psalm 93 is, then, “undoubtedly speaking of God’s victory over the ‘primeval Sea.’”¹²⁰ Terrien thinks that the language was inherited from Canaanite mythology and asserted in spatial and audible terms finally reaching its fortissimo in thundering strokes.¹²¹ Because of this, there are numerous reasons why some commentators have seen fit to associate this verse (and, consequently, this psalm) with Canaanite origin and literature.

First, the similarities between verses 3 and 4 to the Ugaritic texts about Baal may reveal some kind of association:

*What enemy rises up against Baal,
What foe against the Rider of the Clouds?
Have I not smitten Yam, the Darling of El?
Have I not made an end to River (nhr), the great God?*

¹¹⁸ See Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 449: “In the background of these verses are, poetically, Ugaritic asymmetric parallelism and, as to content, Ugaritic and Canaanite mythology. The storm-god Baal fights against his opponent Yam, who can also be called ‘Master Flood, Prince Sea.’ Baal achieves royal rule over the chaos-enemy, Sea. The Canaanite myth about the battle of the gods is here taken up in a broken form” (448); cf. Gordon, *Ugaritic Manual*, 68–69; Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 235.

¹¹⁹ Tarazi, “Psalm 93,” 143.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 144.

¹²¹ Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic and Theological Commentary*, ECC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), 659.

*Have I not muzzled the dragon, captured him?*¹²²

“The thrust of this mythical unit is Baal’s decisive victory over Yam-Nahar. There is an interesting Ugaritic text where the god Yam appears under the parallel name Nahar in the repeated parallelism:

O Prince Sea, O Judge River.”¹²³

There is no reason why Baal should have to defeat several other sea monsters or “rulers” in order to acquire or retain this lofty position. In order for him to establish sovereignty over the earth, he must achieve this victory once and for all.¹²⁴ There are clear similarities that cannot be overlooked.

Second, as mentioned above, the stylized pattern of this tricolon is A+B+C//A+B+D//A+B+E pattern which also occurs in Canaanite literature.¹²⁵ The Ugaritic texts often have the formulation A+B+C//A+B+D which can be called a “classical expanded colon.”¹²⁶ Mowinckel regards Psalm 93 as “tricolonic in its entirety.”¹²⁷ Albright refers to this as a “Canaanitism”—which, he asserts, occurs often in Psalms 92–

¹²² See Green, *Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, 183; cf. *KTU* 1.3 iii:34–39; Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 79.

¹²³ ANET, 129–30.

¹²⁴ Green, *Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, 185.

¹²⁵ Cf. Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 341; Human, “Psalm 93,” 160; Helen Genevieve Jefferson, “Psalm 93,” *JBL* 71 (1952): 156.

¹²⁶ See Avishur, *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms*, 50.

¹²⁷ See Sigmund Mowinckel, *Real and Apparent Tricola in Hebrew Psalm Poetry* (Bergin: Oslo: I Kommissjon Hos H. Aschehoug, 1957), 13. He continues that something important must be understood when observing tricola: “The main rule is here, as it is in the bicolon, that all the three cola (membra) show a more or less exact parallelism between each other. The parallelism is very often of the climactic or repetitive sort” (*ibid.*, 17).

96—and sees Psalm 93:3 as an example of a stylized pattern of this sort.¹²⁸ Elsewhere he notes that a tricolon is the “classic example of Canaanite repetitive style.”¹²⁹ However, one must guard against taking this too far since this construction still does not “prove” that the psalms are of Canaanite provenance, since the pattern here is also attested in many of the Psalms, in the Song of Songs, and three times in the Song of the Sea (with minor variations).¹³⁰

Third, the perfect—perfect—imperfect (or *qtl*—*qtl*—*yiqtol*) verbal sequence is remarkably similar to that found in much of the Ugaritic literature.¹³¹ Wilfred Watson states that the Ugaritic poetic pattern can be *qtl//qtl*, *qtl//yqtl*, *yqtl//qtl* and *yqtl//yqtl*.¹³² The Ras Shamra texts indicate that this kind of verbal sequence is, in fact, deliberate and was a common archaic literary device in Canaanite literature.¹³³

Fourth, there are many similarities between Psalm 93 and many of the Canaanite texts. For instance, the rare Hebrew word כִּיָּם does have some alleged parallels in the Ugaritic texts. Dahood is quick to note that this root *dky* means “to pound, crush,” which

¹²⁸ Albright, “Psalm of Habakkuk,” 6–7.

¹²⁹ William Foxwell Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1968), 6. He later states: “It should be added that the tricolon 3+3+3, with or without repetitive pattern, still dominates Canaanite magical spells from Egypt and Palestine in the fourteenth-thirteenth centuries B.C.” (ibid., 14). Cf. Watson, “Ugaritic Poetry,” 174–75; H. L. Ginsberg, “The Rebellion and Death of Ba‘lu,” *Orientalia* 5 (1936): 170.

¹³⁰ See Avishur, *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms*, 50.

¹³¹ Cf. Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 341; cf. Moshe Held, “The *yqtol-qtl* (*qtl-yqtl*) Sequence of Identical Verbs in Biblical Hebrew and in Ugaritic,” in *Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman*, ed. by Meir Ben-Horin, Bernard D. Weinryb, and Solomon Zeitlin (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 281–90 (see esp. 286).

¹³² See Wilfred G. E. Watson, “Ugaritic Poetry,” in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. by Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 171–72.

¹³³ Held, “The *yqtol-qtl* (*qtl-yqtl*) Sequence,” 283.

is a fitting description of the storm-god whose alternate name *hd/hdd* denotes “the Crasher.”¹³⁴ Along these same lines, Fuhs also remarks that “the entire destructive power of this primeval force is expressed by *dokhyam*, “their roaring” (Ps 93:3), which undoubtedly is equivalent to Ugaritic *dkym*.”¹³⁵ For example, the Ugaritic texts read:

*Baal seized the sons of Athirat.
The great ones he smote with a blade,
The brilliant ones [dkym] he smote with a mace,
The small ones he smote to the earth.*¹³⁶

Though here in the texts, it is translated as “brilliant,” it can also be translated as “pounders of the sea.”¹³⁷ Yet Day aptly concludes that “the Hebrew *dokyam* is to be distinguished from Ugaritic *dkym*.”¹³⁸

Fifth, because verse 3 is after the psalmist’s evidence that Yahweh has existed from everlasting and now discusses the waters lifting up, many see this referring to the battle taking place in primeval time or at the ultimate beginning, when YHWH enters into governance, and from then on.¹³⁹ To that extent the waves and the sea constitute a real threat and challenge to YHWH’s *creatio continua*.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁴ Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 341.

¹³⁵ Fuhs, “אֶרֶב,” 3:203.

¹³⁶ *KTU* 1.6.v:1–3; Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 140.

¹³⁷ Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 140n103. Interestingly, Wyatt concludes his discussion by confessing that “the etymology, and consequently interpretation, remains conjectural” (*ibid.*).

¹³⁸ Day, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 37.

¹³⁹ See Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 449.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Aside from all the mythological interpretations and “allusions” to Ugaritic, Briggs sees verse 3 and the נְהַרְוֹת referring not to rivers or brooks, but to the streams of the Mediterranean Sea.¹⁴¹ The נְהַרְוֹת are the sounds of the rushing and dashing waters in a storm and the roaring of the breakers as they throw themselves upon the shore. Surely the Israelites would have been familiar with these sea breakers crashing down on the seashore in Western Palestine.

But one may object to Briggs’s interpretation by asking why the psalmist would have changed verb tenses from the perfect to the imperfect. To this, Briggs would answer that the psalmist implemented change for added emphasis to show that the action is not completed,¹⁴² but in progress.¹⁴³ The intended purpose of this interpretation is simply to commemorate and hail the majestic wonders of Yahweh as it graphically describes the power and majesty of the sea in the midst of a great storm.¹⁴⁴ God manifests his power in the sound of the floods, and in the tempestuous waves of the sea, in a way calculated to excite our reverential awe.¹⁴⁵

Taking a stand against the mythological interpretation connected with the Canaanite literature, yet rejecting the view of Briggs that there is no symbolic metaphor

¹⁴¹ See Briggs, *Psalms*, 2:302.

¹⁴² The perfect (*qatal*) may signify “completed action” (see Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *From Exegesis to Exposition: A Practical Guide to Using Biblical Hebrew* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 86).

¹⁴³ Briggs, *Psalms*, 2:302.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. To be fair, Briggs does acknowledge that this kind of phraseology is used elsewhere symbolical of armies of mighty foes (cf. Isa 17:12–13; Pss 46:4; 89:10) (ibid.). Human seems to agree with Briggs: “The term הַכִּיָּם . . . probably indicates the loud noise made by the pounding waves of the sea” (“Psalm 93,” 163).

¹⁴⁵ Calvin, *Psalms*, 4:9.

here, Delitzsch sees the rivers as emblems of the Gentile world attempting to hinder the progress of the kingdom of God and its final breaking through to the glory of victory.¹⁴⁶ He sees the change from the perfects to an imperfect as affirming what has taken place in the past with the future (imperfect) tense signifying even now as what is yet to take place.¹⁴⁷

Another possible view would be to see the נְהַרְרוּת in the sense of the physical waters of the Mediterranean lifting their loud voices and crashing breakers being controlled and subdued by the sovereign power of Yahweh *in addition* to seeing an allusion to Canaanite mythology because that was the well-known idea of the “waters” and “rivers” of that day.¹⁴⁸ Not only is there an allusion to Canaanite mythology but it also includes a polemic against this Canaanite mythology.¹⁴⁹ Ross continues:

One of the Canaanite deities of chaos is Prince Sea (Yam), also called Judge River (nahar). This strong and daring god enslaved Baal and had to be defeated before Baal could return to his mountain. The Bible portrays the Lord controlling the sea and the rivers which are not deified, both at creation and in giving his people victory over their Canaanite enemies.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ See Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3:76; cf. Lane, *Psalms 90–150*, 21; Feuer sees this as a metaphor for the enemy hordes who seek to sweep Israel away (*Tehillim*, 2:1159).

¹⁴⁷ Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3:76.

¹⁴⁸ See Allen P. Ross, “נְהַרְרָה,” in *NIDOTTE*, 5 vols., ed. by Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 3:46.

¹⁴⁹ Ross, “נְהַרְרָה,” 3:46. Lawson concurs here: “Like the relentless pounding of the waves against the beach, the seas symbolize all that comes against and oppresses the Lord’s kingdom. All the destructive powers of sin and Satan are embodied in this sea that threatens God’s established order in and on the earth. Man’s sinful rebellion is set against the sovereign Lord” (*Psalms 76–150*, 101).

¹⁵⁰ Ross, “נְהַרְרָה,” 3:46. Interestingly, “In the Ugaritic texts *tpt nhr*, “Judge River” appears as a parallel designation of *zbl ym* “Prince Sea” overcome by Ba‘al” (See the helpful article by L. A. Snijders, “נְהַרְרָה,” in *TDOT*, 15 vols., ed. by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. by David E. Green et al. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1998], 9:261–70; esp. 262).

This final view is to be preferred in understanding verses 3–4 because of the close similarities found in the Hebrew and in the Ugaritic texts. Additionally, the religious phraseology and polemic nuance further enhances the sovereignty of Yahweh—and not Baal—in the immediate context of the psalm.

Now turning to the next verse in Psalm 93, verse 4 is a glorious verse in this psalm for it absolutely debunks every thought of anything rising up and overcoming Yahweh, the God of Israel. Perowne hypothesizes that verses 3 and 4 may have been sung together and verse 4 would have served as an antiphony to verse 3.¹⁵¹

Verse 4 is, however, a complicated verse to construe because of its structure.¹⁵² This verse is a tricolon as is most of this psalm (except for v. 2). The following arrangement displays this structure and shows the balance and symmetry of a 3+3+3¹⁵³ pattern:

מִקְלוֹתַי | מַיִם רַבִּים אֲדִירִים מְשַׁבְּרֵי־יָם אֲדִיר בְּמָרוֹם יְהוָה:

The phrase מִקְלוֹתַי | מַיִם רַבִּים begins the tricolon in verse 4. מִקְלוֹתַי is fronted with the preposition מִן which appears to carry a comparison nuance in this

¹⁵¹ Perowne, *Psalms*, 2:183.

¹⁵² Perowne gives a few possible renderings of this verse with support for each. One possibility is to see this as a causative: “because these waters are rising, Yahweh on high is mighty.” His second possible rendering is to see this as a forcible juxtaposition thereby rendering it: “Above the voices of many waters, Glorious are the breakers of the sea, Jehovah on high is glorious” (ibid., 2:184).

¹⁵³ Here observing the *maqef* in מְשַׁבְּרֵי־יָם as connecting the words with regard to meaning, but keeping the words separate for the purpose of balance and symmetry. Even if, however, the *maqef* was considered as making the two words one, it would be 3+2+3 structure which would still have a form of balance.

context: “More than the sounds of many waters.”¹⁵⁴ Dahood takes, however, a loose translation when he renders this phrase: “Stronger than thundering waters.”¹⁵⁵ Part of his reasoning rests on parsing *rabbim* parses as a plural adjective referring to God, and, since the syllable count of this verse is 7:7:7, “there is sufficient reason,” states Dahood, “for employing the plural of majesty in this context.”¹⁵⁶

It is ironic that the plural from the noun קוֹל is used to portray the loud “sound” (lit. “voices”) of the many waters, yet “the utmost of their power is to him but a sound and he can readily master it, therefore Yahweh calls it a noise by way of contempt!”¹⁵⁷ Even the strongest voices, the greatest of sounds, the most tumultuous of powers or armies cannot match the supreme power of God.

One interesting fact is that even though some are confident of the influence of the Ugaritic texts on this psalm because of its theme and style, the OT phrase מַיִם רַבִּים¹⁵⁸ does not occur in the Ugaritic texts as a designation for Yam at all.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ As Delitzsch also concurs (*Psalms*, 3:76). Contra Perowne who suggests that this ought to be causal (*Psalms*, 2:184).

