

## Notes on the Psaltar, #7

### Psalm Ninety-Five

**Vs. 1: O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!** The three exhortations can serve as a transition from the concluding words of Ps 94, that is, to one which celebrates God's love for his people. The "rock of *salvation*" or yeshah, another instance of "Jesus," has two objects: of *singing* (ranan, cf. Ps 17.11) and *joyful noise* (ruah). The latter can apply to a trumpet sound: "*Blow the trumpet in Zion*" [Jl 2.1].

**Vs. 2: Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!** Being in God's *presence* is qadam, *to be before*; note that the previous verse identified God as "rock of 'Jesus,'" tsur, implying a fortified place. Thus the psalmist exhorts people to "be before" this stronghold, not necessarily to enter it. Here is another use of ruah (cf. vs. 1) joined with *songs of praise* or zimrah (verbal root zamar, *to prune* as noted elsewhere).

**Vs. 3: For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods.** The adjective gadol (*great*) is applied twice: with respect to YHWH as God and king. Note the preposition hal, *on*, with respect to "all gods" which signifies a true superiority over all spiritual beings.

**Vs. 4: In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also.** This verse observes the two extreme points of the physical *earth*, 'erets: 1) *depths* or mechqar, the only instance of this word in the Bible; from the root chaqar, *to search out*. 2) mountain *heights* or tophaphoth, a word basically meaning swift course and weariness. Another meaning: "If the Almighty is your gold and your *precious silver*" [Job 22.25].

**Vs. 5: The sea is his, for he made it; for his hands formed the dry land.** Another pair of opposites which complement each other: 1) *sea* or yam which can symbolize the chaotic waters of Genesis and 2) *dry land* or yabash, "land" not being in the Hebrew text. Two references come to mind regarding God's saving help: "That the people of Israel may go on *dry ground* through the sea" [Ex 14.26] and "And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the *dry land*" [Jon 2.10].

**Vs. 6: O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!** After the last two verses describing God's as creator, it is only natural for the psalmist to bid his listeners to adore him:

- 1) *worship* or shachah; in addition to worship proper, this term can be used as a greeting between equals; it usually involves full prostration on the ground: "Abraham rose and *bowed* to the Hittites" [Gen 23.7].
- 2) *bow down* or karah, an action implying the bending of knees. "To me every knee shall *bow*, every tongue shall swear" [Is 45.23].
- 3) *kneel* or barak, the verbal root for the common word *to bless* and from which is derived *knee*.

**Vs. 7: For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. O that today you would hearken to his voice!** A verse suggestive of Jesus Christ as Good Shepherd. *Pasture* or marhyth which can also mean *flock*: "Therefore they have not prospered, and all their *flock* is scattered" [Jer 10.21]. The people are also identified as God's *sheep*, ts'on, more specifically of his hand which connotes direct guidance or shepherding.

God's *voice* (qol) is that of the Good Shepherd calling his flock. "When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his *voice*" [Jn 10.4]. Note that the hearing of this Shepherd is *today*, a specific kairos or time.

**Vs. 8: Harden not your hearts as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness.** This verse and those to the end of the psalm make no distinction between the days of Israel in the Sinai desert after the Exodus from Egypt and the psalmist's present audience. Hence the need for mentioning *today* and *voice* in vs. 7. Also, vss. 8-11 have God speaking, not the psalmist. Meribah (*contention*): Ex 17.1-7, when Moses struck the rock to

bring forth water; Massah (*proof*): Num 20.1-13, when Moses struck the rock for water; the Exodus text identifies both places as one and the same. Note the reference to Moses' rod in both texts which he used to bring forth the water.

**Vs. 9: When you fathers tested me and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.** Two challenges to God from the fathers as well as present audience:

- 1) *test* (nasah): "That I may *prove* them, whether they will walk in my law or not" [Ex 16.4].
- 2) *prove* (bachan): "You who *try* the mind and hearts, righteous God" [Ps 7.9].

Both challenges were done despite visual witness of divine miracles.

**Vs. 10: For forty years I loathed that generation and said, "They are a people who err in heart, and they do not regard my ways."** Again, "that generation" can be synonymous with the present audience. *Loathe* or *qut* implies a *cutting off*: "Whose hope is *cut off*" [Job 8.14]. Note the preposition b- (*in*) attached to "generation" to show full disgust.

*To err* or *tahah* implies deviation and in the following, horror: "My mind *reels*, horror has appalled me" [Is 21.4]. It is especially poignant when associated with the human *heart*, *lev*. The reason for the people's error is that they do not *know* (*yadah*) divine *ways* (*derek*, singular).

**Vs. 11: Therefore I swore in my anger that they should not enter my rest.** The reason for God's anger is the people's erring and failure to regard in the last verse. Because of this, he wishes to prevent them from entering his *rest* or *menuchah*: "He leads me beside waters of *rest*" [Ps 23.2]. More specifically related to vs. 11: "For you have not as yet come to the *rest* and to the inheritance which the Lord your God gives you" [Dt 12.9].

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### Psalm Ninety-Six

**Vs. 1: O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!** The "new" implies that an "old" song had been sung. Perhaps this exclamation comes in light of the previous psalm's verses where God complains of his dealings with Israel. The first exhortation to sing may thus be addressed to Israel; the second is clearly directed to "all the *earth*," 'erets.

**Vs. 2: Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.** This psalm contains three exhortations with regard to different aspects of God:

- 1) Vs. two has the third exclamation to *sing*, *shyr* being very common in the Psalter as to be expected.
- 2) *Bless* or *barak* with regard to the Lord's name, YHWH; keep in mind that such a name was revealed to Moses as "I am who am," Ex 3.14.
- 3) *Salvation* or *yeshuah* ("Jesus") which is to be announced daily, i.e., *kairos* implied. The verb *basar* for *to proclaim*, from which is derived the noun *flesh*. It is interesting to see this word used in conjunction with "Jesus," as if *yeshuah* were incarnated. "And the Word became *flesh* and dwelt among us" [Jn 1.14].

**Vs. 3: Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!** *Declare* may be seen as an extension of that *basar* of vs. 2; the verb is *saphar* which as noted often in the Psalter is associated with writing something down. Here *saphar* is related to divine *kavod*, more specifically, as presenting itself to *nations* or *goyim*. "Go therefore and make disciples of all *nations*" [Mt 28.19].

The second summons to *saphar* is with regard to *people*, *ham* (singular), which is more generic than *goyim*. Here *saphar* concerns deeds or what could be called signs God performed for Israel and which are extended to peoples.

**Vs. 4: For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.** This verse posits a correlation between *praise* (halal) in an intense manner and *fear* (yare') with respect to gods. Vs. 4 may be seen in conjunction with the previous verse, that is, the nations and peoples, who had such gods.

**Vs. 5: For all the gods of the peoples are idols; but the Lord made the heavens.** A clear identity of such *gods* belonging to the ham as 'elyl (singular). This word is similar in sound to *gods* ('elohey); it can suggest vanity: "Worthless physicians are you all" [Job 13.4]. In contrast to such emptiness is YHWH, maker of heavens, traditional dwelling place of the gods.

**Vs. 6: Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.** The previous verse had the Lord above or hal (also, *on*) the gods; here we have *honor* (hod) and *majesty* (hadar) *before* him. "Splendor and *majesty* you bestow upon him"[Ps 21.5], referring to the king of Israel; thus hadar is something transferable to the human realm.

In addition to the "before-ness" of honor and majesty, vs. 6 posits divine *strength* (hoz) and *beauty* (tiph'ereh) in the *sanctuary* (miqdash; from qadash, *to be holy*). For a reference to tiph'ereh as *glory*: "All the flocks of Kedar...the rams of Nebaioth...shall come up with acceptance on my altar, and I will glorify the house of my *glory*" [Is 60.7].

**Vs. 7: Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength!** Three references (the third in vs. 8) to *ascribe*, yahav, with its parallel in Ps 29.102: "*Ascribe* to the Lord, heavenly beings, *ascribe* to the Lord glory and strength. *Ascribe* to the Lord the glory of his name." In the verse at hand this command is applied to "*families* of the peoples," mishpachah (singular) which also means tribes. "Afterwards the *families* of the Canaanites spread abroad" [Gen 10.18]. Such a social unit is more compact and personal in comparison with the larger entity of people.

The object of such ascribing is kavod and hoz, the latter being in the temple as noted in vs. 6.

**Vs. 8: Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts!** The third use of yahav, *ascribe*, with reference to divine *glory* (kavod); in vs. 7 it was with regard to YHWH proper and here with regard to his *name*, shem. The offering may be those flocks of Kedar and rams of Nebaioth, Is 60.7 in vs. 6 above. For another reference to *courts* (chatser, singular): "For a day in your *courts* is better than a thousand elsewhere" [Ps 84.10].

**Vs. 9: Worship the Lord in holy array; tremble before him, all the earth!** Shachah or *to worship* as in Ps 95.6, here in "holy *array*," hadarah, not especially priestly vestments. The alternate meaning is ornament: "In a multitude of people is the *glory* of a king" [Prov 14.28]. While such veneration is in progress during a liturgical ceremony, the earth is *trembling* before God, chul, which connotes a twisting motion. "They will be in anguish like a woman in *travail*" [Is 13.8]. The same verb also suggest prosperity: "His ways *prosper* at all times" [Ps 10.5].

**Vs. 10: Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns! Yes, the world is established, it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity."** Those whom the psalmist bids to speak with respect to *nations* or goym may be taken as Israelites sent to be messengers of their religion; can also apply to Christ's commission to his disciples. The proclamation has three parts:

- 1) YHWH reigns; his kingship is not limited to Israel.
- 2) The *world* or tevel (cf. Ps 93.1), better, its inhabited regions are *established*, kun, already fixed or prepared to receive Israel's messengers.
- 3) Divine judgement lies in the future with regard to *peoples* (ham, singular).

**Vs. 11: Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar and all that fills it.** This and the next verse form a unit expressive of "The Lord reigns!":

- 1) heavens (where the gods of vs. 5 traditionally live); their *gladness* or shamach can represent a disavowal of their authority.
- 2) earth *rejoicing* or *gyl*, also expressive of gods who dwelt in sacred places. This verb suggests a round dance. "My heart will *rejoice* in your salvation" [Ps 13.5].
- 3) sea *roar* and its contents or those gods who may dwell in it. Raham connotes thunder: "The Lord also *thundered* in the heavens" [Ps 18.13].

**Vs. 12: Let the field exult and everything in it! Then shall all the trees of the wood sing for joy.** Both field and wood can represent the theme of disavowing pagan gods in favor of YHWH. The former is associated with the verb *halaz* evocative of exultation as at a victory: "With *exultation* I will divide up Shechem" [Ps 60.6]. The latter is joined with the verb *ranan* which connotes shouting. "May we *shout for joy* over your victory" [Ps 20.5]. *Yahar* for *wood* signifies the wilderness: "Behold, I will allure her and bring her into the *wilderness* and speak tenderly to her" [Hos 2.14]. Note the "then" which signifies that the field and its contents must first rejoice, after which only can the trees sing for joy.

**Vs. 13: Before the Lord, for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth.** Those created elements mentioned in the last few verses are joyful for the expected divine *judgment*, *shaphat*, with regards to the (physical) *earth* or 'erets, a term which also can apply to the nation of Israel.

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### Psalm Ninety-Seven

**Vs. 1: The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!** Cf. Ps 96.10 for "The *Lord* reigns." As a result of this divine kingship the physical *earth* ('erets) *rejoices* (*gyl*, cf. Ps 96.11), a verse reminiscent of Bar 3.34: "The stars shone in their watches and were glad." Also the *coastlands* or 'y (singular) *samach*, *are glad*; they can be symbolic of distant countries as well as the Mediterranean coast. "In that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant which is left of his people...from Hamath and from the *coastlands* of the sea" [Is 11.11].

**Vs. 2: Clouds and thick darkness are round about him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.** A verse describing divine transcendence in terms of *clouds* (*hanan*) and *thick darkness* (*haraphel*) and evocative of God's revelation at Mt. Sinai: "And the people stood afar off, while Moses drew near to the *thick darkness* where God was" [Ex 20.21]. Both forms of obscurity completely hide God from sight by reason of being *round* him, *savyv*.