¹⁵⁵ Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 339; cf. Eaton, who translates this verse as: “More than the thunders of their majesties the waters, of their lordships the breakers of the sea, more lordly on high was Yahweh” (*Psalms: A Historical and Spiritual Commentary*, 332).

¹⁵⁶ Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 341.

¹⁵⁷ See C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 3 vols. (repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.), 2:135.

¹⁵⁸ This phrase occurs 17 times in the OT (Num 20:11; 2 Chron 32:4; Pss 29:3; 32:6; 93:4; Song 8:7; Isa 17:13; Jer 41:12; 51:13; Ezek 1:24; 17:5, 8; 31:7, 15; 32:13; 43:2; and Hab 3:15). Consult Herbert May’s study at this point: “Some Cosmic Connotations of *Mayim Rabbim*,” 9–20.

¹⁵⁹ Kloos acknowledges this fact (*Yhwh’s Combat with the Sea*, 52).

Then **אֲדִירִים מְשַׁבְּרֵי־יָם** has been subject to some debate because of the masculine plural ending on the noun **אֲדִירִים**. Some have suggested that this is a misreading of the text and it should rather be read as **אֲדִיר מְשַׁבְּרֵי־יָם**.¹⁶⁰ This would make this phrase similar in nature with the first phrase in verse 4 with the comparative **מִן**.¹⁶¹ But there is virtually no textual evidence to change the MT and it ought to remain as **אֲדִירִים מְשַׁבְּרֵי־יָם**, even though it is the harder reading. Perhaps the greatest support in favor of leaving the text as it stands is because of the *rebia'* disjunctive accent over **רַבִּים**. This *rebia'* clearly separates the two phrases so that **אֲדִירִים** cannot be interpreted as an adjective describing **מַיִם**, water, but rather is the predicate of **מְשַׁבְּרֵי־יָם**.¹⁶²

Another possible twist is to see the plural adjective, **אֲדִירִים**, as parallel with *rabbim* in the previous phrase and to, consequently, see **אֲדִירִים** as describing Yahweh.¹⁶³

The phrase for “mighty waves”—**מְשַׁבְּרֵי־יָם**—is used to refer to the ocean breakers. Goulder proposes that the waves are “always real waves (Ps 93:4; Jon 2:4).”¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ See Oesterley, *Psalms*, 2:415; Gaster, “Battle of the Rain and the Sea,” 24n1.

¹⁶¹ Although the **מִן** is omitted from this second phrase in v. 4, context allows for it to be rendered in the translation as it stands; cf. Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 341.

¹⁶² See Feuer, *Tehillim*, 2:1160.

¹⁶³ Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 341.

¹⁶⁴ See Goulder, *Psalms of the Sons of Korah*, 204.

Briggs similarly writes that these are the “roaring of the breakers as they throw themselves upon the shore.”¹⁶⁵

Eaton prefers to insert a second **מִקְלֹת** before the phrase **אֲדִירִים מִשְׁבְּרֵי־יָם** which would result with this translation: “More than the sounds of many waters, than the mighty sounds of the breakers of the sea.”¹⁶⁶ He is also open to the possibility of **אֲדִירִים מִשְׁבְּרֵי־יָם** being in apposition to **מֵי־רַבִּים** which would make it: “More than the sounds of many waters, *that is*, even the mighty breakers of the sea.”¹⁶⁷ This is a valid possibility grammatically.

Finally, the clear affirmation of Yahweh’s supremacy is uncovered when the psalmist exclaims **יְהוָה בְּמָרוֹם יִהְיֶה! אֲדִיר בְּמָרוֹם יִהְיֶה!** It calls the reader to refer back to Psalm 92:8: “But You, O LORD, are on high forever”¹⁶⁸ (cf. Ps 29:10). This phrase here in verse 4 wonderfully portrays the power of Yahweh over every other force or rebellion that may rise against Him.¹⁶⁹ The point is unmistakable: many may rise against Yahweh but his

¹⁶⁵ Briggs, *Psalms*, 2:302. He continues: “This is a graphic description of the majesty of the sea in a great storm. It is to be interpreted as real and not as symbolical of armies of mighty foes, although this symbol is appropriate and used elsewhere, cf. Isa 17:12–13; Pss 46:4; 89:10” (ibid.).

¹⁶⁶ See J. H. Eaton, “Notes and Studies: Some Questions on Philology and Exegesis in the Psalms,” *JTS* 19 (1968): 609.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. He concludes with the following translation of verse 4:
*Over the thunders of their Lordships the Waters,
(Over) their Majesties the Breakers of the Sea,
Prevailed in majesty Yahweh on high.*

¹⁶⁸ Notice the similarities: **יְהוָה בְּמָרוֹם יִהְיֶה וְאֲתָה מְרוֹם לְעֵלָם יִהְיֶה** (Ps 92:8 [9]) and **אֲדִיר בְּמָרוֹם יִהְיֶה** (Ps 93:4).

¹⁶⁹ Note similarities to Ps 46:3–4: “Though its waters [מֵי־מַיִן] roar *and* foam, Though the mountains quake at its swelling pride. Selah. There is a river [נָהָר] whose streams make glad the city of God, The holy dwelling places of the Most High.” Along these lines, Ballard states: “the imagery of the primeval chaos-conflict permeates vv. 3 and 4. This use of a common ancient Near Eastern theme is a clear allusion to Yahweh, as the Divine Warrior, who subdues the powers of chaos, especially the sea (יָם) . . . The speaker

sovereignty is absolutely unassailable!¹⁷⁰ Though the many waters and their loud crashing waves rise up, and though the breakers of the sea are mighty, let it be known that Yahweh on high is mighty (or mightier!).¹⁷¹ One has to ask, at this point, is this imagery really what is read from the Ras Shamra texts?¹⁷²

The phrase **בְּמַרְוֹם** may infer a continuation of the comparison motif found in the previous two phrases in this verse. The translation “mightier on high is Yahweh” would require the **בְּ** preposition to be functioning comparatively. Dahood advocates this view by rendering this phrase: “Mightier than high heaven was Yahweh.” In other words, Dahood does not take the final cola as a contrastive reference to the supreme majesty of Yahweh reigning on high (implied: over all other gods and chaotic forces), but rather, that this refers to Yahweh being more majestic than the high heaven. But because of the change in prepositions and because the **בְּ** preposition does not often denote comparison, his interpretation here seems imposed on the text.¹⁷³ One more minor difference in

declares that God is in control. When chaotic forces roar and threaten, God is ‘our refuge and strength’ (46:1)” (see Ballard, *Divine Warrior Motif in the Psalms*, 53).

¹⁷⁰ See Snijders, “**נְקָרָה**,” 270.

¹⁷¹ Briggs renders it: “Magnificent on high is Yahweh” (2:302). “The poet’s conception is, that however magnificent the sea may be in a storm, Yahweh is much more magnificent as He reigns on high, above its tumult and raging, with the implication that He will eventually still it and reduce it to order” (ibid., 2:302–3).

¹⁷² Luyster who does, in fact, see a connection with Ps 93:3–4 with ANE mythology when he concludes regarding this portion of Ps 93: “It was in the times of old that the floods heaped up over the earth roared defiance at the divine warrior who intended to subdue them. Yahweh’s claim to cosmic sovereignty was vindicated, however, by his domination over the waters. When he drove them off, the dry land was revealed and the earth was established forever” (“Wind and Water: Cosmogonic Symbolism in the Old Testament,” 3).

¹⁷³ Yet it must be noted that Dahood fronts Pss 51:8–9 and 68:34 as being examples of a **בְּ** preposition with a comparative force, yet even these seem far-fetched and unstable.

interpreting this colon involves Feuer's view that יהוה is not the subject (as in "Mighty on High is Yahweh" or "Yahweh on high is mighty"), but rather as a vocative, "You are mighty on high, Hashem."¹⁷⁴ Though the grammar and even the context of Psalm 93 may allow for the vocative here (see the 2ms pronominal suffixes in vv. 2 and 5), whenever יהוה is found in Psalm 93 it is used as a subject, not a vocative. It is, then, most fitting to see it the same way here in verse 4 rather than as a vocative. The RSV's translation is correct: "Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the LORD on high is mighty!" Simply put, "God is mightier than all, and he freely exercises his unrivaled authority over all without any hindrance."¹⁷⁵ Psalm 103:19 unmistakably affirms: "The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, And His sovereignty rules over all;" and Psalm 115:3 similarly underlines this truth: "But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases." In a word, "man proposes, but God disposes."¹⁷⁶

Correspondingly, this phrase emphasizes the oft-repeated phrase in the Scriptures of Yahweh being exclusively "on high." First Chronicles 16:25–26 states:

For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
He also is to be feared above all gods.
For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
But the LORD made the heavens.

Specifically in the royal psalms, this theme is also referenced. Psalm 95:3 confesses:

For the LORD is a great God

¹⁷⁴ Feuer, *Tehillim*, 2:1160.

¹⁷⁵ Lawson, *Psalms 76–150*, 102.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

And a great King above all gods (note 95:5).¹⁷⁷

Psalms 97:9 similarly resounds:

“For You are the LORD Most High over all the earth;
You are exalted far above all gods (cf. 96:4).

In conclusion, given the Masoretic accents of verse 4 and the poetic structure of the psalm (largely composed of tricola), it is best to leave it as the MT stands as three cola escalating in meaning and imagery until the final colon exclaims with all certainty: “Mighty on high is Yahweh!” The word order must not be ignored, here. Similar to the very first phrase of the psalm, מְלֹךְ יְהוָה, here the reader finds אֲדִיר בְּמַרְוֹם יְהוָה. If one concluded that verse 1 was an emphatic acclamation that Yahweh—and *no one else!*—reigns, then here it could have that same inference: “Mighty on high is Yahweh—and *no one (or nothing) else!*” As he concludes his study of verse 4, Delitzsch summarizes:

Jahve’s celestial majesty towers far above all the noisy majesties here below, whose waves, though lashed never so high, can still never reach His throne. He is King of His people, Lord of His church, which preserves His revelation and worships in His temple. This revelation, by virtue of His unapproachable, all-overpowering kingship, is inviolable; His testimonies, which minister to the establishment of His kingdom and promise its future manifestation in glory, are [faithful and true words].¹⁷⁸

And as Spurgeon notes poetically:

Loud the stormy billows spoke,
Loud the billows raised their cry;
Fierce the stormy billows broke,
Sounding to the echoing sky.
Strong the breakers tossing high,

¹⁷⁷ It notes that “the sea is His for it was He who made it” (אֲשֶׁר-לִי הַיָּם וְהוּא עָשָׂהוּ).

¹⁷⁸ Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3:76–77.

Stronger is Jehovah's might,
 True thy words; and sanctity
 Well becomes thy temple bright.¹⁷⁹

As strong and mighty as Yahweh reveals Himself in the first four verses, an interpreter would be disadvantaged if he neglected to see the important truths contained in verse 5 as an appropriate conclusion to this brief—albeit powerful—psalm.

The Sure Revelation of God – Verse 5

Some commentators have seen a great disconnect between verse 5 and the rest of Psalm 93. For instance, Tate believes that “verse 5 is an add-on.”¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, because of verse 5, some believe that Psalm 93 cannot be composed from an “early date.”¹⁸¹ Kselman also sees the sharp change in tone and, hence, concludes that it is a “somewhat banal and flat statement, out of harmony with the artistry and drama of the rest of the poem.”¹⁸² But in actuality and when observed more carefully, it fits perfectly in the context of this psalm as well as in the greater context of the kingship psalms. Even though the transition from verse 4 to verse 5 may appear abrupt, the connection consists

¹⁷⁹ Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, 2:135.

¹⁸⁰ Tate, interview by author. One reason for this view is because יהוה begins v. 1 and it ends v. 4 and, hence, it would form a nice inclusio in the psalm. Cf. Briggs, *Psalms*, 2:303; Tarazi confesses that some have seen quite a disconnect here by saying: “This traditional rendering of the original Hebrew presents one serious problem . . . it does not seem to fit the thrust of a psalm that is proclaiming the Lord’s heavenly kingship” (“Psalm 93,” 148).

¹⁸¹ James Donald Shenkel, “An Interpretation of Psalm 93,5,” *Bib* 46 (1965): 402.

¹⁸² John S. Kselman, “Sinai and Zion in Psalm 93,” in *David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J. J. M. Roberts*, ed. by Bernard F. Batto and Kathryn L. Roberts (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 69.

of God's majesty seen in His dominion over the world of nature (vv. 1–4). But now, Yahweh's self-revelation is manifested in His own Word (v. 5).¹⁸³

Verse 5 nicely divides into three parts on the basis of the familiar tricolon structure observed throughout the psalm.¹⁸⁴

עֲדֹתֶיךָ נֶאֱמָנוּ מֵאֵד לְבֵיתְךָ נֶאֱזָה-קִדְשׁ יְהוָה לְאֶרֶץ יָמִים:

The first phrase affirms the sufficiency and infallibility of the Word of God,

עֲדֹתֶיךָ נֶאֱמָנוּ מֵאֵד. The fact that the psalmist brings the concept of the Word of God to

bear at this point in the psalm does not suggest a disconnect. In fact, the whole of Psalm

93 recalls the rest of the Psalter and how the biblical testimony as a whole portrays the

sovereignty of Yahweh God. Human suggests that verse 5 has a “hymnic character” to

it.¹⁸⁵ The psalmist here deliberately commends the absolute trustworthiness of the law of

God.¹⁸⁶ There are two main reasons to preserve verse 5 (and, hence, the MT) without

emendation.¹⁸⁷

First, the shift from the celestial scene to the earthly one is not uncommon in the Psalter. Psalm 24 is one that speaks of human subjects (vv. 4–6) who laud God as Creator (vv. 1–2) in His “holy” place (v. 3b). Psalm 98 describes human subjects praising Yahweh (vv. 4–6) alongside the sea and its floods that praise Him (vv. 7–8). Finally, in

¹⁸³ See Perowne, *Psalms*, 2:184. He elucidates: “God who rules the world, He whose are the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, has given his testimonies to His people, a sure and faithful word, and has Himself come to dwell among them, making His house and His people holy” (ibid.).