Despite this transcendence, two qualities are discernable which have application in daily life: *righteousness* (*tsedeq*) and *justice* (*misphat*). These two pillars form a *foundation* or *mekon* which also means a sacred *place*: "You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the *place*, O Lord which you have for your abode" [Ex 15.17]. In the verse at hand, the two qualities just mentioned are directly related to God's throne and hence to God himself.

**Vs. 3: Fire goes before him and burns up his adversaries round about.** Perhaps such fire could be manifested in terms of that righteousness and justice of vs. 2. While it is beneficial to those who recognize God, such fire *burns* his adversaries, *lahat*: "Unto you, O Lord, I cry. For fire has *devoured* the pastures of the wilderness" [Jl 1.19]. Note the preposition *savyv* used here in a context different from the clouds and thick darkness *around* God, that is to say, with regard to his enemies.

**Vs. 4: His lightnings lighten the world; the earth sees and trembles.** *Baraq* (singular) for *lightening* is suggestive of Ezekiel's vision of the divine chariot: "In the midst of the living creatures there was something that looked like burning coals of fire...and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth *lightening*" [Ezk 1.13]. Their purpose is not so much to illumine the physical *world* ('erets) but the inhabited *world* (*tevel*). *Chyl* for *to tremble* also suggests making firm; here it is a result from seeing, of grasping the significance of such lightnings: "His ways *prosper* at all time" [Ps 10.5]; cf. Ps 96.9.

**Vs. 5: The mountains melt like wax before the Lord, before the Lord of all the earth.** For the ancients mountains were considered eternal or at least existing from the moment of creation, so for them to *melt* (masas) before God is a sign of his supremacy. “What man is there that is fearful and *faint hearted*” [Dt 20.8]? Note that the verse at hand speaks of such mountains *before* (milpeny) the Lord and before him as Lord of the entire *earth*, ‘erets, another way of expressing divine supremacy.

**Vs. 6: The heavens proclaim his righteousness; and all the peoples behold his glory.** A verse which expresses sentiments similar to those found in Ps 8. Note the verb nagad (*to proclaim*) from which is derived the preposition neged (*before*); cf. Ps 92.2: “To *declare* your steadfast love in the morning.” Thus the proper domain of God (heavens) “put before” his *righteousness* or tsedeq. Such tsedeq is allied with God’s *glory* or kavod which is visible not just to Israel but to “all peoples,” and it consists in part of this tsedeq.

**Vs. 7: All worshipers of images are put to shame who make their boast in worthless idols; all gods bow down before him.** The verb havad more properly refers to those who *serve* such graven *images*, pesel (singular is used here) whose verbal root implies something that has been hewn from either stone or wood. “He makes a *graven image* and falls down before it” [Is 44.15]. Such pesel are also associated with “worthless *idols*,” the adjective is not in the Hebrew text, ‘elyl (singular) as in Ps 96.5. The *gods* or ‘elohym are more or less the same as those idols; cf. Ps 95.3: “A great King above all *gods*.” Note that gods “worship *before* him,” the preposition l- being used, in-the-direction-towards.

**Vs. 8: Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice because of your judgments, O God.** The exact nature of *hearing* (shamah) is undetermined in Ps 97 but cf. Dt 6.4: “*Hear*, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.” As a direct result of this hearing is *gladness*, samach. “And you shall *rejoice* before the Lord your God seven days” [Lev 23.40]. The daughters (reminiscent of those female companions who accompany the bride in the Song of Songs) may be seen as a chorus within Zion, more specifically, the temple area. They too *rejoice* or gyl which as noted several times, can refer to dancing in a circle. The judgments which give rise to this rejoicing may be directed against the idols of the previous verse.

**Vs. 9: For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods.** Helyon for *most high* is used as a proper name for God as in Ps 87.5, whereas here it is descriptive of his relationship with regards to *earth* (‘erets). The same theme is seen with respect to the multiple gods; note the verb halah with the preposition hal (*over*), as though this double hal were to stress God’s transcendence.

**Vs. 10: The Lord loves those who hate evil; he preserves the lives of his saints; he delivers them from the hand of the wicked.** The first part of this verse reads in Hebrew, “You who *love* (‘ahav) the Lord *hate* (sana’) evil,” the second being a natural consequence of the first. *Lives* equals nephesh (singular), the essence of such persons who practice chesed; God *delivers* (natsal) them. Although these saints may be in wicked hands, nevertheless their nephesh is preserved while in that situation.

**Vs. 11: Light dawns for the righteous and joy for the upright of heart.** The Hebrew reads for “dawns” *sown*, zarah, for the tsadyq who is more or less equivalent as the person practicing chesed. “*Sow* for yourselves according to righteousness” [Hos 10.12]. This sowing takes place in one’s nephesh, even if it happens to be in the “hand of the wicked” of vs. 10. Similarly, simchah or *joy* is sown for the *upright*, yashar being the verbal root.

**Vs. 12: Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!** Another use of the verb samach as in vs. 8 and the noun in vs. 11. Ps 97 concludes with this two-fold exhortation, the second element being hadah, *give thanks* not to the Lord but more specifically to his name which is YHWH. Here zeker for *name* refers more to God’s memory but a memory which is active in the present and not lying in the past.

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### Psalm Ninety-Eight

**Vs. 1: O sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory.** The “new song” was mentioned in Ps 96.1; here it celebrates niphelaoth, *marvelous things*, reminiscent of both Moses’ and Miriam’s song immediately after the crossing of the Red Sea, Ex 15. Vs. 1 makes a distinction between the divine right hand and holy arm, yet both effect *victory*, yashah, or “Jesus.” “Sit at my *right hand* until I make your enemies your footstool” [Ps 110.1].

**Vs. 2: The Lord has made known his victory, he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.** Another mention of *victory*, this time the noun yeshuhah or “Jesus.” The act of making it *known* (yadah) implies revelation of Jesus Christ to Israel. This is distinguished from divine *vindication* tshedqah or righteousness to the nations or goym. “A light for *revelation* to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel” [Lk 2.32]. Such *revealing* (galah) involves an uncovering, a making-known of what had already been present.

**Vs. 3: He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.** A verse evocative of Simeon’s blessing quoted in vs. 2 as well as Mary’s song or Magnificat, Lk 1.46-56. All three extol God’s chesed and ‘emunath, more specifically, the fact that he had *remembered* them, zakar, which as noted often suggests propagation of past generations into the future. Note that chesed and ‘emunath apply to Israel; the “ends of the earth” have witnessed God’s *victory* or yeshuhah, another instance of “Jesus,” that is, as appearing for them through the medium of Israel.

**Vs. 4: Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!** The *noise* comes from the entire *earth* (‘erets), ruah, as in Ps 95.1. In the Hebrew text the other three exhortations consist in patsach (*break*), ranan and zamar; for a reference to the first, cf. Is 14.7: “The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they *break forth* into singing.” They flow for the initial ruah, another form of this verb meaning to suffer evil. “He who walks with wise men becomes wise, but the companion of fools will *suffer harm*” [Prov 13.20].

**Vs. 5: Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody!** *Lyre* or kinor is mentioned twice in reference to praise; also added is “sound of *melody*,” zamar; cf. the verbal root, often noted, as *to prune*; it is as though one “pruned” to God with such melody.

**Vs. 6: With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord!** *Trumpet* or chatsotser (singular) differs from the shophar which resembles a horn and is more straight in its form. “...the priests should blow the *trumpets* before the ark of God” [1 Ch 15.24]. Shophar is also mentioned; both are in conjunction with the verb ruah as in vs. 4.

**Vs. 7: Let the sea roar and all that fills it; the world and those who dwell in it!** The *roaring* sound or raham connotes thunder (cf. Ps 96.11); it applies not only to the sea but its contents as well as the tevel or inhabited *world* and its inhabitants. I.e., they all engage in this “thunderous” sound of joy which is united with the trumpets and horn of vs. 6. Perhaps mention of sea connotes the primeval waters of Genesis.

**Vs. 8: Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity.** Here divine *judgment* (shaphat) is a joyous event through the eyes of creation but not necessarily for humans. The *floods* or nahar (singular) is a generic word applicable also to a stream; cf. Ps 93.3: “The *floods* have lifted up, O Lord, the *floods* have lifted up their voice, the *floods* lift up their roaring.” The hills engaged in *singing*, ranan. “Hear a just cause, O Lord; attend to my *cry*” [Ps 17.1]!

The second sentence shifts from the physical ‘erets to the inhabited tevel with regard to shaphat: tshedeq and meysharym, the second implying straightness.

## Psalm Ninety-Nine

**Vs. 1: The Lord reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!**

The same opening words as Ps 97.1, only here with reference to peoples *trembling*, *ragaz*, a verb which implies anger: "Because our fathers had *angered* the God of heaven, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar" [Ezr 5.12]. Here the wish for peoples to act this way appears irrelevant, that is, while God reigns or acts as king.

The proper place for a king to reign is a throne; vs. 1 has the Lord of *cherubim*. "He rode on a *cherub* and flew" [Ps 18.10]. Again as with the first sentence of this verse, the earth can quake like the people who tremble while the Lord is sitting.

**Vs. 2: The Lord is great in Zion; he is exalted over all the peoples.** A distinction between YHWH being *great* (*gadol*) with reference to Zion, more specifically, the Jerusalem temple, and being *exalted* (*rav*) over peoples or the those who inhabit the *tevel* (cf. Ps 97.4). Note the use of two prepositions: *in* (b-) Zion and *over* (hal-) peoples; the former connotes intimacy whereas the latter does not.

**Vs. 3: Let them praise your great and terrible name! Holy is he!** Here God's *shem* is most likely the object of praise from both peoples and Zion, although the "them" is not specified. *Terrible* derived from the verbal root *yare'*, *to fear*. "Great the mighty and *terrible* Lord" [Dt 10.17]. The brief exclamation "*Holy* is he" (*qadosh*) shows that such fear and holiness are similar.

**Vs. 4: Mighty King, lover of justice, you have established equity; you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.** Another title to God as *king* (*melek*) as in vs. 1, here as one who *loves* ('*ahav*) justice. From such love flows *equity* *meysharym* as in Ps 98.8. While this quality may stand alone, the other two (justice and righteousness) are present *in* (b-) Jacob, that is, the nation of Israel as a single person.

**Vs. 5: Extol the Lord our God; worship at his footstool! Holy is he!** *Extol* or *ramam* here refers to the Lord proper; *worship* or *shachah* is carried out at his *footstool*, *hadom* (followed by feet): "until I make your enemies your *footstool*" [Ps 110.1]. "He has not remembered his *footstool* in the day of his anger" [Lam 2.1]. This verse concludes with the same exclamation in vs. 3.

**Vs. 6: Moses and Aaron were among his priests, Samuel also was among those who called on his name. They cried to the Lord, and he answered them.** The first two are obviously noted for their intercessory roles in the Book of Exodus. "These are *Aaron* and *Moses* to whom the Lord said, 'Bring out the people of Israel from the land of Egypt by their hosts'" [Ex 6.26]. Samuel is noted not specifically as a priest here but as a person who *called* (*qara'*) on the divine *shem*. Note the reverse or the fact that God is calling Samuel as a boy, not once but three times, 1 Sam 3.

All three prophets *cried* to the Lord, the verb *qara'* again, to which he responded each in his own way.

**Vs. 7: He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud; they kept his testimonies and the statutes that he gave them.**

Reference here can be not just to Moses, Aaron and Samuel but to Israel as a nation. Moses was the one to whom God spoke in a "*pillar* of cloud," *hamud*. "The *pillar* of cloud by day and the *pillar* of fire by night did not depart from before the people" [Ex 13.22]. The *hamud* of fire does not seem to be the place from which God spoke as noted in the following: "And when all the people saw the *pillar* of cloud standing at the door of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship" [Ex 33.10].

The testimonies and statutes are aspects of the Torah given at Mt. Sinai; the latter (*choq*) is singular. Here Israel did not keep them as depicted in Exodus 32 when Aaron made a golden calf.