¹⁸⁴ Notice the balance observed in this verse: 3+3+3.

¹⁸⁵ See “Psalm 93,” 164.

¹⁸⁶ Calvin, *Psalms*, 4:9.

¹⁸⁷ These two points are adapted from Tarazi and his fine exegetical study (“Psalm 93,” 148).

Psalm 96, one finds human beings (vv. 7–9, 11b), the seas, and floods joining with the “gods” themselves praising God (vv. 4–5)!

Second, the concern with divine decrees and the earthly temple priesthood reflected in the traditional rendering of verse 5 occurs elsewhere in the royal psalms (Pss 95–100). In Psalm 99, the psalmist speaks of Yahweh as King (vv. 1–5), setting the stage for his testimonies and statutes (v. 7). Psalm 97 is similar in that the reference to God’s judgments (v. 8c) appears in a context extolling God’s celestial kingship (vv. 1–5, 9).

Scholars recognize that in Hebrew poetry, word order is more fluid than in narrative which is most frequently verb-subject-object word-order. But here the verse fronts עֲרֹתַיִךְ¹⁸⁸ to draw the reader’s attention to this new—yet still connected—theme to bring the psalm to a close, namely, the Word of God. The noun עֲרֹת¹⁸⁹ occurs 194 times in the OT and always in the plural when referring to Yahweh’s עֲרֹת.¹⁹⁰ Twenty-nine of these occurrences occur in the psalter.¹⁹¹ Only two occurrences of עֲרֹת appear

¹⁸⁸ This is not the place to summarize and critique Shenkel’s careful study and hypothesis that ‘d is equivalent to the Ugaritic term ‘d, “throne.” For his hypothesis—which seems very unconvincing given his arguments and the context of Ps 93 in addition to the plural verb נִאֲמָנִי—see Shenkel, “Psalm 93,5,” 403–9.

¹⁸⁹ It is not the purpose of this thesis to prove or disprove the claim that עֲרֹת reflects late wisdom poetry. Because of Ps 119 and the many occurrences of this word in the so-called “P” documents, many testify that it is post-exilic (See Human, “Psalm 93,” 164–65 and Howard, *Structure of Psalms 93–100*, 40 for good explanations).

¹⁹⁰ See C. van Leeuwen, “עֲרֹת,” in *TLOT*, 3 vols., ed. by Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, trans. by Mark E. Biddle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 2:844; cf. Carl Schulz, “עֲרֹת,” in *TWOT*, 2 vols, ed. by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2:649. He writes: “this word is always used in reference to the testimony of God . . . The law of God is his testimony because it is his own affirmation relative to his very person and purpose” (ibid., 649–50).

¹⁹¹ Pss 1:5; 7:8; 22:17; 25:10; 68:31; 74:2; 78:56; 82:1; 86:14; 93:5; 99:7; 106:17–18; 111:1; 119:2, 22, 24, 46, 59, 79, 95, 119, 125, 138, 146, 152, 167–68; and 132:12.

in the royal psalms (93:5 and 99:7).¹⁹² Oftentimes, when the modern interpreter sees this “testimony,” one is inclined to think of something that happened in the past and there is now “testimony” or “evidence” to prove that fact. Another misconception is Kselman’s take that עֲדוּת ought to be rendered as a “covenant” (cf. Num 9:15; 17:22).¹⁹³ Rather, עֲדוּת here points to what shall happen in the future. In other words, it is a solemn promise or pledge in the covenant between Yahweh and His people.¹⁹⁴ It has the same meaning as Psalm 19:7 where it refers to God’s written Word.¹⁹⁵ The reason this phrase is so beautifully placed at this point in the psalm is because this note of assurance in areas of life and the future is founded upon the truth that Yahweh has the power to fulfill his Word—His testimonies and His “promises.”¹⁹⁶

The psalmist prays and confirms his trust in Yahweh’s עֲדוּת because they are

נֶאֱמָרוּ מֵאֵד. The verb נֶאֱמָרוּ is a Niphal perfect third masculine plural from אָמַן

¹⁹² Ps 99:7 reads: בְּעִמּוּד עֵנָן יִדְבַר אֱלֹהִים שְׁמֵרוּ עֲדוּתָיו וְחַק נְתִן־לָמוֹ:

¹⁹³ Kselman explicates: “In the context of Ps 93:5, *‘ēdōteyā* ‘your covenant’ refers to the royal covenant that Yahweh entered into with David and his descendants. This is indicated by two texts, Ps 89:29 (in a psalm with several other points of contact with Psalm 93) and Ps 132:12; in both texts Yahweh is the speaker, addressing David . . . so the Zion tradition relocates Yahweh’s holy dwelling place from Sinai to Zion; Mount Zion succeeds Mount Sinai to become the source of Torah, the preeminent role of Sinai” (“Sinai and Zion in Psalm 93,” 74–75). Therefore, Kselman proposes the following translation for Ps 93:5:

“Your covenant is entirely reliable;
Truly your house is a holy habitation,
O Yhwh, for length of days” (ibid., 76).

¹⁹⁴ Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, 67n2.

¹⁹⁵ עֲדוּת יְהוָה נֶאֱמָרוּ מֵאֵד מִחֻקֵּימֹת פִּתִּי. Also see Peter Enns’s article when he states referring to the usage of עֲדוּת: “It refers to nonspecified laws or commands from God to his people, particularly in the Psalms (Ps 19:8; 119:14, 88, 129, 157)” (“עֲדוּת,” in *NIDOTTE*, 5 vols., ed. by Willem A. VanGemeren [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997], 3:328–29).

¹⁹⁶ See Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, 67.

meaning “to be verified or confirmed”¹⁹⁷ or to be “confirmed, sure, established.”¹⁹⁸ The verb אָמַן occurs 137 times in the OT. The Niphal also occurs in Hosea 5:9 when the prophet speaks for Yahweh, “Ephraim will become a desolation in the day of rebuke; Among the tribes of Israel I declare what is sure” (אָמַן אֶתְּ). The Niphal, then, can mean “to be established” and “to be made firm.”¹⁹⁹ Therefore, if the meaning relates to firmness, dependability, and faithfulness, then it is bound within the concept of “truth.”²⁰⁰ The major theological significance of אָמַן derives from its frequent usage in depicting the character of Yahweh.²⁰¹ For instance, Exodus 34:6 declares: “Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth’” (אָמַן אֶתְּ). “The understanding of God as a God of faithfulness is naturally often celebrated in Israel’s worship, as this is represented within the Psalter (Pss 86:15; 108:4–5; 115:1).”²⁰² Deuteronomy 7:9 confirms this when Moses reminds the Israelites, “Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His

¹⁹⁷ BDB, 52.

¹⁹⁸ Howard, *Structure of Psalms 93–100*, 41. He elaborates by stating: “It is a short semantic leap to ‘affirmed’, understanding it to refer to an action by the people, that is, that they are involved in a liturgy or ceremony affirming or testifying to the surety of YHWH’s decrees” (ibid.).

¹⁹⁹ See R. W. L. Moberly, “אָמַן,” in *NIDOTTE*, 5 vols., ed. by Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 1:431.

²⁰⁰ See H. Wildberger, “אָמַן,” in *TLOT*, 3 vols., ed. by Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, trans. by Mark E. Biddle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 1:134–57, esp. 138–39.

²⁰¹ See Moberly, “אָמַן,” 1:428.

²⁰² Ibid., 1:429.

lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments.” Not only are Yahweh’s testimonies reliable and sure, but they are absolutely certain (מְאֹד). How true and reliable, then, must God’s Word be.

Some have veered to the opinion that מְאֹד serves as an appropriate epithet of YHWH and, consequently, translate it as “The Mighty One” or “The Almighty.”²⁰³ The primary reason, of course, for this shift is to allow for better balance and symmetry in this verse. Though there is balance in each of three cola, some still want to find that perfect parallelism. Howard provides confirmation: “Reading *ma’ed* in this way [as an epithet for Yahweh “O Mighty One] yields a better parallelism here.”²⁰⁴ However, this interpretation of מְאֹד rests on very shaky ground.²⁰⁵ מְאֹד occurs most often in the OT in reference to an “abundance” of something or an “exceeding amount.”²⁰⁶ No other occurrence in the Psalms employs מְאֹד as an epithet of a deity. In conclusion, therefore, the interpreter must take this as a phrase extolling the very Words of God as being fully and totally reliable and trustworthy.

²⁰³ See David Noel Freedman, “God Almighty in Psalm 78,59,” *Bib* 54, no. 2 (1973): 268; Mitchell Dahood, “Comparative Philology Yesterday and Today,” *Bib* 50, no. 1 (1969): 70–79 (esp. 79); Howard, *Structure of Psalms 93–100*, 41. See David Marcus’s excellent rebuttal of this theory in his article (“Ugaritic Evidence for ‘The Almighty/The Grand One’?” *Bib* 55, no. 3 [1974]: 404–7).

²⁰⁴ Howard, *Structure of Psalms 93–100*, 41. At the same time, he concludes his thought by admitting “that the traditional renderings make perfectly good sense” (*ibid.*).

²⁰⁵ Wakely gives no hint that מְאֹד can be an epithet for Yahweh in the OT—not even once (Robin Wakely, “מְאֹד,” in *NIDOTTE*, 5 vols., ed. by Willem A. VanGemeren [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997], 1:824–27).

²⁰⁶ BDB, 547 gives no hint at this option for מְאֹד.

Johnson sees עֲדָתִיךָ | נֶאֱמָנוּ as an all-important promise of rain (which, would have been the blessing *par excellence*). He believes that Yahweh’s control over the cosmic sea, which dominates this psalm, represents the assurance that this need can be met by Yahweh.²⁰⁷ It may even carry the all-important reminder that Yahweh did, indeed, give His Law and Testimonies to Moses on Mt. Sinai.²⁰⁸ In any event, the glorious reality here is that Scripture “rests on the integrity of God who vouches for its statements, promises, warnings and commands.”²⁰⁹ As Spurgeon writes,

As in providence the throne of God is fixed beyond all risk, so in revelation his truth is beyond all question. Other teachings are uncertain, but the revelations of heaven are infallible. As the rocks remain unmoved amid the tumult of the sea, so does divine truth resist all the currents of man’s opinion and the storms of human controversy; they are not only sure, but *very sure*.²¹⁰

Second of all, the phrase לְבֵיתֶךָ נְאֻה־קֹדֶשׁ reveals the holiness of this sovereign and sure King. Even though קֹדֶשׁ is not defined and described here in this verse, it clearly determines the fundamental character of God as the sovereign King.²¹¹ It is because of the presence of God in the temple that it is called “holy.”²¹² The question is whether the noun קֹדֶשׁ is functioning as a substantive noun referring to “a holy one” (here, it would then be plural, “holy ones”). Dahood confidently asserts that this refers to

²⁰⁷ Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, 67–68.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.; cf. Human, “Psalm 93,” 164.

²⁰⁹ Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 339.

²¹⁰ Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, 2:135.

²¹¹ See Terrien, *Psalms*, 660.

²¹² See Konrad Schaefer, *Psalms*, BO (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 233.

“the holy ones” who compose Yahweh’s celestial council.²¹³ He sees קִדְּשׁ as “the gods or divine beings composing Yahweh’s celestial council.”²¹⁴ This recalls Psalm 29:1 and its beckoning the *bene elim* to sing praises to Yahweh. But, given the context and the psalm as a whole, it is best to leave the phrase לְבֵיתֶךָ נְאוֹהֶה-קִדְּשׁ as referring to “the Lord’s unique position which makes his dwelling special, unlike any other.”²¹⁵

It is holiness alone which is נְאוֹהֶה for “your house.” The nuance behind the verb נָאָה is that of “beautiful or befitting.”²¹⁶ Here, “it is best to translate נְאוֹהֶה as ‘befitting’ [hence, ‘holiness *is befitting* for your house’] because the parallel idea is ‘*amn* ‘faithful, steady.’”²¹⁷

In his article, Patrick Skehan compares this occurrence of נְאוֹהֶה with another similar root נָאָה in 4QPs^b and asserts that in “Ps 93:5b, *na’awah* is a ‘phonetic, anti-etymological spelling and should be read as the Qumran manuscript reads, with the

²¹³ Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 343. Elsewhere, Dahood mysteriously translates v. 5 (“Ugaritic-Hebrew Parallel Pairs,” 3:34):

לְבֵיתֶךָ נְאוֹהֶה-קִדְּשׁ	For your handsome, holy house,
יְהוָה לְאָרְךָ יָמִים:	Yahweh, for length of days.

²¹⁴ Dahood, “Ugaritic-Hebrew Parallel Pairs,” 3:440.

²¹⁵ See Clifford, *Psalms 73–150*, 110.

²¹⁶ See Leonard J. Coppes, “נָאָה,” in *TWOT*, 2 vols., ed. by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2:541.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

root נודה instead of the existing נאה.”²¹⁸ But there is no support to warrant emending the MT to conform to this Qumran manuscript.

בַּיִת expresses the notion that the “transcendent God, whose eternal kingship is described in ‘mythical terms’ in verses 1–4, can be experienced in the concrete reality of the Torah and holiness of the temple.”²¹⁹ Another interesting observation raised by Human is that in Psalm 93, some “‘mythical descriptions’ are present such as ‘Yahweh’s throne’ (v. 2) and his being ‘on high’ (v. 4) are concretized in his ‘house’ (v. 5)—a historical, spatial indication and this spatial model, which expresses a pattern ‘from inside to outside’ and ‘from above to below’ is confirmed by similar spatial analogies elsewhere attested in the OT (Isa 6:1–4; Jer 17:12).”²²⁰ Kselman identifies the *lamed* prefixed to בַּיִת (לְבַיִתָּהּ) as an emphatic particle, the so-called *lamed* emphatic.²²¹

As was the case earlier, some have also seen a very close connection here with the Canaanite texts. Just as verse 4 states that Yahweh has subdued the sea and is enthroned on high over everything that could rise up against him, so the first colon in verse 5 mentions the first result of that “victory,” namely, the consolidation of his royal power. Dahood clarifies: “In referring to Yahweh’s *bayit*, ‘temple,’ the second colon adheres to the Canaanite description in which the construction of a palace follows a victory and

²¹⁸ Patrick W. Skehan, “A Psalm Manuscript from Qumran (4Q Ps^b),” *CBQ* 26, no. 3 (July 1964): 315. Also see Shenkel’s discussion at this point in his article (“Psalm 93,5,” 410–12).

²¹⁹ Human, “Psalm 93,” 165.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ See Kselman, “Sinai and Zion in Psalm 93,” 71 (cf. nn 9 and 10).

acquisition of kingship.”²²² Elsewhere, Dahood makes reference to the same roots which occur in both Hebrew and Ugaritic, “*ark + bt*” (בַּיִת + יָמִים לְאַרְךָ).²²³

Psalms 93 concludes with the reality which has been affirmed throughout the whole psalm, namely, that Yahweh *always* has been, is presently, and always will be *the* King. The final phrase is יָמִים לְאַרְךָ לְיְהוָה and it expresses the temporal reference of Yahweh’s Kingship. “This temporal description puts an exclamation mark behind the realization that Yahweh’s kingship is durable and can be experienced as reality in history.”²²⁴

לְאַרְךָ יָמִים is noted by Dahood to be closely related to the Ugaritic *urk ymm* and notes that most of the words in Psalm 93 are attested in Ugaritic.²²⁵ These two simple words leave the reader hanging in an undefined period of time (i.e., eternal), and the New Testament commentary serves to reveal this in, perhaps, a little more detail as John records what life will be like in the new Jerusalem on the new earth: “And there shall no longer be *any* night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever” (Rev 22:5). Therefore, the eternal kingship of God has no beginning and no end. God alone is eternal.

²²² Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 343.

²²³ See Mitchell Dahood, “Ugaritic-Hebrew Parallel Pairs,” in *Ras Shamra Parallels: The Texts from Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible*, AnOr 51, ed. by Stan Rummel (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1981), 3:34.

²²⁴ Human, “Psalm 93,” 166.

²²⁵ Dahood, *Psalms 51–100*, 344; Jefferson, “Psalm 93,” 155. Jefferson has a helpful—albeit brief—survey of this psalm and the words which are not attested in Ugaritic.

After exegeting this psalm, verses such as the following are left imbedded on the mind of the reader: “Who is like You among the gods, O LORD? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders?” (Exod 15:11); “For who in the skies is comparable to the LORD? Who among the sons of the mighty is like the LORD, A God greatly feared in the council of the holy ones, And awesome above all those who are around Him? O LORD God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty LORD?” (Ps 89:6–8). How awesome and glorious is the sovereign reign of Yahweh!

To conclude the exegesis of this magnificent psalm, Spurgeon exclaims:

The whole Psalm is most impressive, and is calculated to comfort the distressed, confirm the timorous, and assist the devout. O thou who art so great and gracious a King, reign over us for ever! We do not desire to question or restrain thy power, such is thy character that we rejoice to see thee exercise the rights of an absolute monarch. All power is in thine hands, and we rejoice to have it so. Hosanna! Hosanna!²²⁶

Interpretations of Verses 3–4

Interpretations of Psalm 93:3–4 have been numerous and varied. According to Green, “Yam, also called Nahar, is the mythical deified seas, rivers, lakes, and the subterranean abyss—that is, the terrestrial water sources. As such, he controlled the cosmic waters and the rivers with which he fertilized the earth.”²²⁷

Gaster quite adamantly regards Psalm 93 as a concoction of phrases and allusions which all find their source in the Ras Shamra texts. As Gaster himself remarks: “Here, then [in Ps 93], in a psalm all the elements of which can be traced back to the autumn festival, we have a clear allusion, if only by way of poetic metaphor, to the god’s triumph

²²⁶ Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, 2:136.

²²⁷ Green, *Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, 179–80.

over the antagonistic powers of river and sea, an allusion, that is to say, to the same myth as is contained in [a] poem from Ras Shamra.”²²⁸ Interestingly, Gaster’s analysis of Psalm 93 comes immediately subsequent to his statement that Canaanite religion was not “obliterated altogether by Israel . . . for we know from plentiful analogies that the practice of the ‘chosen people’ was to adapt rather than to discard.”²²⁹ Therefore, it would appear as obvious, and even expected, that the Israelites would “copy” features from other religious groups during the same cultural milieu.

Jefferson also sees that the psalm is originally Canaanite since every word (except for nine words) appears in the Ugaritic texts. Note that Dahood classifies four of these nine words as occurring in the Ugaritic texts, leaving only five words without parallels. Jefferson, however, concludes his discussion of Psalm 93 by stating:

The evidence of vocabulary, style, and thought-content agree in pointing to an early, possibly Canaanitish, origin of this psalm. Although its origin may be pre-exilic, this does not necessarily mean the Israelitish borrowing was early. Albright states that most of the borrowing of Ugaritic occurred in exilic and post-exilic times. This supports Gaster’s view that the Israelites took over hymnic patterns without the primitive cultic pantomime with which they were associated.²³⁰

John Gray notes that in Psalm 93 the Canaanite theme appears nearly in its primitive simplicity.²³¹ His kingship and in consequence all nature is ordered and established.²³² His sovereignty, like that of Baal in the Ras Shamra texts, is everlasting and, consequently, there is nothing added to the Canaanite theme except Jahweh for Baal

²²⁸ Gaster, “The Battle of the Rain and the Sea,” 26.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

²³⁰ Jefferson, “Psalm 93,” 157.

²³¹ Gray, “Hebrew Conception of the Kingship of God,” 273.

²³² *Ibid.*, 274.

throughout.²³³ He asserts elsewhere in his article that the enthronement psalms—as a whole—are the “direct Hebrew adaptation of the Canaanite theme of the sovereignty of God.”²³⁴

Eaton confidently states that many phrases in Psalm 93 are reminiscent of Ugaritic texts in both theme and style.²³⁵ Similarly, Shenkel contributes that Psalm 93 gives evidence of archaic features in poetic style such as the absence of the definite article and the copula *waw*, the use of the tricolon in the metrical structure of the poem, and the presence of repetitive parallelism, especially in verse 3.²³⁶

Avishur takes a different approach in regarding the similarities between Hebrew and Ugaritic—specifically in Psalm 93. He analyzes stylistic and literary features common to biblical and Canaanite literature, and assumes that the biblical literature is the continuation of Canaanite literature, whose first stages are represented by the Ugaritic texts.²³⁷ Similarly, Cross sees Psalm 93:1–4 as “purely mythic, with no reference to the historical event at the Reed Sea remembered in the Israelite tradition.”²³⁸

Kraus sees Psalm 93 as having a polemical and confessional ring.²³⁹ The overarching point that this psalm—along with the phrase יְהוָה יְהוָה
מִלְּךָ—attempts to show

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid., 275.

²³⁵ Eaton, “Notes and Studies,” 608.

²³⁶ Shenkel, “Psalm 93,5,” 401.

²³⁷ Avishur, *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms*, 34.

²³⁸ Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 135.

²³⁹ Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 87.

is that the supreme deity (or deities) proclaimed by Israel's neighbors must be rejected because of the utter sovereignty of Yahweh, God of the Israelites.

Meanwhile, there are a number of interpreters who interpret verses 3–4 as reference to the natural waves of the sea. Along these lines, Derek Kidner speaks of verse 3 when he says: “The Old Testament looks back to no event that invested the Lord, like the Babylonian Marduk, with sovereignty, and makes no provision in its calendar of feasts (Lev 23) for an enthronement festival. To hear the authentic voice of these psalms we need no cultic expertise: they speak to us directly.”²⁴⁰

Having observed the background of pagan mythology, the Ugaritic texts, Baal, and Psalm 93 exegetically, now some conclusions must be drawn. The following chapter will lay out those conclusions.

²⁴⁰ Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 338.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

THE RELATIONSHIP OF PSALM 93 TO BAAL AND CANAANITE MYTHOLOGY

Introduction

Although the Ugaritic tablets revealing much of the Canaanite mythology of Baal at Ras Shamra may elucidate some of the historical backdrop of the ancient culture of the ANE, Craigie rightly acknowledges its limitations when he affirms:

It cannot always be assumed that evidence drawn from Ugaritic sources will be truly representative of the Canaanite culture that flourished in the geographical region of Palestine to the south, where the main biblical events took place. And the geographical distance between Ugarit in the north and the biblical world in the south cannot be ignored; even today, in an age of mass communications, there are distinct differences between the Arabic spoken in Latakia (near Ras Shamra) and the Palestinian dialect in the south. Furthermore, the kingdom of Ugarit had flourished and declined before the Hebrew kingdoms had even entered the stage of history . . . [Therefore,] there are serious difficulties of a chronological nature pertaining to all precise comparative studies.¹

In other words, one must not be dogmatic in assuming that the Israelite religion must have been identical to or that the Israelites borrowed from the Canaanite religion simply because there are many Ugaritic tablets revealing much about the latter. There still exists a large cultural, geographical and chronological gap that must not be ignored. Indeed, Craigie is correct in these observations. Now the connection and correlation between the Canaanite texts and Psalm 93 must be delineated.

The Relationship of the Canaanite Texts with Psalm 93

Throughout this thesis, many similarities and many differences have been elucidated between the Canaanite texts and the biblical psalms. But now it is necessary to

¹ Craigie, Peter C., *Ugarit and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1983), 68.

draw some of these conclusions. This will be organized by first observing the similarities and then the differences between Psalm 93 and the Canaanite texts.

The Ugaritic Texts as a Source for Psalm 93

There are many similarities which may be drawn connecting some elements of a psalm—specifically here, Psalm 93—with the Ugaritic texts found at Ras Shamra. First, as proposed by Dahood and Gaster (et al.), the similarities between the Hebrew psalms and the Ugaritic texts are too similar to attribute to sheer coincidence. Therefore, it is purported that the tablets found at Ras Shamra and the phraseology from the Canaanite cult tradition served as a source—or, to use a less forceful term, a model—for some of the psalms. Theodor Gaster aids in understanding how this relates to Psalm 93 when he writes:

This mythological situation [the god of the weather defeating a rebellious dragon or monster] certainly finds expression in the Old Testament . . . it provides the *true* interpretation of Psalm 93. [This] psalm begins with a reference to Yahweh's having acquired kingship and to his being arrayed in the robes of majesty. It then alludes to the firm establishment of his throne and of the world order, and to his prowess over the raging force of Sea (*Yam*) and Streams (*N^eharoth*), the very antagonists specifically mentioned in the Canaanite *Poem of Baal*. Next it makes reference to the reliability of his decrees—a phrase readily explicable from the fact that, in the analogous Babylonian myth, Marduk inaugurates his new regime by issuing orders and decrees designed to regulate the world. Lastly, there is an allusion to a “house” which Yahweh is destined to occupy for all eternity.²

Some propose here that there are both similar phraseology and poetic constructions and that the psalmist composes Psalm 93 as a sort of polemic implementing the religious language of the day to dismantle Baal and all his supposed grandeur in order

² Theodor H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament: A Comparative Study with Chapters from Sir James G. Frazer's Folklore in the Old Testament* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1969), 748 (emphasis added).

to prove to Israel (and the surrounding nations) that Yahweh is the true King of kings! As an adherent of this polemical theory, Seybold notes, “In this way the various aspects of Yahweh’s rule are encompassed and appended to the confession itself as concrete examples, whereby the polemical fundamental character of the formula comes to expression.”³

To be sure, the Ras Shamra texts and the biblical texts contain similarities and it is easy to understand how one could conclude that the psalmist, writing at a later time (though definitely not a Persian or Hellenistic time), takes the common lingo of the day and implements it in the true worship of Yahweh to elevate Yahweh and demote every other (false) deity for all to see. Patton asserts this view when he notes in his study on *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms* that “vocabulary is one of the strongest bits of evidence for the close kinship of Biblical Hebrew and the Canaanite Ugarit.”⁴ In fact, Patton observes that:

When the vocabulary of the Psalms is compared with the vocab of all the Ugaritic literature extant, it is found that approximately 46% of all roots appearing in the Psalms are common to both, while 54% of the roots appearing in Ugaritic are common to both. If comparison were made with the whole of Biblical literature, the percentages would be much higher.⁵

“Linguistically,” Patton continues, “the literature of Ugaritic is in a kindred dialect to the Hebrew of the Psalms. Although the method of representing the alphabet is different, the phonemes occurring show time development rather than dialectic variation,

³ K. Seybold, “גִּלְגָּל,” in *TDOT*, 15 vols., ed. by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. by Douglas W. Stott et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 8:372.

⁴ John Hastings Patton, *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1944), 32.

⁵ *Ibid.* It is noteworthy to mention that Patton failed to mention the all-too-common root, *mlk* in his comparative study of Ugaritic and Hebrew (*ibid.*, 41–42).

though there is a little dialectic difference.”⁶ At the conclusion of his study, Patton asserts: “the occurrence of similar thought patterns in the expression of ideas, if these are found in sufficient numbers, precludes the possibility of mere coincidence. The cumulative evidence of all three of these in this study points to a *direct influence* of the Canaanite of Ugarit upon the composition of the Psalms.”⁷

John Day concludes a lengthy study comparing much of Canaanite mythology with the biblical text by declaring that

There was considerable continuity between the Canaanite mythology and religion at Ugarit and that presupposed by the Bible, but we have also found evidence of some differences. There are also matters on which we must be content to remain agnostic because of the paucity of our data. But overall it is the extent of the continuity which is the most striking thing, all the more remarkable in view of the temporal and geographical distances between second millennium Ugarit and first millennium Israel.⁸

Therefore, Day finds much continuity between the Canaanite myths and the biblical text, yet not an “overwhelming dependence” of the latter on the former.