**Vs. 8: O Lord our God, you did answer them; you were a forgiving God to them but an avenger of their wrongdoings.** Note that the noun *cloud* (*hanan*) derives from the same verbal root *to answer*, that is, God answered them through a cloud. This verse may be situated in the context of Ex 32 noted in vs. 7. Despite

the idolatry, God was *forgiving* (*nasa'*) while at the same time an *avenger*, *naqam*. "I will *avenge* the blood of my servants, the prophets" [2 Kg 9.7].

**Vs. 9: Extol the Lord our God, and worship at his holy mountain; for the Lord our God is holy!** Cf. vs. 5 for the first part of this verse where it was in reference to the divine footstool; here extolling is relationship with God's "holy mountain" which is now Zion, the new Mount Sinai, especially in light of the previous verses and three prophets Moses, Aaron and Samuel. The preposition *at* (l-) intimates directions-towards-which, not necessarily physically on the mountain. This can be taken as being in line with the people before Mount Sinai; only Moses could ascend it.

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### Psalm One-Hundred

**Vs. 1: Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands!** The Hebrew text has the singular *land*, 'erets. The ruah coming from *lands* ('erets) may be been taken as all the physical (as opposed to human) action of nature in sea and on land.

**Vs. 2: Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!** Although this verse obviously is addressed to humans, it can intimate the lands of vs. 1. Two exhortations to joy: *gladness* (*samach*) and *singing* (*ranan*), the latter being associated with God's *presence*, *lipeny*. Both serving and coming thus form one gesture.

**Vs. 3: Know that the Lord is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.** Such *knowing* (*yadah*) may be traced to being made in God's image and likeness as depicted in Genesis. The second part of vs. 3 in Hebrew runs: "It is he who made us and not we ourselves." I.e., the tendency to idolatry is recognized here and is foregone by the third and final part of this verse: the "we" being Israel and as belonging to God's *pasture*, *marhyth*; this noun also means *flock*: "and all their flock is scattered" [Jer 10.21]. "And I have other sheep that are not of this *fold*; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice" [Jn 10.16].

**Vs. 4: Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him, bless his name!** Reference to the Jerusalem temple, possibly in a procession. First come *gates* (*shahar*, singular) followed by *courts* (*chatser*, singular). For the latter, cf. Ps 84.2: "My soul longs, yes, faints for the *courts* of the Lord." The act of *giving thanks* (*yadah*) and *blessing* (*barak*) presumably happens once inside the temple; former with respect to God proper and the latter with respect to his shem. "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep" [Jn 10.7].

**Vs. 5: For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever and his faithfulness to all generations.** Having gone through the gates and courts and now inside the Jerusalem temple, the procession can perceive God's *steadfast love* (*chesed*) and *faithfulness* (*'emunath*) not just to their own generation as well as those in the past but future generations. Note that *chesed* last *forever*, *leholam*; *'emunath* lasts "to all *generations*," *dor* (singular), the latter being indefinite temporal extension and not as durable, so to speak, as *leholam*.

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### Psalm One-Hundred and One

**Vs. 1: I will sing of loyalty and of justice; to you, O Lord, I will sing.** Two objects of the psalmist's song, *chesed* and *mishpat*; note how he distinguishes between them and the Lord. Also the former has *shyr* and the latter *zamar* (cf. Ps 81.2) joined to YHWH with the preposition *to*, l-.

**Vs. 2: I will give heed to the way that is blameless. Oh when will you come to me? I will walk with integrity of heart within my house.** The *derek* which is *blameless* or *tamym* (connotes perfection) can apply to Christ as "The *way*, truth and life" [Jn 14.6]. The psalmist applies the word *sakal* as in Ps 14.2: "The Lord looks down

from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who *act wisely*, who seek after God.” Since he is on this way which is not yet complete, he is looking down it for God who has not yet arrived, hence, the second part of vs. 2.

The third part of this verse has the psalmist walking with resolve as symbolized by the physical house; he walks “*within his house*,” qerev signifying the very center of this residence. Such walking is constituted by his heart’s *integrity*, tam, being from the same verbal root as tamym.

**Vs. 3: I will not set before my eyes anything that is base. I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cleave to me.** The verb *to set* (shyt) means a permanent fixing for present and future reference. Here it pertains to something *base* or belyahal which can mean *evil*: “Did one not come out from you who plotted *evil* against the Lord and counseled villainy” [Nah 1.11]? The verse at hand suggests worship of such a base object, perhaps an idol.

The verb *set* is the only occurrence of this word in the Bible and implies transgression. Note the play on words between this verb and *to hate*: setym/sane’ty. The psalmist is determined that such evildoing does not *cleave* to him, davaq. For an opposite sense of this word, cf. Ps 63.8: “My soul *clings to you*; your right hand upholds me.”

**Vs. 4: Perverseness of heart shall be far from me; I will know nothing of evil.** *Perverseness* derives from the verbal root haqash, *to twist*. “Although I was upright, God would *pervert* my cause” [Job 9.20]. Here the psalmist wishes distance (sur, *far*); this verb also means *to turn aside*. I.e., the thoughts emanating from one’s heart are seen as twisted. Note that the two verbs in vs. 4 are in the future, as though the psalmist were setting out and stating that he is prepared for future dangers.

**Vs. 5: Him who slanders his neighbor secretly I will destroy. The man of haughty looks and arrogant heart I will not endure.** The noun *tongue* derives from the verbal root lashan for *to slander*. “Do not *slander* a servant to his master lest he curse you, and you be held guilty” [Prov 30.10]. Vs. 5 puts this defamation in a worse light, that is, *secretly* (seter) as paralleled in Ps 64.2: “Hide me from the *secret plots* of the wicked.” To *destroy* these plots (tsamath) means reducing them to *silence*.

The second sentence speaks of *haughty looks*, literally, “high eyes,” and “*arrogant heart*” (rechav), from a verbal root meaning *to be wide*. Usually this verb has a positive connotation: “Your commandment is exceedingly *broad*” [Ps 119.96].

**Vs. 6: I will look with favor on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; he who walks in the way that is blameless shall minister to me.** The Hebrew text reads for “I will look” “my eyes shall be on,” that is, the *faithful* or those who practice ‘emunath. These people have a specific location (*land*, ‘erets), implying the nation of Israel as opposed to other nations. For such people to dwell with the psalmist suggests that he has already attained that ‘emunath in which they are invited to share. In addition to dwelling, there is movement in the moral sense, namely, *blameless* (tamym, with respect to way), a word connoting perfection as noted in vs. 2. The psalmist is stationary, whereas the person so walking will *minister* to him, sharath, a term associated with divine worship. “The tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may join you and *minister* to you while you and your sons with you are before the tent of the testimony” [Num 18.2].

**Vs. 7: No man who practices deceit shall dwell in my house; no man who utters lies shall continue in my presence.** The house may refer to the Jerusalem temple, as though the psalmist here (as well as in the previous and next verse) were in God’s place. The Hebrew has “in the *midst* (qerev) of my house,” its very center. *Deceit* or remyah: “They turn to Ba’al; they are like a *treacherous bow*” [Hos 7.16].

The psalmist’s presence or in Hebrew “before my eyes” can be taken in conjunction with the qerev just noted. Shaqar is the verbal root for *lie*. “Let the *lying lips* be dumb” [Ps 31.18].

**Vs. 8: Morning by morning I will destroy all the wicked in the land, cutting off all the evildoers from the city of**

**the Lord.** Boqer for *morning* is the time of daybreak when light begins to appear, the time of *destroying* the wicked, tsamath (cf. vs. 5). In addition to this group of people (the wicked), the psalmist *cuts off* (karath) evildoers. This is the same verbal root for the cutting of a covenant: “On that day the Lord *made a covenant* with Abram” [Gen 15.18]. For a New Testament reference to the implied Jerusalem, cf. Rev 21.27: “But nothing unclean shall enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood.”

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### Psalm One-Hundred and Two

**Vs. 1: Hear my prayer, O Lord; let my cry come to you!** Two forms of petition: *prayer* (tephilah) and *cry* (shawah), the latter from a verbal root meaning *to be broad* (cf. Ps 91.9). The former is a direct association with divine hearing, whereas the latter is marked by a being before God.

**Vs. 2: Do not hide your face from me in the day of my distress! Incline your ear to me; answer me speedily in the day when I call!** Three petitions:

- 1) A play on words between “do not *hide*” (taster, from satar) and *distress* (tsar). The *day* or yom is a particular kairos which can have negative or positive connotations. For another use of *face* (peny), cf. Ex 33.20: “You cannot see my *face*; for man shall not see me and live.”
- 2) *Incline* or natah with reference to God’s ear. “You will *incline* your ear” [Ps 10.17].
- 3) *Answer* or hanah, which was noted numerous times, here with reference to another kairos.

From vs. 3 through vs. 11 the psalmist describes his lamentable situation which may be outlined as follows. In the psalm verses themselves, note the references to loneliness:

- 1) heart = smoke.
- 2) bones = furnace.
- 3) vs. 4: heart = smitten and withered.
- 4) forgets to eat bread.
- 5) vs. 5: bones cleave to flesh.
- 6) vs. 6: like a vulture.
- 7) like an owl.
- 8) vs. 7: like a lonely bird.
- 9) vs. 8: enemies taunt me.
- 10) names as a curse.
- 11) vs. 9: east ashes.
- 12) mingle tears with drink.
- 13) vs. 10: God’s wrath throws takes him up.
- 14) God’s wrath throws him away.
- 15) vs. 11: days = evening shadow.
- 16) wither = grass.

**Vs. 12: But you, O Lord, are enthroned forever; your name endures to all generations.** While the psalmist has detailed his plight, he recognizes God’s transcendence which assumes the form as being *enthroned*, yashav. He also recognizes a distinction between this kingly sovereignty and the divine *name* or shem which is associated with remembrance throughout generations. The verb *to endure* here is zakar which as noted on several occasions (cf. Ps 6.5) implies begetting or propagation into the future; the noun *male* is derived from it.

**Vs. 13: You will arise and have pity on Zion; it is the time to favor her; the appointed time has come.** The gesture of arising (cf. Ps 82.8) can apply to God as a judge, only here he does so to *pity* Zion (racham, noted several times earlier). “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have no *compassion* on the son of her womb” [Is 49.15]? The manifestation of a related divine inclination towards Zion (*pity* or chanan) has a kairos (the LXX word used here for heth). The psalmist reenforces this by mentioning mohed (the LXX adds

kairos again) which can also mean an assembly. “The place of the *assemblage* of all living” [Job 30.23].

**Vs. 14: For your servants hold her stones dear and have pity on her dust.** Ratsah is the verb for *to hold dear* and implies delight with regard to Zion’s physical nature (stones). “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be *acceptable*” [Ps 19.14]. The verb chanan (*to pity*) was used in the previous verse and here is related to dust, symbol of the lowest or most common feature of Zion. Consider the New Jerusalem, Rev 21.15-27 and apply vs. 14 to this passage.

**Vs. 15: The nations will fear the name of the Lord and all the kings of the earth your glory.** Here the psalmist shifts attention from Israel to *nations* or goym. Note that the action of *fear* (yare’) takes place in the future with respect to the divine shem. In distinction to the nations are earth’s kings who manifest this fear to God’s kavod. Glory is proper to earthly kings and for them to fear God’s is a sign that they recognize his kingship.

**Vs. 16: For the Lord will build up Zion, he will appear in his glory.** This and the next verse are the proper reasons for the nations and earth’s kings to fear God as noted in vs. 15. Implied is that Zion has been wasted in battle and vs. 16 is a promise lying in the future. In addition to reconstructing the city, God will appear in his kavod which the earth’s kings of vs. 15 fear.

**Vs. 17: He will regard the prayer of the destitute and will not despise their supplication.** Perhaps this twofold concern for the *destitute* (harhar) is an action of divine kavod already mentioned. This noun derives from the verbal root harar, *to be naked* or *exposed*. “The broad wall of Babylon shall be *leveled* to the ground” [Jer 51.58]. The action in vs. 17 is panah, more fundamentally, *to turn*. The common word for *prayer* is used twice as well as for *supplication*, tephilah.