Helpful Principles for Comparative Study

As one concludes whether texts reveal similar background information, John Walton gives ten important principles to bear in mind. For the purposes here, they will be noted:⁹

⁶ Ibid., 47.

⁷ Ibid., 48.

⁸ John Day, “Ugarit and the Bible: Do They Presuppose the Same Canaanite Mythology and Religion?” in *Ugarit and the Bible: Proceedings of the International Symposium on Ugarit and the Bible*, UBL 11 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1994), 52.

⁹ See John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 26–27.

1. Both similarities and differences must be considered.
2. Similarities may suggest a common cultural heritage or cognitive environment rather than borrowing.
3. It is not uncommon to find similarities at the surface but differences at the conceptual level and vice versa.
4. All elements must be understood in their own context as accurately as possible before cross-cultural comparisons are made (i.e., careful background study must precede comparative study).
5. Proximity in time, geography, and spheres of cultural contact all increase the possibility of interaction leading to influence.
6. A case for literary borrowing requires identification of likely channels of transmission.
7. The significance of differences between two pieces of literature is minimized if the works are not the same genre.
8. Similar functions may be performed by different genres in different cultures.
9. When literary or cultural elements are borrowed they may in turn be transformed into something quite different by those who borrowed them.
10. A single culture will rarely be monolithic, either in a contemporary cross-section or in consideration of a passage of time.

In addition to Walton's helpful insights, Avishur concurs in his work, *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms*, with similar truths. Though a bit lengthy, it will help to understand Avishur's viewpoint as he identifies no direct dependence or copying between the biblical and ANE texts:

There is no justification for assuming that Canaanite psalms are found in the Bible, or that biblical literature and Ugaritic literature should be considered a single literature. Similarly, we conclude that Ps. 29 is not a Canaanite psalm (in contrast to the regnant scholarly view), nor has a Canaanite psalm been quoted in Hab. 3, nor are the hymnic fragments in the biblical psalter remnants of Canaanite literature. To be sure, there are affinities between Ugaritic literature and biblical literature.

Nevertheless, the biblical and Ugaritic texts differ significantly from one another with regard to both form and content. The compositional techniques employed by the Hebrew psalms are much more sophisticated than those found in the Ugaritic psalms and prayers. The same holds true of the contents of these texts: the Hebrew psalms and prayers are much more well-developed and conceptually refined than their Ugaritic counterparts. The refinement of the Hebrew psalms is manifest in the absence of concrete cultic concepts, which were replaced by abstract, spiritual notions, reflected in the difference between the Canaanite and Israelite religions.

Our conclusions about this issue . . . are that the affinities between biblical and Ugaritic literature may be elucidated in light of the assumption that the two

literatures exhibit common formal, thematic, linguistic and stylistic elements. In fact, these literatures should be considered different branches of Canaanite literature, with Ugaritic literature the earliest known example of Canaanite literature.¹⁰

Recalling the observations of both Walton and Avishur, there are numerous reasons why the author of this thesis believes that Psalm 93 (especially verses 3–4) does not at all require a Canaanite background of borrowing.

Reasons Why Psalm 93 Does Not Require a Canaanite Background

The Impossibility of Proving Absolute Interdependence

At the most basic and fundamental level, one can only a priori *assume* that Psalm 93 derived its phraseology from the Ugaritic texts. There is no way to assert with conclusive evidence that the psalmist did, in fact, depend upon or copy from an extant Ugaritic hymn. Therefore, the best an interpreter could offer is merely an argument from silence which fails to be convincing. The reason for this is because of the close similarities in the Semitic cognate languages and the abundance of similar roots and phrases found therein. It is fallacious to assert that two similar phrasal similarities must stem from the same source because it simply cannot be proven.

Additionally, though similar in nature, the words do not always demand identical meanings in different languages—they may be similar, and often they are. There may be similarities but because a word has a semantic domain in one language does not guarantee that another cognate language will have the identical semantic domain for that specific word. Plus, the sheer fact that these are ancient languages does not help in the

¹⁰ Yitzhak Avishur, *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1994), 7–8.

process. It is impossible to find anyone who spoke that language, who lived in that culture, who knew the customs, who knew the cultural and religious phrases in order to determine how similar the words were in the various languages. It simply is impossible to determine.

The Similar Nature of the Semitic Languages

The closeness of the two dialects simply makes the task of discerning interdependence in a comparative study very difficult because the points of similarity might indicate interdependence or it may indicate similar development within each dialect respectively.¹¹ The reason Psalm 93 and other examples of similar ANE phraseology in the psalms do not require a Canaanite background is that the texts from Ugarit do *not* offer clear and unambiguous data for sacral kingship.¹² That is to say, this common cult-pattern of sacral kingship as traced through the ANE religions and cults can lead to speculation. Though information abounds within the Canaanite corpus speaking of both Baal and El as king, there still remains no undeniable evidence that the Hebrew texts somehow and in some way copied off of, or even examined the Ugaritic literature. The argument that the language and phraseology is “similar” is no firm reason to argue for dependence.

Moreover, similar language would be expected because of dialectical closeness in the both the Semitic languages and peoples in the ANE milieu. Sure the similarities must be observed and studied for greater understanding, but one must recognize that though

¹¹ See P. C. Craigie, “The Poetry of Ugarit and Israel,” *TynBul* 22 (1971): 6.

¹² See K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago: InterVarsity Press, 1966), 104n64.

“Ugaritic and Hebrew are akin they are not identical.”¹³ Ugaritic, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Canaanite/Phoenician are all languages belonging to the Northwestern branch of Semitics.¹⁴ Craigie observes that “common parallel word pairs occur in Hebrew, Ugaritic, Akkadian, Sumerian, Aramaic, Phoenician, Arabic, and Egyptian, to name only a few languages.”¹⁵ Ringgren assesses the difficulty of identifying literary borrowing or dependence, “it is very difficult to find out what is common heritage and what is real influence.”¹⁶ Indeed, the similarities are primarily general rather than specific. Finally, J. A. Emerton correctly remarked, “Ugaritic is not the father of Hebrew. At best, it is no more than an uncle.”¹⁷

The Forms of נַהַר in Ugaritic and Hebrew Differ

Since the pairing of *n^eharim* (“rivers”), *n^eharot*, or *nahar* with *yam* is familiar from the Bible and from Ugaritic texts, one may infer that this must result from dependence of the Hebrew psalm upon the earlier Canaanite text. But at this point the argument fails because when the noun נַהַר is found in the OT (as, e.g., in Ps 93:3–4) and could possibly have a “mythological” connotation, it is *always* found in the plural—

¹³ Adrian H. W. Curtis, *Ugarit (Ras Shamra)*, Cities of the Biblical World (Cambridge, UK: Lutterworth Press, 1985), 109.

¹⁴ See Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *IBHS* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 5.

¹⁵ Peter C. Craigie, “Parallel Word Pairs in Ugaritic Poetry,” *UF* 11 (1979): 136–37. Craigie continues, “The commonality of such word pairs has to do with *meaning*, though the extent to which cognate terms are involved will vary, depending upon a number of factors, including proximity of linguistic relationship” (*ibid.*, 137).

¹⁶ Helmer Ringgren, “The Impact of the Ancient Near East on Israelite Tradition,” in *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament*, ed. by Douglas A. Knight (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 33.

¹⁷ J. A. Emerton, “What Light Has Ugaritic Shed on Hebrew?” *Ugarit and the Bible: Proceedings of the International Symposium on Ugarit and the Bible*, UBL 11 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1994), 54.

נְהַרֹּת. One must not overlook that in Ugaritic *nhr* is *always* in the singular in such pairings.¹⁸

The Geographical Distance between Ugarit and Canaan

Another discrediting factor in favor of the argument proposing Psalm 93's relationship upon the Ugaritic texts is because of the sheer distance in time, geography, and culture with which the modern interpreter finds himself removed from the ANE *Sitz im Leben*. In other words, it would be highly unlikely to prove that the Davidic psalms (from the 11–10th centuries B. C.) would have had access to this kind of Ugaritic literature given the chronological difference (about three to four centuries) and the geographical distance (hundreds of miles). To be sure, archaeologists have unearthed inscriptions and tablets in Palestine which evidence similarities to the epics, but can it be known for sure that the people in Canaan during the time of David and the Monarchy would have had access to these Ugaritic tablets from Northern Syria? Even if they would have, would they have known Ugaritic and been able to understand what was written?

Craigie accurately assesses that “the Kingdom of Ugarit was situated far to the North of the territory held by the Hebrew, never bordered on it, and ceased to exist before the Hebrew Kingdoms entered the arena of history.”¹⁹ Subsequently, Craigie rightly asks: “May the Ugaritic literature be representative of Canaanite literature, both *geographically* (viz. representative of Canaanite literature and oral poetry current in the southern ‘Canaanite’ city states) and *chronologically* (viz. representative of the later Canaanite

¹⁸ Emphasis added; see Avishur, *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms*, 175.

¹⁹ Peter C. Craigie, “Ugarit and the Bible,” in *Ugarit in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic*, ed. by Gordon Douglas Young (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 106.

literature and oral poetry of the distant region)?”²⁰ These questions are hard to answer and have yet to be definitively answered. It seems far-fetched to prove.²¹

Israel Lived as Part of the ANE Cultural-Religious Milieu

Though fairly similar to a previous argument, a biblical interpreter should expect similar religious phraseology because Yahweh and the biblical writers spoke to people in words, phrases, and theological concepts which would have been understood in *that* day and in *that* cultural milieu. Cross and Freedman speak to this as follows: “There can be no doubt that the early poets of Israel were heavily influenced by the poetic imagery and modes of expression of the peoples with whom they came into contact.”²² Granted, God did not fly a kite in the sky and drop down a “supernatural language” which *only* they would comprehend. Rather, they were a real people group living among other pagan people groups of that day who worshiped pagan deities. Ringgren states, “It is obvious that Israelite tradition did not develop in an isolated vacuum. Geographically, Israel was part of the ANE, and history and archaeology inform us that her political, commercial, and cultural relations with its neighbors were manifold and varied.”²³

To communicate with His people, Yahweh employed concepts, phrases, and acts with which the people were already familiar. Specifically in relation to ANE mythology,

²⁰ Ibid; emphasis original.

²¹ Elsewhere, Craigie raises this issue in regard to doing comparative studies between Hebrew and Ugaritic—and, of course, including the thought that the Israelites could have had access to the Ugaritic tablets—in his article, “The Poetry of Ugarit and Israel,” 9.

²² Frank Moore Cross and David Noel Freedman, “The Blessing of Moses,” *JBL* 67 (1948): 202.

²³ Helmer Ringgren, “The Impact of the Ancient Near East on Israelite Tradition,” in *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament*, ed. by Douglas A. Knight (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 31.

Wakeman concludes that “the biblical poets make free use of the ancient images without being bound by the structure of the myth.”²⁴ John Walton states: “Words such as ‘borrowing’ or ‘influence’ imply a little too much prideful knowledge on *our* part of *their* culture. They all incorporated from a common stock of imagery, language, principles, ideas, and religion, so that’s no surprise.”²⁵

For instance, when Leviathan occurs in the OT, oftentimes similarities are noted and connections are drawn with the older pagan Baal myths. But is this always correct? The Canaanites understood Leviathan as a mythological figure raising havoc against Baal. But in the OT, Leviathan (in its six occurrences) seems to refer to a great sea creature (cf. Job 41:1; Ps 104:26; Isa 27:1). Words that occur in one culture may not have and, indeed, do not demand, the identical meaning in another. In the seventeenth century, Thomas Hobbes authored a book which he entitled *Leviathan; or, The Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil*.²⁶ Just in observing the title one recognizes that Hobbes was not referring to the great mythological creature at odds with Baal (as the Ugaritic myths) or the great sea monster of the deep (as in the OT). Words, thus, can take different meanings and nuances in different cultures and in different time periods.

Along these lines, one expects similar concepts, ideas, and worship patterns among religions—and some have taken this too far with correlating (and even equating) Yahwism and Baalism/Canaanitism. Similarities exist, to be sure, yet this is to be

²⁴ Wakeman, *God’s Battle with the Monster*, 105.

²⁵ John Walton, interview by author, Los Angeles, August 8, 2008; emphasis added.

²⁶ 4th ed. (repr., New York: Routledge and Sons, 1894).

predicted from that time period. The oldest biblical texts are practically unanimous on two significant points: (1) the divine name, the tetragrammaton “YHWH,” goes back to Moses (assuming he lived in the 15th century BC), and (2) YHWH, at least to some extent, was brought into Canaan by the group Moses led, the Bene-Israel (“Sons of Israel”).²⁷

The people who received the revelation of God were very much a part of the ancient world.²⁸ Therefore, it is not a stretch to assume that language, culture, vocabulary, religious epithets, and so on would appear. But even *if* one acknowledges that an expression was “borrowed” from the Ugaritic literature concerning Baal, he need not imply that the Israelite notion of Yahweh was, consequently, derived from, and in all aspects resembled the Canaanite idea and character of Baal.²⁹ Matthews well states that: “Parallels, even where they are exact, do not guarantee a significant meaning for interpretation.”³⁰ Therefore, this does not demand direct borrowing from the Canaanite literature. Pfeiffer rightly summarizes,

We should not conclude that the Israelites directly borrowed their literary forms from Ugarit. Both peoples drew upon a literary and cultural inheritance which was common to the western Semites and, in a measure, to all Near Eastern peoples. The ancient inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent were highly mobile. Ugarit was not only linked to the Fertile Crescent—reaching southward to Egypt

²⁷ See André Lemaire, *The Birth of Monotheism: The Rise and Disappearance of Yahwism*, BAS (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2007), 20–21.