**Vs. 18: Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet unborn may praise the Lord.** A verse which serves as an introduction to the next one, here with respect to a generation which has not yet come into existence. The most proximate (future) generation is intimated as opposed to an indefinite series of generations. Their task is to *praise* (halal) God. The verb katav (*to write*) suggests not simply a writing in a scroll but etched on a monument and placed in a public place.

**Vs. 19: That he looked down from his holy height, from heaven the Lord looked at the earth.** “Holy height” is the place from which God *looked down*, shaqaph, a verb suggesting the looking out from a window. “Michal the daughter of Saul *looked out* of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord” [2 Sam 6.16]. Such merom (*height*) is distinguished from *heaven* (shamaym) from where the Lord *looked* (navat) on the ‘erets, this verb conveying the idea of beholding. “*Look toward* heaven and number the stars if you are able to number them” [Gen 15.5].

**Vs. 20: To hear the groans of the prisoners, to set free those who were doomed to die.** Here are the two objects of the verbs shaqaph and navat, a verse reminiscent of Ex 3.7: “I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters.” While referring more properly to Zion’s destitution, this verse brings to mind divine intervention in Egypt as a pattern for salvation.

**Vs. 21: That men may declare in Zion the name of the Lord and in Jerusalem his praise.** The two types of afflicted persons may be noted here. Saphar: *to declare* but more properly means writing down something. Vs. 21 supposes that saphar will be done in a rebuilt Zion and Jerusalem with regards to the divine shem and tephilah. Perhaps intimated is that saphar assumes the form of a monument with reference to the Exodus as noted in the previous verse or Israel’s defining moment of salvation.

**Vs. 22: When peoples gather together and kingdoms to worship the Lord.** Reference is to the Jerusalem temple. *Peoples* (ham, singular, which may include the goym) *gather* or qavats, a verb implying the taking hold of one’s hand. “For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will *gather* you” [Is 54.7]. In addition to the qavats of peoples, vs. 22 has kingdoms for the purpose of worshiping God; the Hebrew text has “to *serve*,” havad.

**Vs. 23: He has broken my strength in mid-course; he has shortened my days.** The psalmist shifts attention from Jerusalem's condition to his own, perhaps because he was affected by the former's destruction and promised restoration. Hanah for *to break* has been noted often and suggests affliction. The Hebrew reads "in the way," derek. The second affliction from God is the *shortening* of his days, qatsar, which also means *to reap*. "They have sown wheat and have reaped thorns" [Jer 12.13]. While both instances of personal distress confront the psalmist, they do not necessarily imply physical or moral death but an impoverishment. As with so many sentiments in the Psalter, they are all attributed directly to a divine source.

**Vs. 24: "O my God," I say, "take me not hence in the midst of my days, you whose years endure throughout all generations!"** Here the psalmist directly addresses God and contrasts two modes of time: his *days* which is equivalent to chronos, temporal extension, and God's *years* which are equivalent to a kairos event. Cf. the Fourth Servant Song, for example, Is 53.8: "By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?" On the other hand, the divine years—which extend into the chronos-logical realm—are "in (b-) generation of generations."

Note that the verb *to take away* (halah) can also mean *to ascend*; perhaps the psalmist is alluding to the ascension of Elijah: "And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" [2 Kg 2.11].

**Vs. 25: Of old you laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the work of your hands.** The first part of this verse in Hebrew is one word, yasad: "The Lord by wisdom *founded* the earth" [Prov 3.19]. In contrast to the 'erets, the psalmist speaks of the *heavens* (shamaym) being the work of God's hands, that is, they are more immediate with respect to divine creation. Cf. Gen 1.8: "And God called the firmament *Heaven*."

**Vs. 26: They will perish, but you endure; they will all wear out like a garment. You change them like raiment, and they pass away.** The first part of this verse contrasts the transitory nature of creation (the verb 'avad) and God's eternal nature (the verb hamad; compare this word with yasad of vs. 25). A *garment* or beged usually refers to an outer piece of clothing. "She caught him (Joseph) by the *garment*" [Gen 39.12]. In addition to this vs. 26 has *raiment* or levush, a general term for clothing; it can refer to creation: "And all things stand forth as in splendid *attire*" [Job 38.14]. This piece of clothing is *changed* (chalaph); note that this same verb is used for *pass away*.

**Vs. 27: But you are the same, and your years have no end.** The Hebrew reads "But you are he," i.e., you are the one with true being. In contrast, divine *years* (kairoi) lack an ending, the verb being tamam which also means to complete in the sense of having attained a goal. "And (Solomon) he overlaid the whole house with gold until all the house was *finished*" [1 Kg 6.22].

**Vs. 28: The children of your servants shall dwell secure; their posterity shall be established before you.** Implied is that the children will also be servants for God; they will *dwell secure* (shakan), a verb implying a lying down, and the following verse gives a specific place for this: "Who shall *dwell* on your holy hill" [Ps 15.1]? Posterity derives from the verbal root zakar, *to remember*. "What is man that you are *mindful* of him" [Ps 8.4]? This posterity-mindfulness is *established*, kun, "O let the evil of the wicked come to and end but *establish* the righteous" [Ps 7.9]. Kun thus has physical and moral implications.

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### Psalm One-Hundred and Three

**Vs. 1: Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name!** A distinction between two types of *blessings* (barak, the verb): the psalmist's nephesh and that which is *within* him, qerev, or the very center of his being which is directed towards the divine shem. The "all" can include nephesh and implies concentration of energy with regard to the act of blessing.

**Vs. 2: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.** Another mention of nephesh, this time in conjunction with the recollective faculty or memory; shakach or *forget* is the antithesis of zakar (*to remember*)

as noted in Ps 102.28. "But you who forsake the Lord, who *forget* my holy mountain" [Is 65.11]. In the verse at hand, shakach pertains to divine *benefits* or gemul (singular). For an alternate meaning: "Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the *recompense* of God" [Is 35.4].

Verses 3-5 contain the following reasons for why the psalmist blesses God:

- 1) vs. 3: *forgives* iniquity: salach: "For your name's sake, O Lord, *pardon* my guilt, for it is great" [Ps 25.11].
- 2) *heals* diseases, rapha': the verbal root for the proper name of (the angel) Raphael. "When I would *heal* Israel" [Hos 7.1].
- 3) vs. 4: *redeems* life (from Pit, cf. Ps 88.4): ga'al which connotes a buying back or returning to one's possession. "Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will *redeem* it, *redeem* it" [Rt 4.4].
- 4) *crowns* with chesed and rachamym (from racham, same verbal root as *bowls*), hatar. "You set a *crown* of fine gold upon his head" [Ps 21.3].
- 5) vs. 5: *satisfies* with good, savah. "In your presence there is *fullness* of joy" [Ps 16.11].
- 6) youth *renewed* (chadash) as eagle's: cf. Is 40.31, "But they who wait for the Lord shall *renew* their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles."

Verses 6-14 speaks of what the Lord does for his people:

- 1) vs. 6: works *vindication*, tsedaqah (plural form used here).
- 2) works *justice*, mishpatym (plural form used here).
- 3) vs. 7: makes known *ways* to Moses, derek; referring to the revelation on Mt. Sinai. Derek as way can also allude to the passage through the Red Sea.
- 4) acts to Israel as accomplished through Moses.
- 5) vs. 8: the Lord is *merciful* (rachum), *gracious* (chanun), *slow* to anger ('erek), abounding in chesed.
- 6) vs. 9: Lord will not always *chide*, ryv; this verb also means *to contend*. "Go not forth hastily to *contend*" [Prov 25.8].
- 7) the Lord will not *keep* anger forever, natar, which also means *to guard*.
- 8) vs. 10: Lord does not deal with us according to our *sins*, chata' being the verbal root.
- 9) the Lord does not *requite* according to our iniquities, gamal. "I will sing to the Lord because he has dealt *bountifully* with me" [Ps 13.6].
- 10) vs. 11: divine chesed is compared with height of heavens over the earth. Note play on words between *high* (gavah) and *great* (gavar, with respect to chesed). The latter adjective derives from a verbal root meaning *to be strong, mighty*.
- 11) vs. 12: the Lord *removes* transgressions, rachaq; this verb is related here to the distance between east and west, sunrise and sunset.
- 12) vs. 13: the Lord *pities* those who fear him, racham being the verb as in vs. 8 above.
- 13) vs. 14: the Lord knows our *frame*, yetser; this word can also mean an idol. "What profit is an *idol* when its maker has shaped it" [Hab 2.18]?
- 14) the Lord remembers we are *dust*, haphar, as opposed to 'adam or *earth* from which the first man was made; cf. Ps 30.9. Note that God remembers this fact, zakar, "propagates" it.

**Vs. 15: As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field.** 'Enush for *man*, a poetic term for the human race. "What is *man* that you make so much of him" [Job 7.17]? Here his days (chronological time as opposed to kairos time) are compared to *grass*, chatsyr; from a verbal root which also means *to enclose*. "We remember the fish we ate in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the *leeks*, the onions and the garlic" [Num 11.5].

*Flower* or tsyts as in Is 28.4: "And the fading *flower* of its glorious beauty." "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven" [Mt 6.30]. Note that in the verse at hand the verb *to flourish* is the source for *flower*.

**Vs. 16: For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.** Ruach is used for *wind*, the same word for Spirit. Contrast the destructive nature of this verse with the creative Spirit of creation: "And

the *Spirit* of God was moving over the face of the waters” [Gen 1.2]. The verb nachar is used for *to know*; an alternate meaning is *to estrange*: “Ask now those who go by the way, and you will not be *ignorant* of their signs” [Job 21.29].

**Vs. 17: But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear him and his righteousness to children’s children.** Chesed: used in conjunction with halom which signifies eternity with regard to fear of God. Tsedaqah: used in conjunction with begetting of future generations, an indefinite passage of time which mirrors divine halom.

**Vs. 18: To those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.** A continuation of the previous verse, most likely tied in with the indefinite passage of time regarding children, symbolic of human propagation. It applies to two categories of people: 1) those who keep the divine beryth or *covenant* and 2) those who *remember* (zakar) divine *commandments*, pequdah; from paqad which has various meanings but generally refers to anything done favorably towards someone. Note that the sense of propagation concerning zakar as noted several times earlier is a form of halom; the limited nature of human begetting can thus mirror divine eternity.

**Vs. 19: The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.** The situation of God’s *throne* (kise’) in heaven obviously signifies his sovereign lordship. “You have sat on the *throne* giving righteous judgment” [Ps 9.4]. Distinct yet connected with this kise’ is God’s kingdom *over* (hal-) all, this preposition also meaning *on*, as though his kingdom were a physical weight.

Verses 20-22 has the following commands to *bless* (barak) the Lord:

- 1) vs. 20: angels.
- 2) *mighty ones* (gever, singular; refers to a warrior) as related to God’s *word* (dever).
- 3) vs. 21: *hosts* or tsava’ (singular).
- 4) *ministers* (mahseh), not necessarily priests but can include them as well as other attendants at liturgical services. They are concerned with fulfilling God’s *will*, retson, an alternate meaning being *delight*. “In a time of *favor* I have answered you” [Is 49.8].
- 5) vs. 22: God’s *works*, from the same verbal root (hasah) as ministers, vs. 5. Such works are not limited to one place but in those of God’s domain or in the Hebrew text, “places of his rule.”
- 6) the psalmist’s own *soul* or nephesh.

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### Psalm One-Hundred and Four

**Vs. 1: Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord, my God, you are very great! You are clothed with honor and majesty.** Here the psalmist’s nephesh does the *blessing* (barak) as opposed to himself, as it were. He uses two titles, the divine name proper (YHWH) and *God* (‘elohym). *Very* or me’od can also mean *excessive*. The two pieces of divine clothing (verb, lavash; cf. levush, Ps 102.26) are hod and hadar, which are similar in sound. The latter implies an ornament. “Array yourself with glory and *beauty*” [Job 40.10].

After the introductory exhortation to bless the Lord, the psalm recounts a number of instances where God shows his care for the created realm which may be outlined as follows:

- 1) vs. 2: God *covers* himself (hatah): a verb which also connotes rolling. “He (Nebuchadnezzar) will *wrap* himself in the land of Egypt as a shepherd *wraps* himself in a cloak” [Jer 43.12]. Compare this wrapping in light with God’s manifestation in darkness to Moses: “I am coming to you in a thick cloud” [Ex 19.9].
- 2) Stretches out heavens like a *tent*: yeryhah, which also means a *veil*; from the verbal root yarah, *to shake* (as a tent in the wind). “You shall make the tabernacle with ten *curtains* of fine twined linen and blue and purple and scarlet stuff” [Ex 26.1].
- 3) vs. 3: *Laid beams* of chambers on waters: qarah, an alternate meaning is *to meet*, perhaps alluding to the

fact that beams “meet” each other to form a structure. *Chambers* or *halyah* (singular) refers to one located in the upper part of a building. “And he (Elijah) took him from her bosom and carried him up into the *upper chamber*” [1 Kg 17.19]. In the verse at hand, note the location of these chambers, “*in (b-) the waters,*” that is, the waters surrounding creation.

4) God makes the following his messengers: winds, fire and flame; perhaps alluding to three forms of divine manifestation throughout the Bible.

5) vs. 5: Set earth on *foundations*: *makon* (singular); it can also mean a *place* or better, a place where God dwells. “The *place*, O Lord, which you have made for your abode” [Ex 15.17].

6) This place is not *shaken*, *mut*, alluding to an earthquake. “Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be *moved*” [Ps 16.8].

7) vs. 6: Cover earth with the *deep*: *tehom*, the word used to describe the earth before creation: “And darkness was upon the face of the *deep*” [Gen 1.2]. Note use of *garment* (*levush*) here with respect to *tehom* as used in Ps 102.26.

8) Waters stood *above* mountains, *hal* being the preposition in the sense of being *upon*. Mountains are the highest reaches of land extending to the heavens yet such waters which are associated with *tehom* are above them as well as below the earth.

9) vs. 7: Waters fled at God’s *rebuke* (*geharah*), a verb usually associated with one’s enemies. “But he will *rebuke* them (enemies) and they will flee far away” [Is 17.13].

10) Waters fled at *sound* of God’s thunder: *qol* or *sound* which connotes a voice and thus a personal element. The verb *chaphaz* for *to fled* suggests a leaping up (cf. Ps 48.5).

11) vs. 8: Mountains rose and valleys sank, actions proper to their natures. Note that both opposites have a single *place*, *maqom*, appointed by God.

12) vs. 9: God established a *bound* (*gevul*) so waters will not cover the earth. This noun can also refer to the land within such limits. “And the locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole *country* of Egypt” [Ex 10.14]. The Hebrew text has “*return* again (*shuv*) suggesting that such waters in the form of *tehom* once covered the earth.

13) vs. 10: The Hebrew text reads, “He sends *springs* (*nachal*, singular; cf. Ps 18.4) into the valleys.”

14) vs. 11: Streams provide drink for: beasts of field, wild asses, (vs. 12) birds live by them.

15) vs. 13: God waters mountains from his *lofty abode* (*halyah*, as in vs. 3).

16) earth *satisfied* with fruit of God’s work, *savah* (cf. Ps 103.5).

17) vs. 14: Grass for cattle.

18) Plants for man to cultivate or in the Hebrew, “fodder for the animals that serve man.”

19) For the purpose of bringing *food* (*lechem*, more properly, *bread*) from the earth.

20) vs. 15: Wine to *gladden* (*samach*) man’s heart. “The precepts of the Lord are right, *rejoicing* the heart” [Ps 19.8].

21) Oil to make man’s face *shine* (*tsahal*). For an alternate meaning, cf. Is 12.6: “*Shout* and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion.”

22) Bread to *strengthen* man’s heart, *sahad*. “And give you *support* from Zion” [Ps 20.2].

23) vs. 16: Lord’s trees *watered* abundantly, *savah*, as in vs. 13.

24) Cedars of Lebanon planted by God.

25) vs. 17: Birds build nests in Lord’s trees and Lebanon cedars. The second half of this verse reads in Hebrew, “the *stork*,” *chasydah*; from the same verbal root as *chesed*. This bird has its nest in *fir trees*, *berush*. “The cedars in the garden of God could not rival it, nor the *fir trees* equal its boughs” [Ezk 31.8].

26) vs. 18: High mountains are for *wild goats*, *yahel* (singular). “Do you know when the mountain *goats* bring forth” [Job 39.1]?

27) Rocks are refuge for *badgers*, *shaphan* (singular). The only other reference to this animal, Prov 30.26: “*Badgers* are a people not mighty, yet they make their homes in the rocks.”

28) vs. 19: Moon to mark *seasons*, *mohed* (singular; cf. Ps 102.13). The LXX has *kairos*.

29) Sun *knows* (*yadah*) time for setting, a verb with a personal connotation.

30) vs. 20: God makes darkness or night.

31) At this time beasts of forest *creep forth*, *ramas*. “All the *creeping things* which *creep* upon the earth” [Gen 1.26].

32) vs. 21: Young lions roar for prey, *seeking* food from God; *baqash*: another example of personification.

33) vs. 22: At sunrise young lions get away and *lie* in their dens; the verb *ravash* refers to quadrupeds when

they gather their feet beneath them. “The wolf shall *lie down* with the lamb” [Is 11.6].

34) vs. 23: At sunrise man goes forth to work.

35) At sunrise man labors until evening.

Vs. 24 is an exclamation at the wonders just described where the psalmist notes their manifold nature and that they were made in God’s *wisdom*, chakmah. “Making your ear attentive to *wisdom* and inclining your heart to understanding” [Prov 2.2].

36) vs. 25: The sea *teems* with innumerable things; rama as in vs. 20.

37) vs. 26: On the sea ships sail.

38) In the sea lives Leviathan (cf. Ps 74.13) in which it *sports*; sachaq suggests *play*. “For the mountains yield food for him where all the wild beasts *play*” [Job 40.20].

39) vs. 27: All animals *look to* God; savar in the sense of examining something and waiting. “On the very day when the enemies of the Jews *hoped* to get the mastery over them” [Est 9.1].

40) All animals savar for food in *due season*, heth; LXX has eukaioros; the prefix eu- signifying something beneficial.

41) vs. 28: When God gives food to animals, they gather it up.

42) When God opens his hand, the animals are *filled*, savah (cf. vss. 13 & 16).

43) vs. 29: When God hides his face, animals are *dismayed*; the verb is bahal. “By your wrath we are *overwhelmed*” [Ps 90.7].

44) When God takes away animals’ *breath* (ruach) they die.

45) vs. 30: When God sends his *Spirit* (Ruach), animals are created.

46) God renews (through Spirit) face of the ground, i.e., its surface.

**Vs. 31: May the glory of the Lord endure forever, may the Lord rejoice in his works.** God’s kavod by its very nature is everlasting; perhaps the psalmist is referring to glory as it contacts creation as described in this psalm and can be perceived as not enduring due to creation’s limited nature. Samach as in Ps 21.6: “You make him glad with the *joy* of your presence.” The short but delightful expression of God taking delight is mirrored by Bar 3.34: “The stars shone in their watches and were glad; he called them and they said, ‘Here we are!’ They shone with gladness for him who made them.”

**Vs. 32: Who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke!** The relative pronoun “who” shows that this verse is connected with the same Lord who “rejoices in his works.” Thus the earth’s trembling and mountains’ smoking may be taken as a form of divine samach. The verb nagah (*touch*) can also refer to smiting anything. “And Joshua and all Israel made a pretense of being *beaten* before them” [Jos 8.15].

**Vs. 33: I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being.** This verse as well as the next may be read in conjunction with Bar 3.34 just cited. Here *singing* (shyr) and living, that is, in the physical sense, are as one. The psalmist distinguishes this in the second part of the verse where *signing* (zamar; cf. numerous other references, *to prune*) is a reality existing in the future. It seems to be dependent upon whether the psalmist will have *being* or hod; this word means *again, still*, and implies continuation.

**Vs. 34: May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord.** A close connection between the psalmist’s *meditation* (verbal root, syach) and his *rejoicing* (samach; cf. this term as related to God, vs. 31). Syach fundamentally means *to bring forth*. “Evening, morning and at noon I utter my *complaint* and moan, and he will hear my voice” [Ps 55.17]. For a negative sense, cf. 1 Kg 18.27: “Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is *musing* or he has gone aside.” In the verse at hand, the psalmist wishes his syach to be *pleasing*, harav, a verb which connotes a *pledge*. “Lay down a *pledge* for me with yourself” [Job 17.3].

**Vs. 35: Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more! Bless the Lord, O my soul! Praise the Lord!** The verb tamam (*to consume*) connotes the bringing to an end in the sense of being perfected as has been noted often. With regard to sinners, the psalmist wishes them consumed from the ‘erets; with regard to the wicked, he wishes them cease to exist, that is, be fully annihilated. In anticipation of this

event his nephesh both *blesses* (barak) and *praises* (halal) the Lord.

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### Psalm One-Hundred and Five

**Vs. 1: O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples!** In a sense, this verse sets the tone for the psalm, that is, by making *known* (yadah) God's deeds among the *nations*, ham (singular). The deeds commence in vs. 8 where God makes a covenant with Israel which has ramifications not just for them but for everyone. The making known of *deeds* (halylah, singular) takes place "in the peoples," b-. This noun derives from the verbal root halal with its alternate meanings of *to drink again, to glean, to be petulant*.

**Vs. 2: Sing to him, sing praises to him, tell of all his wonderful works!** Three commands: 1) shyr, 2) zamar, 3) syach. For the last, cf. Ps 104.34 above; in the verse at hand, syach is connected with God's *wonderful works*, one word in Hebrew, from the verbal root pala'. Such pala' are not necessarily marvels of creation but divinely wrought deeds such as the Exodus and miracles in the Sinai desert. Compare pala' with halylah in vs. 1.

**Vs. 3: Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice!** The verb halal is used for *glory* which also means *to praise* as well as *to be bright*. For a reference to the last meaning: "For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not *give their light*" [Is 13.10]. In the verse at hand, halal is used with reference to the divine shem as though the psalmist had bidden his listeners to "reflect" its brightness.

The second exhortation associates *seeking* (baqash) with *rejoicing* (samach). For an example of the former, cf. Ps 24.6: "Such is the generation of those who *seek* him." The object of baqash is YHWH who is distinct from his name; here the hearts do the seeking.

**Vs. 4: Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his presence continually!** Another use of *seek* which in this context is darash. "To see if there are any that act wisely, that *seek after* God" [Ps 14.2]. This verb connotes a treading as though constantly going back and forth to search for something. Note that darash is in reference to YHWH and his hoz which is distinct from him after the manner of shem above. The last exhortation also has *to seek* as baqash in a *continuous* manner, tamyd; from the verbal root tamam connoting perfection (cf. Ps 104.35).

**Vs. 5: Remember the wonderful works that he has done, his miracles and the judgments he uttered.** Zakar for *remember* with respect to three divine actions: 1) wonderful works as in Ps 105.2, 2) *miracles* (mopheth, singular) which are related to the first: "Ask a *sign* of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven" [Is 7.11]. , 3) *judgments* (misphat, singular). All three are "uttered" or in the Hebrew, "of his *mouth*."

**Vs. 6: O offspring of Abraham his servant, sons of Jacob, his chosen ones!** The term zerah is used for *offspring* which derives from the verbal root *to sow*. "They shall not labor in vain or bear children for sudden terror; for they shall be the *offspring* of the blessed of the Lord" [Is 65.23]. This zerah is used in conjunction with two patriarch's of Israel: 1) Abraham: "Then he said to him, 'So shall your *descendants* be'" [Gen 15.5]. 2) Jacob: "I will do you good and make your *descendants* as the sand of the sea which cannot be numbered" [Gen 32.12]. A reference to bachyr (*chosen one*): "And Israel my elect" [Is 45.4].

**Vs. 7: He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth.** Divine *judgments* (mishpat, singular) here take on a kind of personal reality as though they were inhabitants of the earth; not just the earth but "*all the earth*." Note the preposition *in* (b-), presence with-in the very *earth*, 'erets.