²⁸ See Richard S. Hess, “Ancient Near Eastern Studies,” in *Interpreting the Old Testament: A Guide for Exegesis*, ed. by Craig C. Broyles (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 202.

²⁹ T. Worden, “The Literary Influence of the Ugaritic Fertility Myth on the Old Testament,” *VT* 3 (1953): 276.

³⁰ Kenneth A. Matthews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996), 86. Though Matthews speaks with reference to Gen 1–2 and its relationship to other ANE creation texts, the point remains the same.

and eastward to the lands of the Tigris-Euphrates basin—but also enjoyed the cultural advantage of trade with the Mediterranean islands, particularly Cyprus, and with the Hittite Empire.³¹

Hermeneutic of Accommodation

The hermeneutic of accommodation simply affirms that for God to reveal Himself to human beings, he had to accommodate himself to human words, language, and human limitations. The authors of Scripture employed this hermeneutic when writing about Yahweh in using words, phrases, and key concepts that would be familiar to anyone living in the ANE world. Again, the axiom is true that similarity does not equal identity. This does not imply any sort of loss of truth or deviation from the original meaning. It simply affirms that the writers of Scripture accommodated to their specific readers in order that they would comprehend what they were reading. So it is with the psalmists explaining the kingship and the sovereignty of Yahweh to the sinful Israelites—who were so often prone to idolatry—in the United Monarchy.

A Consistent View of Biblical Inspiration

A thoroughly consistent view of biblical inspiration and Scriptural authority precludes the possibility of dependence upon pagan texts for the text of the Bible. If all Scripture is God-breathed and the very Word of God, then how could that word be copied and pasted from pagan, syncretistic, and polytheistic religions? If, as Psalm 119:13 clearly reveals, God's ordinances all stem from His mouth, then how could one conclude that the authors of Scripture directly borrow existing pagan myths concerning pagan gods? Additionally, if the authors of Scripture—including the Psalms, for instance—

³¹ Pfeiffer, *Ras Shamra and the Bible*, 66.

directly borrowed from pagan sources which hail pagan deities as sovereign, then why would the authors use those pagan epics and insert the name of the God of Israel within the text? If there was this sort of borrowing, then it may indicate “that the Israelite attitude was not at all points so exclusive toward external cultures as their religious polemic would suggest.”³² It seems contradictory to the biblical argument that Yahweh—and He alone—reigns. Psalm 119:160 seals the argument when it reads: “The sum of Your word is truth, And *every one of Your righteous ordinances* is everlasting” (emphasis added).

³² Craigie, “Poetry of Ugarit and Israel,” 29.

CONCLUSION

Although Theodor Gaster is quick to assert that “evidence is increasing daily that many of the psalms were conscious and deliberate Yahwizations of current ‘pagan’ compositions,”³³ this kind of argumentation cannot stand in the light of the authoritative, inerrant, sufficient Word of God.³⁴ H. W. Wolff gives an apropos rebuttal:

Following the signposts of the OT itself, we must seek to understand it on the basis of the peculiar nature of Yahweh, the God of Israel. In his essence, Yahweh is not a figure of mythology in the sense that one could speak of him in the manner of the myths of the neighboring lands, which chatter so much of the “private life” of their gods and of their life together in the pantheon. Yahweh is the one beside whom no other is god, and before whom all others are shown to be no gods.³⁵

How ironic would it be if God were to give His Word to people and expect them to read it, study it, learn it, apply it, teach it, and live it if they could not even interpret it properly? Again, this argument further supports the reality that the ANE texts (Ugaritic texts and tablets) prove to be helpful in understanding the ANE background and culture, but they are not essential to a proper biblical hermeneutic. If one asserts that Psalm 93, and other biblical literature with similarities to ANE literature, can *only* be rightly understood in light of ANE texts, then the Word of God is not totally sufficient, for then it would *need* the ANE texts in order to rightly understand it.

Moreover, similarities in cognate languages, religious (“kingship”) phraseology, and cultural concepts show that Israel was not some isolated religion/cult which Yahweh

³³ Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament*, 751.

³⁴ See 6n7 above.

³⁵ Hans Walter Wolff, “The Hermeneutics of the Old Testament,” in *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*, ed. by Claus Westermann, trans. by James Luther Mays (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1963), 168.

dropped out of a clear blue sky in the middle of the ANE. To the contrary, God deliberately placed Israel in the midst of many pagan people groups worshipping pagan gods and God implemented similarities so all could know and *clearly understand* that He alone is God—and there is none other.

This thesis has endeavored to show the need for the present study in light of the flourishing debate as to the issue of borrowing and/or copying in the OT. It is impossible to downplay the prominence of the Ugaritic literature in the ANE world and its influence in many contemporary scholars' hermeneutic, but the immediate issue at hand is to answer whether these Ugaritic myths are *necessary* for a proper understanding of Scripture and if the biblical authors themselves copied from or borrowed from these Ugaritic texts. It is the persuasion of this author that Psalm 93 does not borrow from the Ugaritic texts because it remains virtually impossible to prove if, in fact, the psalmist did implement the ANE texts, thoughts, and language into the psalm. Additionally, the predominant argument scholars purport lies in the similarities within the cognate languages—Ugaritic and Hebrew. But ought this to be assumed given the reality that they both derive from the same Semitic family? Similarities in religious language, similar roots, cultic language, kingship verbage ought not to strike one as atypical. Specifically, the interpretive crux of Psalm 93:3–4 (the rivers rising up) is inherently different in both the Hebrew and Ugaritic which only further advances the conclusion that there is no interdependence.

The distance of hundreds of miles between Ugarit in Northern Syria and that of Canaan further strengthens the reality that the Israelites were not likely to have copied from the older and distant pagan myths from Ugarit. Because Israel did, no doubt, live in

and among the ANE people groups defined by syncretistic religions and pagan mythological ideologies, similarities in religious language must be expected. Yet the author has attempted to propose that similarity does not demand identity especially in religious-cult language.

Additionally, the hermeneutic of accommodation affirms that Psalm 93 need not presume borrowing from the ANE texts because God obviously would reveal Himself to His people through words, terms, phrases, and religious language with which they were familiar. Finally, a consistent view of biblical inspiration seems to contradict the concept of the authors of Scripture “copying and pasting” from extant ANE texts. As Scripture unequivocally declares, God inspired His Word (2 Tim 3:16–17; 2 Pet 1:20–21) and it seems impossible for the biblical author to copy from or borrow an ANE text thus importing its thoughts into the Word of God and then say with the writers of Scripture that *all* God’s ordinances stem from His mouth (Ps 119:13; emphasis added).

Therefore, it is the conclusion of this author of this thesis that Psalm 93 does not have any direct dependence upon the ANE pagan, mythological literature. Are there similarities? Of course. That is the nature of religious phraseology. Nevertheless, any direct dependence or deliberate borrowing ought to be rejected.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Albright, W. F. *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1968.
- Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. New York: Basic Books, 1985.
- Assmann, Jan. *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*. Translated by David Lorton. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Avishur, Yitzhak. *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1994.
- Ballard, Harold Wayne, Jr. *The Divine Warrior Motif in the Psalms*. Bibal Dissertation Series 6. North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press, 1999.
- Basson, Alec. *Divine Metaphors in Selected Hebrew Psalms of Lamentation*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006.
- Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997.
- Charnock, Stephen. *The Existence and Attributes of God*. 2 volumes. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.
- Chisholm, Robert B., Jr. *From Exegesis to Exposition: A Practical Guide to Using Biblical Hebrew*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.
- Coogan, Michael David. *Stories from Ancient Canaan*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978.
- Craigie, Peter C. *Ugarit and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1983.
- Crim, Keith R. *The Royal Psalms*. Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1962.
- Cross, Frank Moore. *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973.

- . *From Epic to Canaan: History and Literature in Ancient Israel*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.
- Curtis, Adrian H. W. *Ugarit (Ras Shamra)*. Cities of the Biblical World. Cambridge, UK: Lutterworth Press, 1985.
- Danby, Herbert. *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933.
- Day, John. *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament*. University of Cambridge Oriental Publications 35. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Driver, G. R. *Canaanite Myths and Legends*. Old Testament Studies 3. Reprint, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1971.
- Eaton, J. H. *Meditating on the Psalms*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.
- Enns, Peter. *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.
- Gaster, Theodore H. *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament: A Comparative Study with Chapters from Sir James G. Frazer's Folklore in the Old Testament*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1969.
- Gibson, J. C. L. *Language and Imagery in the Old Testament*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge Publishers, 1998.
- Goldingay, John. *Old Testament Theology*. 2 volumes, 1:57–72. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- Gordon, Cyrus H. *Ugaritic Manual: Newly Revised Grammar, Texts in Transliteration, Cuneiform Selections*. Analecta Orientalia 35. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1955.
- Goulder, M. D. *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplemental Series 20. Edited by David J. A. Clines, Philip R. Davies, and David M. Gunn. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982.
- Gray, John. *The Canaanites*. Ancient Peoples and Places 38. Edited by Glyn Daniel. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964.
- . *The Legacy of Canaan: The Ras Shamra Texts and Their Relevance to the Old Testament*. 2nd edition. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 5. Leiden: Brill, 1965.

- Green, Alberto R. W. *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003.
- Habel, Norman C. *Yahweh Versus Baal: A Conflict of Religious Cultures*. New York: Bookman Associates, 1964.
- Haney, Randy G. *Text and Concept Analysis in Royal Psalms*. Studies in Biblical Literature 30. Edited by Hemchand Gossai. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2002.
- Hastoupis, A. P. *The Mythological Aspect of the Foreign Influences on the Old Testament Conception of the Kingdom of God*. Evanston, IL: Garrett Biblical Institute, 1950.
- Heidel, Alexander. *The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of Creation*. 2nd edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963.
- Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan or the Matter, Form and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastic and Civil*. 4th edition. London: Routledge and Sons, 1894.
- Howard, David M., Jr. *The Structure of Psalms 93–100*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997.
- Johnson, Aubrey R. *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967.
- Kapelrud, Arvid S. *Baal in the Ras Shamra Texts*. Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad Publisher, 1952.
- . *The Ras Shamra Discoveries and the Old Testament*. Translated by G. W. Anderson. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963.
- Keel, Othmar. *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: ANE Iconography and the Book of Psalms*. Translated by Timothy J. Hallett. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997.
- Kitchen, K. A. *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*. Chicago: InterVarsity Press, 1966.
- Kloos, Caroline Jacoba Louise. *Yhwh's Combat with the Sea: A Religio-Historical Investigation into the Myth in Psalm XXIX and Exodus XV 1–18*. Leiden: Brill, 1986.
- Koehler, Ludwig, and Walter Baumgartner, eds. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. 5 volumes. Revised by Walter Baumgartner and Johann Jakob Stamm. Translated and edited by M. E. J. Richardson. Leiden: Brill, 1994.
- Kraus, Hans-Joachim. *Theology of the Psalms*. Translated by Keith Crim. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986.

- . *Worship in Israel: A Cultic History of the Old Testament*. Translated by Geoffrey Buswell. Oxford: Alden Press, 1966.
- Kugel, James L. *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History*. London: Yale University Press, 1981.
- Lemaire, André. *The Birth of Monotheism: The Rise and Disappearance of Yahwism*. Biblical Archaeological Society. Edited by Jack Meinhardt. Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2007.
- L'Heureux, Conrad E. *Rank Among the Canaanite Gods: El, Ba'al, and the Repha'im*. Harvard Semitic Monographs. Edited by Frank Moore Cross. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979.
- Longman III, Tremper. *How to Read the Psalms*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1988.
- McCann, J. Clinton, Jr. *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.
- Miller, Patrick D., Jr. *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel*. Harvard Semitic Monographs 5. Edited by Frank Moore Cross, William L. Moran, Isadore Twersky, and G. Ernest Wright, 8–63. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975.
- de Moor, Johannes C. *The Rise of Yahwism: The Roots of Israelite Monotheism*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 91. Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1990.
- Mowinckel, Sigmund. *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*. 2 volumes. Translated by D. R. Ap-Thomas. Nashville: Abingdon, 1962.
- . *Real and Apparent Tricola in Hebrew Psalm Poetry*. Oslo: I Kommissjon Hos H. Aschehoug, 1957.
- O'Connor, M. *Hebrew Verse Structure*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997.
- del Olmo Lete, Gregorio. *Canaanite Religion: According to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit*. Translated by Wilfred G. E. Watson. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004.
- Patton, John Hastings. *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1944.

- Peterson, Allan Rosengren. *The Royal God: Enthronement Festivals in Ancient Israel and Ugarit?* Journal for Study of the Old Testament Supplemental Series 259. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
- Peterson, David L., and Kent Harold Richards. *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry*. Old Testament Series. Edited by Gene M. Tucker. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.
- Pfeiffer, Charles F. *Ras Shamra and the Bible*. Baker Studies in Biblical Archaeology. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976.
- Pink, Arthur W. *The Sovereignty of God*. Revised edition. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1998.
- Pope, Marvin H. *El in the Ugaritic Texts*. Leiden: Brill, 1955.
- Pritchard, James B. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament with Supplement*. 3rd edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969.
- Ringgren, Helmer. *Religions of the Ancient Near East*. Translated by John Sturdy. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973.
- Smith, Mark S. *Untold Stories: The Bible and Ugaritic Studies in the Twentieth Century*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001.
- Snaith, Norman H. *The Jewish New Year Festival: Its Origins and Development*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1947.
- Sparks, Kenton L. *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005.
- Tozer, A. W. *The Knowledge of the Holy*. San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1961.
- Wakeman, Mary K. *God's Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery*. Leiden: Brill, 1973.
- Waltke, Bruce K., and M. O'Connor. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990.
- Walton, John H. *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context: A Survey of Parallels Between Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Texts*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989.
- . *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.