**Vs. 8: His is mindful of his covenant forever, of the word that he commanded for a thousand generations.** Divine *mindfulness* or zakar (the verb being used) has two objects, that is, objects of "begetting" (cf. verbal root): *covenant* (beryth) which was first made with Abraham (cf. next verse) and *word* (davar). In this instance, the latter may be said to spring from the former; "thousand generations" being symbolic of indefinite temporal extension which is distinct from the covenant = *forever* (leholam).

**Vs. 9: The covenant which he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac.** Note the importance in Ps 105 of this covenant; cf. vs. 6 for scriptural reference regarding Abraham. In later verses, Ps 105 speaks of Israel's travails in Egypt and the Exodus but does not extend to the beryth at Mt. Sinai made through the mediation of Moses. A sworn *promise* (shevuhah) is made with Isaac, the son of Jacob/Israel, and whom his father Abraham intended to sacrifice (cf. Gen 22). Shevuhah properly speaking is not made with Isaac but the experience of this sacrifice can. Note the reference to *descendants* in Gen 22.15+ as discussed above regarding zerah.

**Vs. 10: Which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant.** After mentioning the first two patriarchs of Abraham and Isaac, vs. 10 moves onto the latter's son, Jacob. He is bound to a divine *statute* or choq which connotes an appointed time, not unlike a kairos event. "That you would appoint me a *set time* and remember me" [Job 14.13]!

The second part of vs. 10 mentions Israel, that is, the same person or Jacob but with a changed name where there is a transition from a single man to a collective unity or nation. In this case, beryth is *everlasting* (holam); note lack of preposition l- (*to*) as used in vs. 8.

**Vs. 11: saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance."** A continuation of the last verse, actually vs. 8 where the full sentence begins. This "saying" refers to the beryth as in Gen 15.18.21, 17.1-8, 26.1-5, 28.10-15. Canaan is the land which Israel entered after the Exodus and after the wandering in the Sinai wilderness for forty years. *Portion* or chevel can also refer to a measuring line or anything given by lot. "Why have you given me but one lot and one *portion* as an inheritance" [Jos 17.14]?

Vss. 12 through 45 (the end of Ps 105) describes the events of Israel in Egypt and towards the end, the Exodus from that country. These verses may be outlined as follows:

vs. 12: few in number and sojourners.

vs. 13: wandering.

vs. 14: God prevented people from oppressing them. Compare with God's protection of Cain who was a wanderer (cf. Gen 4.12).

-God rebuked kings.

vs. 15: God ordered these kings not to touch his *anointed* ones (mashyach, a term applied to Jesus Christ) nor to harm his prophets.

vs. 16: God summoned a famine on Egypt.

vs. 17: God sent Joseph ahead of his people in Egypt.

vs. 18: Joseph was bound as a slave. Cf. LXX vivid rendering, "His soul passed into iron."

vs. 19: Joseph remained a slave until his words came to pass.

-The *words* (verbal root is 'amar) of Lord tested Joseph; the Hebrew reads, "until the *time* (heth)."

vs. 20: Pharaoh released Joseph from prison.

vs. 21: Pharaoh made Joseph lord of his house and ruler of his possessions.

vs. 22: Pharaoh bound (the Hebrew text, 'asar) his princes and taught his elders *wisdom*. Contrast this chakmah with Pharaoh's magicians who contested Moses, for example, Ex 7.10.

vs. 23: Israel came to Egypt, and Jacob *sojourned* (gur; the verb is akin to going into exile) in Ham.

vs. 24: The Lord made Israel very fruitful and *made* them *stronger* (hatsam; connotes binding; the noun *bone* is derived from this verbal root) than their foes, the Egyptians.

vs. 25: The Lord made the Egyptians hate Israel and to deal craftily with his servants.

vs. 26: The Lord sent Moses as servant and Aaron as *chosen*: bachar-bu; note "chosen *in*."

vs. 27: Moses and Aaron wrought the Lord's *signs* ('oth) in Egypt; they wrought *miracles* (mopheth; cf. Ps 105.5) in Ham.

vs. 28: The Lord sent darkness and the Egyptians (according to the Hebrew) "did *not* rebel" against his words.

vs. 29: The Lord turned Egypt's waters into blood and made their fish die.

vs. 30: Egypt swarmed with frogs.

vs. 31: The Lord sent swarms of flies and gnats by his speaking.

vs. 32: The Lord rained down hail and made lightening flash.

vs. 33: The Lord smote Egypt's vines and fig trees and shattered their trees.  
 vs. 34: Locusts and young locusts came when the Lord spoke.  
 vs. 35: Locusts and young locusts Egypt's vegetation and fruit of their ground.  
 vs. 36: The Lord smote all Egypt's first born.  
 vs. 37: The Lord led out Israel with silver and gold.  
 vs. 38: Egypt was glad at this departure because they were in dread of Israel.  
 vs. 39: The Lord spread a cloud as a covering and fire at night.  
 vs. 40: The Lord sent quails and manna from heaven.  
 vs. 41: The Lord made water gush from the rock.  
 vs. 42: The Lord *remembered* (zakar) his *promise* (devar; from the same verbal root as *to speak*). The Lord also remembered his servant Abraham, the first patriarch.  
 vs. 43: The Lord led out his people with *joy* (sus) and his chosen ones with *singing* (ranan).  
 vs. 44: The Lord gave them the nations' lands, and Israel possessed the fruit of their toil.  
 vs. 45: This verse concludes with bahvur—*in order that*—which in a sense sums up all the divine benefits just enumerated which have for their common end the keeping of God's *statutes* (choq, singular) and *laws* (torah, singular). Psalm 105 concludes with the simple Halelu-Yah, *Praise God*.

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### Psalm One-Hundred and Six

**Vs. 1: Praise the Lord! O give thanks to the Lord for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!** Vs. 1 begins with almost the same exclamation as vs. 45 (the last one) of the Psalm 105, Haleluyah, only here the text joins YAH with halelu. Also added is divine chesed which lasts (verb lacking in Hebrew) *forever*, leholam. With this lack of a verb, chesed and holam may be taken as a signal unity.

**Vs. 2: Who can utter the mighty doings of the Lord or show forth all his praise?** A rhetorical question which involves both two types of speaking: malal as in Job 33.3, "How long will you *utter* such things?" and *showing forth* which has the verb shamah, means *to speak*. *Mighty doings* or gevorah (singular) with the former as in Ps 71.16: "With the *mighty deeds* of the Lord I will come." *Praise* or tehilah with regards to the latter.

**Vs. 3: Blessed are they who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times!** The adjective 'ashry (cf. Ps 1.1 for discussion) with respect to *observation* (shamar) of mishpat as well as doing tsedaqah; the latter is done "at all *times* (heth, singular)," and the LXX has kairos as a translation of this term.

**Vs. 4: Remember me, O Lord, when you show favor to your people; help me when you deliver them.** This and the next verse inject a personal note by the psalmist which is otherwise concerned with God's deeds to Israel as a nation. Vs. 4 intimates that the Lord has not yet shown ratson towards Israel; the same with *deliverance* (yashah, verb) or "Jesus." Often in the Psalter zakar (*to remember*) is used on the psalmist's part but here is with respect to God; i.e., for him to "beget" him.

The verb yashah is used in conjunction with paqad. "What is man that you are *mindful* of him, and the son of man that you *care for* him" [Ps 8.4]? This psalm also has zakar for mindful.

**Vs. 5: That I may see the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation, that I may glory with your heritage.** A continuation of vs. 4 and hence a three-fold desire to be the object of divine zakar and yashah. Note the progression of see-rejoice-glory:

- 1) see chosen ones' *prosperity* (bachyr) as in Ps 105.6. The noun *prosperity* is an alternate form of the simple adjective tov.
- 2) *rejoice* and *gladness*, both from the verbal root samach. By focusing attention upon (Israel) *nation* or goy—this term mostly refers to Gentiles—the psalmist implies God making Israel separate from such goy.
- 3) *glory* or halal which also means to praise, here with respect to divine *heritage* or Israel, nachalah, which implies the possession of something.

Much of Ps 106 (through vs. 46) recounts by way of summary God's favor towards Israel, more precisely, when they left Egypt and just as they entered the Promised Land. This section may be outlined as follows:

- vs. 6: We and our fathers: lack of temporal extension noted which shows the sameness of *sin*, *chatah*. This verse also includes "we" with respect to the current doing of iniquity and acting wickedly.
- vs. 7: Our fathers in Egypt failed to *consider* God's works, *sakal*, which implies a beholding. They also failed to *remember* (*zakar*) divine *chesed* as well as having rebelled against God at the Red Sea.
- vs. 8: Despite this, God *saved* (*yashah*, "Jesus") them in order to make known his *power*, *gevorah* (cf. vs. 2).
- vs. 9: God rebuked Red Sea to dry it up; God led Israel through the *deep* (*tehom*); cf. Gen 1.2 where *tehom* is primal chaos before creation. In vs. 9 *tehom* is equated with a desert, a current symbol of indistinctness.
- vs. 10: God *saved* (*yashah*, "Jesus") Israel from their foe and *delivered* (*ga'al*, in the sense of redeem) them from their enemy.
- vs. 11: Waters covered adversaries, symbolic of *tehom* as destructive.
- vs. 12: They then believed God's *words*; Hebrew text has singular *devar*. After this believing follows *singing* (*shyr*) of praise.
- vs. 13: They soon forgot God's works; Hebrew text has a verb (*mahar*) for *soon*. They did not wait for God's *counsel* (*hetsah*) which most likely was manifested through Moses.
- vs. 14: They had a wanton craving in the *wilderness* and put God to the test; verbal root *yasham* means *to lay waste*.
- vs. 15: God gave what they asked but sent a wasting disease. The Hebrew reads, "in their *souls*," *nephesh* (singular).
- vs. 16: People were jealous of Moses and Aaron; latter is called "holy one of God" although Moses gets most attention as leader.
- vs. 17: Earth swallowed up Dathan and covered company of Abiram.
- vs. 18: Fire broke out among them and burned the wicked.
- vs. 19: The people made a calf at Horeb, a molten image.
- vs. 20: The people exchanged God's glory; the Hebrew reads "They changed their *glory* (*kavod*, here another term for God) into the similitude of an ox."
- vs. 21: The people forgot God their *Savior* (*Yashah* or "Jesus"), the same God who wrought wonders in Egypt.
- vs. 22: The people forgot God who did wondrous works in Ham and terrible things by the Red Sea.
- vs. 23: God intended to destroy them but Moses his *chosen one* (*bachyr*; cf. vs. 5) stood in the breach to avert his wrath.
- vs. 24: The people despised the *pleasant* land (*chamad* being the verbal root). "Beat upon your breasts for the *pleasant fields*" [Is 32.12].
- vs. 25: The people murmured inside their tents and disobeyed God's voice; the Hebrew reads, "did not hear *in* (b-) voice of the Lord."
- vs. 26: God swore to make them fall in the wilderness.
- vs. 27: God would make fall (Hebrew text) their descendants among the *nations* (*goy*, singular) and scatter them in the *lands* (*'erets*, singular).
- vs. 28: The people attached themselves to the Ba'al of Peor and ate sacrifices offered to the dead. From the verbal root *tsamad* comes an *acre* or measure of land. "For ten *acres* of vineyard shall yield but one bath" [Is 5.10].
- vs. 29: The people provoked the Lord who then sent a plague.
- vs. 30: Phinehas interposed to *stay* the plague; *palal* can also mean *to pray*.
- vs. 31: Phinehas' deed was reckoned as righteousness for succeeding generations; cf. Rom 4.3: "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," referring to Gen 15.6.
- vs. 32: The people angered God at Meribah and thus displeased Moses. Note the connection between divine anger and human displeasure.
- vs. 33: The people embittered Moses' *spirit* (*ruach*) which then made him speak rash words.
- vs. 34: The people failed to destroy their enemies according to God's command.
- vs. 35: The people mingled with the *nations* (*goy*, singular).
- vs. 36: The people served idols which became a snare.
- vs. 37: The people sacrificed sons and daughters to *demons* (*shed*); from a verbal root meaning *to rule*.
- vs. 38: The people shed innocent blood, especially that of their children. It in turn was sacrificed to idols of

Canaan which *polluted* (chanaph) the land. “Both prophet and priest are *ungodly*” Jer 23.11].

vs. 39: The people became unclean and played the harlot.

vs. 40: God’s anger was then kindled against his people and he abhorred his heritage.

vs. 41: God gave the people over to the *nations* (goy, singular).

vs. 42: The people’s enemies oppressed them.

vs. 43: Many *times* (paham, singular; also means a *step*) God *rescued* (natsal) the people.

vs. 44: Yet God regarded the people’s distress.

vs. 45: God *remembered* (zakar) his covenant.

vs. 46: God made the people an object of *pity* (racham being the verb) by their captors.

**Vs. 47: Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise.** All the above mentioned distressful situations make the people cry out to be *saved*, yashah (“Jesus”) and for being *gathered* (qavats) from among *nations* (goy, singular). For an opposite meaning, cf. Ps 41.6: “And when one comes to see me, he utters empty words while his heart *gathers* mischief.”

Both yashah and qavats have a two-fold goal: giving thanks to God’s holy shem and *glorifying* (shavach) in his tehilah; the second verb can also mean *to still* as in Ps 89.9: “You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you *still* them.”

**Vs. 48: Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, “Amen!” Praise the Lord! Everlasting** (halom) has two points of reference, as it were, for emphasis: a beginning and an end. They are joined by the prepositions min (*from*) and l- (*to*). Awareness of such continuity of *blessing* (barak) causes the people to give their assent (‘aman).

Psalms 106 ends as it begins with Halleluyah.

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### Psalm One-Hundred and Seven

**Vs. 1: O give thanks to the Lord, for he his good; for his steadfast love endures forever!** A familiar refrain equating divine *goodness* (tov, adjective) with chesed; the former is directly associated with YHWH, whereas the latter with *forever*, lehalom.

**Vs. 2: Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble.** This and the remaining verses of Ps 107 are exhorted to proclaim divine tov and chesed, more specifically, the *redeemed* (ga’al, verb) and further specified by having been redeemed from trouble; here the Hebrew reads “from the hand of the foe, tsar.” As the psalm will spell out, such (not directly specified) tsar consists of what the psalmist presents as imprisonment when Israel wandered in the desert after the Exodus.

Ps 107 depicts the various forms of tsar which may be outlined accordingly. Note the refrain (“Let them thank the Lord for his *steadfast love* (chesed), for his *wonderful works*—niphle’othayu, from the verbal root pahal—to the sons of men!”) which occurs in vss. 8, 15, 21 and 31:

-vs. 3: *gathered from* (qavats; literal meaning: “to grasp with the hand”) lands: east, west, north and south.

-vs. 4: wandered in desert and could not find a city. The first part reads in Hebrew, “wandered in the desert in a *solitary* (yeshymon, cf. Pss 68.8, 78.40) *way* (derek).” Here the idea of *wandering* (tahah) can connote going astray; the image can be one of a stream without an outlet. “All of us like sheep have *gone astray*” [Is 53.6].

The lack of a city can refer to those cities inhabited by pagans and had to be destroyed such as Ai and Jericho.

-vs. 5: people were hungry and thirst (cf. tahah); *soul* (nephesh) *fainted* or hataph: “From the end of the earth I call you when my heart is *faint*” [Ps 61.2].

-vs. 6: then the people cried to the Lord in *distress* (tsar, cf. vs. 2); as a result he *rescued* (natsal) them from *distress* (metsoqah). This noun has the same verbal root (tsoq) as *column*, matsiq.

-vs. 7: God led the people by a *straight way*, yashar, a term which connotes correct moral behavior. “When will

you do what is *right*" [Dt 12.25]? This *leading* or *darak* (verbal root for *derek*) continued until they reached a city, perhaps ultimately referring to Jerusalem.

-vs. 9: God *satisfies* (*savah*) the thirsty and hungry, again implying a moral sense. "My soul is *feasted* as with marrow and fat" [Ps 63.5].

-vs. 10: two types of sitting: in darkness and in *gloom* (*tsalmaoth*) which corresponds to prisoners in affliction and bound with iron chains. *Tsalmaoth* often refers to death: "Let gloom and *deep darkness* claim it (day of Job's birth, Job 3.5). Note that here *gloom* is the same word for darkness as in vs. 10 *choshek*.

-vs. 11: people rebelled against God's *word* (*'emer*) and spurned Most High's *counsel* (*hetsah*). "Woe to those who hide deep from the Lord their *counsel*" [Is 29.15].

-vs. 12: hearts were *bowed down* (*kanah*) with hard labor and fell without anyone to *help* (*hazar*). "You *subdue* (*kanah*) the noise of the aliens" [Is 25.5].

-vs. 13: then people cried to the Lord in *trouble* (*tsar*, cf. vs. 6) and he delivered them from their *distress* (*metsoqah*, cf. vs. 6). Note use of *yashah* ("Jesus"), *to deliver*.

-vs. 14: God brought people from *darkness* (*choshek*) and *gloom* (*tsalmaoth*); both words as in vs. 10. God also *broke* (*nataq*) their bonds. "My tent is destroyed, and all my cords are *broken*" [Jer 10.20].

-vs. 16: God shatters bronze doors and cuts in two iron bars.

-vs. 17: Some were sick due to sinful ways; the Hebrew reads fools for *sick* (*'ewyl*). Thus foolishness and sin are equated. They also were afflicted due to their iniquities. Note play on the words, both from the verbal root *hanah* which has alternate meanings as noted elsewhere. *Beryach* (*bar*, singular): "I went down to the land whose *bars* closed upon me forever" [Jon 2.7].

-vs. 18: people loathed food and drew near to death's gates. *Tahav* (*to loathe*): "Because of your sins in which you *acted* more *abominably* than they" [Ezk 15.52]. *Nagah* (*to draw near*): "And he *touch*ed my mouth" [Is 6.7].

-vs. 19: verse identical to vs. 13.

-vs. 20: God sent forth his *word* (*davar*; compare with *'emer*, vs. 11). God both healed (*rapha'*) and *delivered* (*malat*) people from *destruction* (*shachyth*; same word for *pit*).

-vs. 22: As noted at the beginning of Ps 107, vs. 8, 15, 21 & 31 act like refrains. Vs. 22 serves to enhance this by sacrifices of thanksgiving (not necessarily animal sacrifices) and by *telling* (*saphar*, in the sense of writing) God's deeds in *joy* (*ranan*).

-vs. 23: sailors on ships, reminiscent of those who threw Jonah overboard.

-vs. 24: these sailors same the Lord's wondrous works in the *deep* (*metsulah*), again reminiscent of Jonah. "The waters closed in over me, the *deep* was round about me" [Jon 2.5].

-vs. 25: God commanded to raise the stormy *wind* (*ruach*, united with *seharah*) which caused waves. "You will be visited by the Lord of hosts...with whirlwind and *tempest*" [Is 29.6].

-vs. 26: Sailors mounted up to heaven and descended to *depths* (*tehom*, as in Gen 1.2), the opposite of heaven but according to ancient cosmology, such *tehom* were above as well as below earth.

-vs. 27: sailors *reeled* (*chagag*) and *staggered* (*nawah*) like drunken men. *Chagag*: "Let my people go, that they may *hold a feast* to me in the wilderness" [Ex 5.1]. *Nawah*: "Let him be; let no man *move* his bones" [2 Kg 23.18].

-vs. 28: similar to vs. 13 & 19; verb used here is *yatsa'* which basically means *to go forth*.

-vs. 29: God stilled the *storm* (*seharah*, cf. vs. 25) and *hushed* (*chashah*) sea's waves. *Chashah*: "For Zion's sake I will not *keep silent*" [Is 62.1].

-vs. 30: people were *glad* (*samach*) for the *quiet* (*shataq*); God brought them to their desired haven. *Shataq*: "What shall we do to you, that the sea may *quiet down* for us" [Jon 1.11]?

-vs. 31: *sons of men* or *beny 'adam*, a phrase signifying mortality, especially in the context of this psalm with its various threats.

-vs. 32: people to extol God in congregation and to praise him in assembly of elders. Two forms of gathering: *congregation* (*qahal*) and *assembly* (*moshav*); latter means a place for sitting as well as *habitation*: "Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your *dwelling* be" [Gen 27.39].

-vs. 33: God *turns* (*shuv*; used in next several verses) rivers into desert and springs into thirsty ground. The second half of this verse has a play on words using the letter "m" to signify dryness.

-vs. 34: God turns fruitful land into salty waste because of the inhabitants' wickedness. Reminiscent of Gen 19.26: "but Lot's wife behind him looked back, and she became a pillar of salt."

-vs. 35: God turns desert into *pools* (*'agam*, singular) of water and parched land into springs (*motsa'*, singular)

of water. 'Agam: connotes a marsh as in Is 35.7: "The burning sands shall become a *pool*." Motsa': a going forth and can mean a *gate*. "With a passage in front of them; they were similar to the chambers on the north...with the same *exits*" [Ezk 42.11].

-vs. 36: God lets (hungry) people dwell in above mentioned desert and to establish a city.

-vs. 37: people sow fields and plant vineyards which give a fruitful yield. Cf. Ezk 47 which describes the river of life flowing from the temple which may be said to water these fields and vineyards.

-vs 38: God's blessing cause the people to multiply, and he does not let their cattle decrease. Note the parallel between the people's multiplication and their cattle's increase.

-vs. 39: people diminished and brought low through oppression, trouble and sorrow. The opposite of their multiplication wrought by God in the previous verse.

-vs. 40: When the low point of vs. 39 is reached, God shows contempt upon princes and makes these same princes (implied?) wander through trackless wastes...i.e., where there are no pools and springs (cf. vs. 35). Note the play on words: tahav (*contempt*) and tehom (*trackless wastes*) where both are one and the same.

-vs. 41: God raises up the needy and makes their families like flocks: cf. the parallel between people and cattle, vs. 38, only here it is with respect to the *needy*, 'evyon (cf. Ps 86.1).

-vs. 42: upright see this wonder (of vs. 41) which makes them *glad* (samach); mouths of wicked are *stopped* (qaphats). "So the poor have hope, and injustice *shuts* her mouth" [Job 5.16].

-vs. 43: a wise person is bidden to *heed* (shamar) what Ps 107 has recounted; men are asked to consider the Lord's chesed. "Blessed are they who *observe* justice" [Ps 106.3].

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### Psalm One-Hundred and Eight

**Vs. 1: My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast! I will sing and make melody! Awake, my soul!** Kun for *steadfast* in the sense of being "founded:" "Woe to him who builds a town with blood and *founds* a city on iniquity" [Hab 2.12]! The Hebrew text lacks this repetition and adds "even with my *glory*" (kavod) before moving directly into the second and third sentences. Shyr for *to sing* and zamar for *to make melody*, both of which are frequent in the Psalter. The Hebrew text lacks the last sentence.

**Vs. 2: Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn!** Two exhortations of hur: harp and lyre, both of which are musical instruments as opposed to wind; such stringed implements are more soothing and less harsh than for example a trumpet blast. Right away the psalmist applies hur to *dawn* (shachar); verbal root can mean to seek. "I will return again to my place until they acknowledge their guilt and *seek* my face" [Hos 5.15]. Implied is that the harp and lyre couldn't be played at night; instead, the psalmist applied this awakening to the dawn to obtain visibility.

**Vs. 3: I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples, I will sing praises to you among the nations.** Future tense of yadah (*thanks*) suggests that the psalmist is still in Israel, more specifically Jerusalem, where he intends to extend this gratitude among *peoples* (ham, singular). Secondly, he intends to zamar among *nations* (le'om; similar to ham). The preposition among more specifically means *in* (b-).

**Vs. 4: For you steadfast love is great above the heavens, your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.** Divine chesed transcends (*above*, hal) the heavens; *faithfulness* ('eman; similar to 'aman) does not but goes only to clouds which may be said to conceal the furthest extend of chesed.

**Vs. 5: Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!** Ramah essential means *to cast*, as though such exultation was a result of forceful exertion. Here ramah is considered *above* (hal) the heavens to which chesed reaches (vs. 4).

Divine kavod is *over* (hal again; compare with *above* just noted) the 'erets; the verbal root of this word (*to be heavy*) suggests God's kavod "weighing" down upon the earth.