- Watson, Wilfred G. E. *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques*. Journal of the Study of the Old Testament Supplemental Series 26. Edited by David J. A. Clines and Philip R. Davies. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.
- Westermann, Claus. *The Praise of God in the Psalms*. Translated by Keith R. Crim. Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1965.
- Wyatt, Nick. *The Mythic Mind: Essays on Cosmology and Religion in Ugaritic and Old Testament Literature*. London: Equinox Publishing, 2005.
- . *Myths of Power: A Study of Royal Myth and Ideology in Ugaritic and Biblical Tradition*. Ugaritisch-Biblische Literatur 13. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996.
- . *Religious Texts from Ugarit: The Words of Ilmilku and His Colleagues*. The Biblical Seminar 53. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
- . *Space and Time in the Religious Life of the Near East*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.
- Yon, Marguerite. *The City of Ugarit at Tell Ras Shamra*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

Periodical Articles

- Ackroyd, P. R. "Notes and Studies: Some Notes on the Psalms." *Journal of Theological Studies* 17 (1966): 393–99.
- Albright, W. F. "A Catalogue of Early Hebrew Lyric Poems (Psalm LXVIII)." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 23, no. 1 (1950–51): 1–39.
- Ap-Thomas, D. R. "Elijah on Mount Carmel." *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 92 (July–December 1960): 146–55.
- Beale, G. K. "Myth, History, and Inspiration: A Review of *Inspiration and Incarnation* by Peter Enns." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49, no. 2 (June 2006): 287–312.
- Beyer, Bryan E. Review of *Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context: A Survey of Parallels between Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, by John H. Walton. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37, no. 1 (March 1994): 131–33.
- Carson, D. A. "Three More Books of the Bible: A Critical Review." *Trinity Journal* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 1–62.
- Cassuto, U. "Baal and Mot in the Ugaritic Texts." *Israel Exploration Journal* 12, no. 2 (1962): 77–86.

- Coats, George W. "The Song of the Sea." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (January 1969): 1–17.
- Craigie, Peter C. "The Conquest and Early Hebrew Poetry." *Tyndale Bulletin* 20 (1969): 76–94.
- . "Parallel Word Pairs in Ugaritic Poetry: A Critical Evaluation of their Relevance for Psalm 29." *Ugarit Forschungen* 11 (1979): 135–40.
- . "The Poetry of Ugarit and Israel." *Tyndale Bulletin* 22 (1971): 3–31.
- . "Psalm XXIX in the Hebrew Poetic Tradition." *Vetus Testamentum* 22, no. 2 (April 1972): 143–51.
- Cross, Frank Moore. "A Note on Deuteronomy 33:26." *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 108 (December 1947): 6–7.
- . "Notes on a Canaanite Psalm in the Old Testament." *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 117 (February 1950): 19–21.
- . "The Song of Miriam." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 14 (January-October, 1955): 237–50.
- . "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs." *Harvard Theological Review* 55, no. 4 (October 1962): 225–59.
- , and David Noel Freedman. "The Blessing of Moses." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 67 (1948): 191–210.
- Curtis, Adrian H. W. "The 'Subjugation of the Waters' Motif in the Psalms; Imagery or Polemic?" *Journal of Semitic Studies* 23, no. 2 (Autumn 1978): 245–56.
- Dahood, Mitchell. "Comparative Philology Yesterday and Today." *Biblica* 50, no. 1 (1969): 70–79.
- Durham, John I. "The King as 'Messiah' in the Psalms." *Review & Expositor* 81, no. 3 (Summer 1984): 425–35.
- Eaton, J. H. "Notes and Studies: Some Questions on Philology and Exegesis in the Psalms." *Journal of Theological Studies* 19 (1968): 603–9.
- Eissfeldt, Otto. "El and Yahweh." *Journal of Semitic Studies* 1, no. 1 (January 1956): 25–37.

- Enns, Peter. "Response to G. K. Beale's Review Article of *Inspiration and Incarnation*." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49, no. 2 (June 2006): 313–26.
- Fensham, F. C. "The Use of the Suffix Conjugation and the Prefix Conjugation in a Few Old Hebrew Poems." *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 6 (1978): 9–18.
- Fisher, Loren R. "Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament." *Vetus Testamentum* 15 (1965): 313–24.
- , and F. Brent Knutson. "An Enthronement Ritual at Ugarit." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 28, no. 3 (July 1969): 157–67.
- Fitzgerald, Aloysius. "A Note on Psalm 29." *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 215 (October 1974): 62–63.
- Freedman, David Noel. "God Almighty in Psalm 78,59." *Biblica* 54, no. 2 (1973): 268.
- , and C. Franke Hyland. "Psalm 29: A Structural Analysis." *Harvard Theological Review* 66, no. 2 (April 1973): 237–56.
- Gaster, Theodor H. "The Battle of the Rain and the Sea: An Ancient Semitic Nature-Myth." *Iraq* 4 (1937): 21–32.
- . "On a Proto-Hebrew Poem from Ras Shamra." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 57 (1938): 81–87.
- . "Psalm 29." *Jewish Quarterly Review* 37, no. 1 (July 1946): 55–65.
- Gelston, A. "A Note On יהודה מלך." *Vetus Testamentum* 16 (1966): 507–12.
- Ginsberg, H. L. "The Rebellion and Death of Ba'lu." *Orientalia* 5 (1936): 161–98.
- Goulder, M. D. "The Fourth Book of the Psalter." *Journal of Theological Studies* 26 (1975): 269–89.
- Gray, John. "The Hebrew Conception of the Kingship of God: Its Origin and Development." *Vetus Testamentum* 6 (1956): 268–85.
- . "The Kingship of God in the Prophets and Psalms." *Vetus Testamentum* 11 (1961): 1–29.
- Grønbaek, Jakob H. "Baal's Battle with Yam – A Canaanite Creation Fight." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 33 (October 1985): 27–44.
- Hasel, Gerhard F. "The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology." *Evangelical Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (April–June 1974): 81–102.

- Howard, David M., Jr. "Psalm 94 among the Kingship-Of-Yhwh Psalms." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 61, no. 4 (Oct 1999): 667–85.
- Jefferson, Helen Genevieve. "Psalm 93." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 71 (1952): 155–60.
- Kruse, Heinz. "Psalm CXXXII and the Royal Zion Festival." *Vetus Testamentum* 33, no. 3 (July 1983): 279–97.
- Luyster, Robert. "Wind and Water: Cosmogonic Symbolism in the Old Testament." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 93, no. 1 (1981): 1–10.
- Marcus, David. "Ugaritic Evidence for 'The Almighty/The Grand One'?" *Biblica* 55, no. 3 (1974): 404–7.
- Margulis, B. "The Canaanite Origin of Psalm 29 Reconsidered." *Biblica* 51, no. 3 (1970): 332–48.
- . "A Ugaritic Psalm (RS 24.252)." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 89, no. 3 (September 1970): 292–304.
- Matthews, Victor H. Review of *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context: A Survey of Parallels Between Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, by John H. Walton. *Biblical Archaeologist* 53, no. 3 (Spring 1990): 176.
- May, Herbert G. "Some Cosmic Connotations of *Mayim Rabbîm*, 'Many Waters.'" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 74, no. 1 (March 1955): 9–20.
- McCarthy, Dennis J. "'Creation' Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 29 (1967): 87–100.
- Mettinger, Tryggve N. D. "Fighting the Powers of Chaos and Hell—Towards the Biblical Portrait of God." *Studia Theologica* 39, no. 1 (1985): 21–38.
- . "'Enthroned on the Praises of Israel:' The Praise of God in Old Testament Theology." *Interpretation* 39, no. 1 (January 1985): 5–19.
- Morgenstern, Julian. "The Cultic Setting of the 'Enthronement Psalms.'" *Hebrew Union College Annual* 35 (1964): 1–42.
- Pope, Marvin H. "Marginalia to M. Dahood's *Ugaritic-Hebrew Philology*." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 85, no. 4 (December 1966): 455–66.

- . Review of *The Legacy of Canaan. The Ras Shamra Texts and their Relevance to the Old Testament*, by John Gray. *Journal of Semitic Studies* 11, no. 2 (Autumn 1966): 228–41.
- Rainey, Anson F. “Family Relationships in Ugarit.” *Orientalia* 34 (1965): 10–22.
- Roberts, J. J. M. “The Enthronement of Yhwh and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language in the Psalms.” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (October 2002): 675–86.
- Rodríguez, Angel Manuel. “Ancient Near Eastern Parallels to the Bible and the Question of Revelation and Inspiration.” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 43–64.
- Shenkel, James Donald. “An Interpretation of Psalm 93,5.” *Biblica* 46 (1965): 401–16.
- Sherwood, Stephen K. “Psalm 112 – A Royal Wisdom Psalm?” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (January 1989): 50–64.
- Shveka, Avi. “A Trace of the Tradition of Diplomatic Correspondence in Royal Psalms.” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 50, no. 2 (Autumn 2005): 297–320.
- Skehan, Patrick W. “A Psalm Manuscript from Qumran (4Q Ps^b).” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (July 1964): 313–22.
- Smick, Elmer B. “Mythopoetic Language in the Psalms.” *Westminster Theological Journal* 44, no. 1 (1982): 88–98.
- Tarazi, Paul Nadim. “An Exegesis of Psalm 93.” *St. Vladimir’s Quarterly* 35, nos. 2–3 (1991): 137–48.
- Ulrichsen, Jarl H. “*JHWH Mālāk*: Einige Sprachliche Beobachtungen.” *Vetus Testamentum* 27, no. 3 (July 1977): 360–74.
- Walton, John H. Review of *The Bible in the Light of Cuneiform Literature: Scripture in Context III*. Edited by William W. Hallo, Bruce William Jones, and Gerald L. Mattingly. *Hebrew Studies* 33 (1992): 130–32.
- Williamson, H. M. G. Review of *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context A Survey of Parallels Between Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Texts*. By John Walton. *Vetus Testamentum* 42, no. 3 (July 1992): 429.
- Wilson, Gerald H. “The Use of Royal Psalms at the ‘Seams’ of the Hebrew Psalter.” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 35 (June 1986): 85–94.

Worden, T. "The Literary Influence of the Ugaritic Fertility Myth on the Old Testament." *Vetus Testamentum* 3 (1953): 273–97.

Yamauchi, Edwin M. "Tammuz and the Bible." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84, no. 3 (September 1965): 283–90.

Essays

Ahlström, G. W. "אֱלֹהִים." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 15 volumes. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, 1:73–74. Translated by John T. Willis. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1974.

Albright, W. F. "The Psalm of Habakkuk." In *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy Presented to Professor Theodore H. Robinson by the Society for Old Testament Study*. Edited by H. H. Rowley, 1–18. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1950.

Clements, R. E. "מִיָּם." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 15 volumes. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, 8:282–83. Translated by Douglas W. Stott. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997.

Cooper, Alan, and Marvin H. Pope. "Divine Names and Epithets in the Ugaritic Texts." In *Ras Shamra Parallels: The Texts from Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible*. 3 volumes. Edited by Stan Rummel. *Analecta Orientalia* 51, 333–469. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1981.

Coppes, Leonard J. "נֶאֱדָר." In *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. 2 volumes. Edited by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, 2:541. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.

Cornelius, I. "כִּפְּתָא." In *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren, 2:672–74. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.

Craigie, Peter C. "Ugarit and the Bible." In *Ugarit in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic*. Edited by Gordon Douglas Young, 99–111. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981.

Creach, Jerome F. D. "The Psalms and the Cult." In *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*. Edited by David Firth and Philip S. Johnston, 119–37. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005.

- Cross, Frank Moore. "The Divine Warrior in Israel's Early Cult." In *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations*. Philip W. Lown Institute of Advanced Judaic Studies: Studies and Texts 3. Edited by Alexander Altmann, 11–30. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966.
- . "Notes on Psalm 93: A Fragment of a Liturgical Poem Affirming Yahweh's Kingship." In *A God So Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller*. Edited by Brent A. Strawn and Nancy R. Bowen, 73–77. Winona Lake: IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003.
- Culver, Robert D. "גִּלְגָּל." In *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. 2 volumes. Edited by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, 1:507–10. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.
- Curtis, Adrian H. W. "Ras Shamra, Minet El-Beida and Ras Ibn Hani: The Material Sources." In *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*. Edited by Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt, 5–27. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Dahood, Mitchell. "Ugaritic-Hebrew Parallel Pairs." In *Ras Shamra Parallels: The Texts from Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible*. 3 volumes. Edited by Stan Rummel. *Analecta Orientalia* 51, 1–178. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1981.
- Day, John. "Baal (Deity)." In *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 volumes. Edited by David Noel Freedman, 1:545–49. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- . "Canaan, Religion of." In *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 volumes. Edited by David Noel Freedman, 1:831–37. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- Day, John. "Ugarit and the Bible: Do They Presuppose the Same Canaanite Mythology and Religion?" In *Ugarit and the Bible: Proceedings of the International Symposium on Ugarit and the Bible*. Edited by George J. Brooke, Adrian H.W. Curtis, and John F. Healey, 35–52. *Ugaritisch-Biblische Literatur* 11. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1994.
- Domeris, W. R. "גִּלְגָּל." In *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren, 1:943–47. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
- Eidevall, Göran. "Images of God, Self, and the Enemy in the Psalms: On the Role of Metaphor in Identity Construction." In *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*. Edited by P. Van Hecke, 55–65. Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2005.
- Emerton, J. A. "What Light Has Ugaritic Shed on Hebrew?" In *Ugarit and the Bible: Proceedings of the International Symposium on Ugarit and the Bible*. Edited by George J. Brooke, Adrian H.W. Curtis and John F. Healey, 53–69. *Ugaritisch-Biblische Literatur* 11. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1994.

- Enns, Peter. “עֲדֹרִית.” In *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren, 3:328–29. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
- Fabry, H. J. “כִּסָּא.” In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 15 volumes. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, 7:232–59. Translated by David E. Green. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995.
- . “מִיִּים.” In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 15 volumes. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, 8:268–69. Translated by Douglas W. Stott. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997.
- , and N. van Meeteren. “תִּבְלִי.” In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 15 volumes. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, 15:557–64. Translated by David E. Green. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2006.
- Freedman, David Noel, and B. W. Willoughby. “נְשָׂא.” In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 15 volumes. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, 10:24–27. Translated by Douglas W. Stott. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1999.
- Fuhs, H. F. “כֶּסֶּא.” In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 15 volumes. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, and Helmer Ringgren, 3:195–208. Translated by John T. Willis and Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1978.
- Gamberoni, J. “לְבַשׁ.” In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 15 volumes. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, 7:457–68. Translated by David E. Green. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995.
- Gibson, J. C. L. “The Kingship of Yahweh against its Canaanite Background.” In *Ugarit and the Bible: Proceedings of the International Symposium on Ugarit and the Bible*. Edited by George J. Brooke, Adrian H.W. Curtis and John F. Healey, 101–12. Ugaritisch-Biblische Literatur 11. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1994.
- . “The Ugaritic Literary Texts: The Mythological Texts.” In *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*. Edited by Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt. 193–202. Leiden: Brill, 1997.

- Gordon, Cyrus H. "Leviathan: Symbol of Evil." In *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations*. Edited by Alexander Altmann. Philip W. Lown Institute of Advanced Judaic Studies: Studies and Texts 3, 1–9. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966.
- Gray, John. "Baal (Deity)." In *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. 4 volumes. Edited by George Arthur Buttrick, 1:328–29. New York: Abingdon Press, 1962.
- Grisanti, Michael A. "בַּלְעַזְרָא." In *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren, 2:929–34. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
- Hadley, Judith M. "Baal." In *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren, 4:422–28. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
- Hallo, William H. "Compare and Contrast: The Contextual Approach to Biblical Literature." In *The Bible in the Light of Cuneiform Literature: Scripture in Context III*. Edited by William W. Hallo, 1–30. Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 8. New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990.
- Hamilton, Victor. "אֱשֶׁר־אֵלֵּים." In *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren, 3:160–63. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
- Held, Moshe. "The *yqtol-qtl* (*qtl-yqtl*) Sequence of Identical Verbs in Biblical Hebrew and in Ugaritic." In *Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman*. Edited by Meir Ben-Horin, Bernard D. Weinryb, and Solomon Zeitlin. 281–90. Leiden, Brill: 1962.
- Herrmann, W. "Baal (בעל)." In *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. 2nd edition. Edited by Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, 132–39. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
- Hess, Richard S. "Ancient Near Eastern Studies." In *Interpreting the Old Testament: A Guide for Exegesis*. Edited by Craig C. Broyles. 201–20. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Horsnell, Malcolm J. A. "Myth, Mythology." In *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. 4 volumes. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 3:455–63. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1986.
- Howard, David M., Jr. "A Contextual Reading of Psalms 90–94." In *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*. Edited J. Clinton McCann, 108–23. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplemental Series 159. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993.

- Human, Dirk J., ed. "Psalm 93: Yahweh Robed In Majesty and Mightier Than the Great Waters." In *Psalms and Mythology*. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 462. 147–69. New York: T&T Clark, 2007.
- Humphries, Michael L. "Myth." In *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Edited David Noel Freedman, 934–35. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2000.
- Jung, Kurt Gerhard. "Baal." In *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. 4 volumes. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 1:377–79. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1979.
- Kapelrud, Arvid S. "The Relationship Between El and Baal in the Ras Shamra Texts." In *The Bible World: Essays in Honor of Cyrus H. Gordon*. Edited by Gary Rendsburg, Ruth Adler, Milton Arfa, and Nathan H. Winter, 79–85. New York: Institute of Hebrew Culture and Education of New York University, 1980.
- Kedar-Kopfstein, B. "בַּאֵל." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 15 volumes. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, 8:39–41. Translated by Douglas W. Stott. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997.
- . "קוֹל." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 15 volumes. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, 12:576–88. Translated by Douglas W. Stott. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2003.
- Koch, K. "כּוֹן." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 15 volumes. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, 7:89–101. Translated by David E. Green. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995.
- Koopmans, William T. "בַּעַל." In *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Edited Willem A. VanGemeren, 1:681–83. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
- Kselman, John S. "Sinai and Zion in Psalm 93." In *David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J. J. M. Roberts*. Edited by Bernard F. Batto and Kathryn L. Roberts, 69–76. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004.
- van Leeuwen, C. "עֵר." In *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. 3 volumes. Edited by Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, 2:838–46. Translated by Mark E. Biddle. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997.
- Libolt, Clayton G. "Canaan." In *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. 4 volumes. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 1:585–91. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1979.

- Maré, Leonard P. "Some Remarks On Yahweh's Protection Against Mythological Powers in Psalm 121." In *Psalms and Mythology*. Edited by Dirk J. Human. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 462, 170–80. New York: T&T Clark, 2007.
- Martens, Elmer A. "כֹּהֵן." In *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren, 2:6:15–17. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
- Moberly, R. W. L. "אֱלֹהִים." In *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren, 1:427–33. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
- de Moor, Johannes C. "El, The Creator." *The Bible World: Essays in Honor of Cyrus H. Gordon*. Edited by Gary Rendsburg, Ruth Adler, Milton Arfa, and Nathan H. Winter, 171–87. New York: Institute of Hebrew Culture and Education of New York University, 1980.
- . "בַּעַל." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 15 volumes. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, 2:181–92. Translated by John T. Willis. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1975.
- Mulder, M. J. "בַּעַל." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 15 volumes. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, 2:192–200. Translated by John T. Willis. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1975.
- Oden, Robert A., Jr. "Myth and Mythology." In *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 volumes. Edited by David Noel Freedman, 4:946–56. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- del Olmo Lete, Gregorio, and Joaquín Sanmartín. "b'1." In *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition: Part One*. 2nd edition. Edited and translated by Wilfred G. E. Watson, 1:205–9. Leiden: Brill, 2004.
- Pardee, Dennis. "Ugaritic Myths: The Ba'lu Myth." In *The Context of Scripture*. 3 volumes. Edited by William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr., 241–82. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Parker, Simon B. "The Baal Cycle." In *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*. Translated by Mark S. Smith. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997.
- Pettinato, Giovanni. "Pre-Ugaritic Documentation of Ba'al." In *The Bible World: Essays in Honor of Cyrus H. Gordon*. Edited by Gary Rendsburg, Ruth Adler, Milton Arfa, and Nathan H. Winter, 203–9. New York: Institute of Hebrew Culture and Education of New York University, 1980.

- Phelps, Mark Anthony. "Baal Deity." In *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Edited by David Noel Freedman, 134–35. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2000.
- Rainey, Anson F. "Canaan, Canaanites." In *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Edited by David Noel Freedman, 213–15. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2000.
- Ringgren, Helmer. "The Impact of the Ancient Near East on Israelite Tradition." In *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament*. Edited by Douglas A. Knight, 31–46. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977.
- Ross, Allen P. "נָהָר." In *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren, 3:46–51. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
- Schultz, Carl. "עוֹר." In *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. 2 volumes. Edited by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, 2:648–50. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.
- Seybold, K. "מֶלֶךְ." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 15 volumes. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, 8:346–74. Translated by Douglas W. Stott. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997.
- Smith, Gary V., and Victor P. Hamilton. "נֶאֱדָר." In *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren, 1:786–89. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
- Smith, Mark S. "The Baal Cycle." In *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*. Edited by Simon B. Parker. Writings from the Ancient World Society of Biblical Literature 9, 81–180. N.p.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1997.
- . "Mythology and Myth-making in Ugaritic and Israelite Literatures." In *Ugarit and the Bible: Proceedings of the International Symposium on Ugarit and the Bible*. Edited by George J. Brooke, Adrian H.W. Curtis and John F. Healey, 293–341. Ugaritisch-Biblische Literatur 11. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1994.
- . "Recent Study of Israelite Religion in Light of the Ugaritic Texts." In *Ugarit at Seventy-Five*. Edited by K. Lawson Younger, Jr., 1–25. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007.
- Snijders, L. A. "נָהָר." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 15 volumes. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, 9:261–70. Translated by David E. Green. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1998.

- Soggin, J. A. “גִּזְלוֹת.” In *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. 3 volumes. Edited by Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, 2:672–80. Translated by Mark E. Biddle. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997.
- Stähli, H. P. “גִּזְלוֹת.” In *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. 3 volumes. Edited by Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, 1:285–87. Translated by Mark E. Biddle. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997.
- Tomasino, Anthony. “עוֹלָם.” In *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren, 3:345–51. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
- Venter, Pieter M. “Spatiality in Psalm 29.” In *Psalms and Liturgy*. Edited by Dirk J. Human and Cas J. A. Vos, 235–50. London: T. & T. Clark, 2004.
- Wakely, Robin. “גִּזְלוֹת.” In *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren, 1:824–27. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
- Walton, John H. “Ancient Near Eastern Background Studies.” In *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Edited by Kevin J. Vanhoozer, 40–45. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005.
- . “Cultural Background of the Old Testament.” In *Foundations for Biblical Interpretation*. Edited by David S. Dockery, Kenneth A. Mathews, and Robert B. Sloan, 255–73. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994.
- . “Principles for Productive Word Study.” In *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren, 1:161–71. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
- . “Ugaritic Poetry.” In *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*. Edited by Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt, 165–192. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Weber, Beat. “‘They Saw You, the Waters—They Trembled’ (Psalm 77:17B): The Function of Mytho-Poetic Language in the Context of Psalm 77.” In *Psalms and Mythology*. Edited by Dirk J. Human. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 462, 104–25. New York: T. & T. Clark, 2007.
- Weinfeld, Moshe. “Divine Intervention in War in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East.” In *History, Historiography and Interpretation: Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures*. Edited by H. Tadmor and M. Weinfeld, 121–47. 1983. Reprint, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1986.

- Wildberger, H. “יְהוָה.” In *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. 3 volumes. Edited by Ernst Jenni, and Claus Westermann, 1:134–57. Translated by Mark E. Biddle. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997.
- Wilson, Gerald H. “Understanding the Purposeful Arrangement of Psalms in the Psalter: Pitfalls and Promise.” In *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*. Edited by J. Clinton McCann. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplemental Series* 159, 42–51. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993.
- Wolff, Hans Walter. “The Hermeneutics of the Old Testament.” In *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*. Edited by Claus Westermann. Translated by James Luther Mays, 160–99. Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1973.
- Wyatt, Nick. “The Religion of Ugarit: An Overview.” In *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*. Edited by Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt, 529–85. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- . “The Religious Role of the King in Ugarit.” In *Ugarit at Seventy-Five*. Edited by K. Lawson Younger Jr., 41–74. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007.

Commentaries

- Alexander, Joseph Addison. *The Psalms Translated and Explained*. Classic Commentary Library. 1864. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975.
- Briggs, Charles Augustus, and Emilie Grace Briggs. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Psalms*. 2 volumes. International Critical Commentary. 1907. Reprint, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1960.
- Calvin, John. *Commentary on The Book of Psalms*. 5 volumes. Translated by James Anderson. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1963.
- Clifford, Richard J. *Psalms 73–150*. Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries. Edited by Patrick D. Miller. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003.
- Dahood, Mitchell. *Psalms I: 1–50*. Anchor Bible. Garden City: NY: Doubleday & Company, 1965.
- . *Psalms II: 51–100*. Anchor Bible. Garden City: NY: Doubleday & Company, 1968.
- Delitzsch, Franz. *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*. 3 volumes. Translated by Francis Bolton. *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*. Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1968.
- Eaton, J. H. *The Psalms: A Historical and Spiritual Commentary with an Introduction and New Translation*. London: T & T Clark, 2003.

- . *Psalms: Introduction and Commentary*. London: SCM Press Ltd., 1967.
- Feuer, Avrohom Chaim. *Tehillim: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources*. 2 volumes. Artscroll Tanach Series. Translated by Avrohom Chaim Feuer and Nosson Scherman. Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, 1985.
- Goldingay, John. *Psalms: Volume 2, Psalms 42–89*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.
- Hossfeld, Frank-Lothar, and Erich Zenger. *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51–100*. Translated by Linda M. Maloney. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005.
- Kidner, Derek. *Psalms 73–150: An Introduction and Commentary on Books I and II of the Psalms*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975.
- Kraus, Hans-Joachim. *Psalms 60–150*. Translated by Hilton C. Oswald. Continental Commentaries. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.
- Lane, Eric. *Psalms 90–150: The Lord Reigns*. Focus on the Bible. Geanies House, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2006.
- Lawson, Steven J. *Psalms 1–75*. Holman Old Testament Commentary. Edited by Max Anders. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003.
- . *Psalms 76–150*. Holman Old Testament Commentary. Edited by Max Anders. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006.
- Maclaren, Alexander. *The Psalms*. 3 volumes. Limited Classical Reprint Library. Reprint, Minneapolis: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1981.
- Matthews, Kenneth A. *Genesis 1–11:26*. New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996.
- Oesterley, W. O. E. *The Psalms: Translated with Text-Critical and Exegetical Notes*. 2 volumes. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1939.
- Perowne, J. J. Stewart. *The Book of Psalms*. 2 volumes. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1966.
- Schaefer, Konrad. *Psalms*. Berit Olam. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001.
- Spurgeon, C. H. *The Treasury of David*. 3 volumes. Reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.

- Terrien, Samuel. *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary*. Eerdmans Critical Commentary. Edited by David Noel Freedman. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2003.
- VanGemeren, Willem A. "Psalms." In *Expositor's Bible Commentary*. 12 volumes. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelin, 5:1–880. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.
- Walton, John H., Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- Wilcock, Michael. *The Message of Psalms 73–150: Songs for the People of God*. The Bible Speaks Today. Edited by J. A. Motyer. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.
- Wilson, Gerald H. *Psalms: Volume 1*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.