**Vs. 6: That your beloved may be delivered, give help by your right hand and answer me!** *Beloved* or dod; the

first half of this verse is identical to that found in Ps 60.5. In addition to such deliverance, the psalmist begs *help* or *yashah* (“Jesus”) which is followed by *answering* (*hanah*). In light of the New Testament, since Jesus is the *Word* or Logos, the desire for him to *hanah* reflects this Logos nature.

**Vs. 7: God has promised in his sanctuary: “With exultation I will divide up Shechem and portion out the Vale of Succoth.** A *promise* or the verb *davar* which continues through vs. 9 with respect to rule of Israel’s foes. The Hebrew reads *holiness* (*qadesh*) for “sanctuary.”

Such a *davar* takes on the following parts listed through vs. 9:<sup>1</sup>

- divide Shechem.
- portion out Vale of Succoth.
- Moab is God’s washbasin.
- God casts his shoe upon Edom.
- God shouts in triumph over Philistia.

Vs. 10 refers to both the fortified city as well as Edom, both of which may or may not be identical.

**Vs. 11: Have you not rejected us, O God? You do not go forth, O God, with our armies.** *Zanach* for *reject* as in Ps 43.2: “Why have you *cast me off?*” If this were so, it would be impossible for God to go with Israel’s *armies*, *tsava’* (singular), same word as used in the expression “Lord of *Hosts.*”

**Vs. 12: O grant us help against the foe, for vain is the help of man!** Two contrasts of help: *hezrath* (from *hazar*) with regard to Israel’s foe; *teshuhath* (“Jesus”) with regard to human assistance; the latter is *vain* or *shawe’* which also suggests falsehood. “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God *in vain*” [Ex 20.7].

**Vs. 13: With God we shall do valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes.** The preposition *b-* (*in*) is used for *with*, here in relationship to God; this *b-* yields *valiancy* (*chyl*) which can refer to virtue as well as a host; for the latter, cf. Ex 14.28: “And all the *hosts* of Pharaoh” [Ex 14.28]. Divine *chyl* extends further: to the *treading* of Israel’s foes, bus. “Many shepherds...have *trampled down* my portion” [Jer 12.10].

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### Psalm One-Hundred and Nine

**Vs. 1: Be not silent, O God of my praise!** The psalmist bids God not to be *silent* (*charash*) as in Ps 83.1: “O God, do not keep *silence.*” He identifies God with *praise* (*tehilah*) or more specifically, *my praise*, which is a coy way of getting God to respond to the lengthy list of complaints in this psalm.

Verses 2-20 go into detail with regard to the psalmist’s afflictions by his enemies and may be listed as follows. Note several references to *zakar* (*to remember*) and its importance regarding moral behavior; same with regard to *chesed*. The words are italicized to highlight the assaults suffered:

- vs. 3: *beset* with words of hate and *attack* without cause.
- vs. 4: *accuse* the psalmist for his love despite his prayer for them.
- vs. 5: reward *evil* for good and *hatred* for love.
- vs. 6: asks God to appointed a wicked man against his enemy and bring him to *trial*.
- vs. 7: wishes his enemy to be *guilty*.
- vs. 8: wishes enemy’s days to be *few*.
- vs. 9: wishes enemy’s children to be *fatherless* and his wife a *widow*.
- vs. 10: wishes enemy’s children to *wander* and *beg* and be *driven* from the ruins they inhabit.

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<sup>1</sup>Vss. 6-13 are practically identical with those of Ps 60.5-12; the same applies to vss. 1-5 with regard to Ps 57.7-11.

- vs. 11: wishes *creditor* seize his possessions.
- vs. 12: wishes no one to be *kind* (chesed) to him.
- vs. 13: wishes his posterity to be *cut off* and name be *blotted out* to 2<sup>nd</sup> generation.
- vs. 14: wishes fathers' (plural) iniquity be *remembered* (zakar) before God and mother's (singular) sin not be blotted out.
- vs. 15: *sins* of fathers and mother be before the Lord continually and his enemy's *memory* (zakar) be cut off.
- vs. 16: enemy did not *remember* (zakar) to show *kindness* (chesed) but pursued poor, needy and broken-hearted to death.
- vs. 17: enemy loved to *curse* and psalmist wishes curses upon him; same with blessing.
- vs 18: enemy clothed himself with *cursing* which psalmist wishes to penetrate his body like water.
- vs. 19: psalmist wishes enemy's cursing to be like a garment on him and a belt to gird him.
- vs. 20: conclusion of these curses; seen in term of a reward from the Lord to *accusers* (satan; same word for Satan).

Verses 21-31 (to end of the psalm) reveal a shift in tone for the psalmist who now begs God to be merciful to him as a result of the afflictions he is suffering:

- vs. 21: begs God to deal on his behalf for sake of his shem or *name*; wishes God to *deliver* (natsal) him because of divine chesed.
- vs. 22: psalmist is *poor* (hany, from hanah) and *needy* ('evyon); heart is *stricken* (chalal; connotes piercing) within him.
- vs. 23: gone like a shadow at evening; Hebrew reads *declines* (natah): "O God, *incline* your ear to me" [Ps 17.6]; shaken off as a locust.
- vs. 24: knees weak through fasting; body gaunt.
- vs. 25: object of scorn and accusers wag their heads; cf. Mt 27.39: "And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads."
- vs. 26: psalmist begs God for *help* (hazar) and to be *saved* (yashah, "Jesus") according to divine chesed.
- vs. 27: psalmist wishes enemies to know that God's right hand effected hazar, yashah and chesed.
- vs. 28: psalmist knows that God blesses despite enemies cursing; wishes shame upon assailants as well as *gladness* (samach) for himself whom he calls a servant.
- vs. 29: wishes enemies to be clothed with dishonor and wrapped in shame (cf. vss. 18-19).

Despite the detailed afflictions and curses, the psalmist says that he will thank and praise the Lord (vs. 30); note the location for this, "in the *midst* (vetok, i.e., the very center) of the throng." Psalm 109 concludes (vs. 31) with God standing at the *needy* ('evyon) person's right hand, thereby anticipating the opening words of the next psalm. Purpose: to "Jesus" him, yashah.

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### Psalm One-Hundred and Ten

**Vs. 1: The Lord says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool."** Two "Lords:" YHWH and the psalmist's, 'adony, or the king of Israel. This verse is frequently quoted in the New Testament, for example, Mt 22.44, Acts 2.34, 1 Cor 15.25, Eph 1.20 and Heb 1.3, 13, as referring to Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Implied in the psalm is that the king is newly established and will take his place at God's right hand. Note that this sitting extends for a period (kairos) of time: until (God is speaking now) he subdues the king's enemies and makes them a *footstool*, hadom. "I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord and for the *footstool* of our God" [1 Chron 28.2].

**Vs. 2: The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your foes!** This verse is a demonstration of that "*until-ness*" (had) of vs. 1, and is what the new king has been waiting for. The Hebrew reads, "rod of your *strength*, mateh: "So he cast it (rod) on the ground, and it became a serpent" [Ex 4.3]. Thus the king's mateh has power over enemies as with the mateh of Moses. Such transforming power is rooted in Zion and allows the king to *rule* (radah, literally, to trample) not only over his foes but in their *midst*, qerev.

**Vs. 3: Your people will offer themselves freely on the day you lead your host upon the holy mountains. From the womb of the morning like dew your youth will come to you.** The first sentence is reminiscent of a sacrificial *offering*, *nadav*, a term which connotes an element of freedom and spontaneity. “Then the people rejoiced because these had *given willingly...to the Lord*” [1 Chron 29.9]. Such willingness is associated with a military campaign to the “*holy mountains*,” the Hebrew has *heder* (singular) or *ornament*, perhaps signifying a successful outcome. The people follow the king (Hebrew text) “in the day of your *power* (*chyl*); day can signify a particular *kairos* or special occasion.

In the second sentence the Hebrew text reads, “from the *womb* (*rechem*) of the *morning* (*shachar*; cf. Ps 108.2) as though this early time were one of giving birth for the triumph described in Ps 110's following verses. The king is described as being like “*dew* (*tal*) of your youth” (Hebrew), another implication of the impending victory. “For there shall be a sowing of peace...and the heavens shall give their *dew*” [Zech 8.12].

**Vs. 4: The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”** Here the king is ordained by the Lord to be a *priest* (*kohen*). It results from a divine oath which reveals the Lord's unswerving intention; *nacham* is used for *change*, more specifically, *repent* as in Is 1.24: “I will vent my wrath on my enemies and *avenge* myself on my foes.” The role of the king's priesthood resembles that of Melchizedek, priest of Salem, who brought bread and wine to Abraham after his victory over kings from the east (cf. Gen 14.18). The word for *order* derives from *davar*, *to speak*. “A priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek” [Heb 5.6], referring to Jesus Christ.

**Vs. 5: The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings of the day of his wrath.** A verse reminiscent of Gen 14.18 mentioned in the last verse. Note that such *shattering* (*machats*, *to shake*; cf. Ps 68.22) occurs only with the Lord at Israel's king at his right hand which was mentioned in vs. 2. Such *machats* occurs on the “day (...on the *kairos*) of his *wrath*,” ‘aph. Perhaps this may have a parallel with Christ's triumph depicted in the Book of Revelation.

**Vs. 6: He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth.** Here *nations* are *goyim*, those not belonging to Israel; action is in the future. Note that the Lord will do this “*in* (*b-*) the *goyim*.” The word for *corpse* is *gewayah*; related to *goyim*, as signify stuffing them with their own kind. The psalmist extends divine judgment by (future) *shattering* (*machats* again as in vs. 5) the earth's chiefs or rulers. *Wide* or *rabah* connotes the entire earth or habitations of the *goyim*.

**Vs. 7: He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head.** *Brook* or *nachal* (cf. Ps 18.4) from which the king will drink, perhaps an action at the boundary between Israel and the *goyim*. Compare the lifting of his *head* (*ro'sh*) with the shattering of the chiefs' *heads* (*ro'sh*) of the previous verse. Such a *lifting* (*rom*) can refer to the king's exultation at this boundary and hence, the *goyim's* submission to Israel.

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### Psalm One-Hundred and Eleven

**Vs. 1: Praise the Lord. I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.** An acrostic psalm; the same opening words as the next two psalms. Note two groups: *company* (*sod*) and *congregation*, *hedah*. *Sod* as in Ps 25.14: “The *friendship* of the Lord is for those who fear him.” *Sod* is used with respect to the upright whereas *hedah* is more general. *Hedah*: from the same verbal root as the noun *ornament* *hadah*; the verb means to testify in the sense of judging: “This heap is a *witness*, and the *pillar* is a witness” [Gen 31.52]. Despite this two-fold division of peoples, the psalmist still gives thanks to the Lord.

**Vs. 2: Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who have pleasure in them.** *Mahaseh* (*work*, singular) in the sense of something wrought or created, not necessarily something divinely wondrous. They are the objects of human *study* (*darash*, more to seek intensely), especially by persons taking *pleasure* in them, *chaphats*. “But

his *delight* is the law of the Lord” [Ps 1.2].

**Vs. 3: Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever.** Hod (*honor*) and hadar (*majesty*), a play on words, both are which are God’s *work* (pahal). Compare this word with mahaseh in vs. 2. “He *labors* in the coals” [Is 44.12]; this term can be associated with the fabrication of an idol. The idea in vs. 3 is that God is fashioning with care hod and hadar. Tsedaq is a characteristic belonging more properly to God, not the object of his pahal which is why it *endures* (hamad; also *to stand* in the sense of abide) forever.

**Vs. 4: He has caused his wonderful works to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and merciful.** Note “causal” use with regard to zakar, where God is indirectly involved; it is as though the human recollective faculty were set in motion to do this remembering. Zakar here is more specific: divine wonderful works, pala’ being the verbal root and distinct from mahaseh and palah just mentioned. “Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow the Lord will *do wonders* among you” [Jos 3.5]. The addition of the Lord being chanun (from chanan) and rachum (from racham) are specific characteristics of God doing wonderful works, not necessarily involved with the other two types.

**Vs. 5: He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant.** Tereph for *food* in the sense of prey. “The strong lion perishes from lack of *prey*” [Job 4.11]. The image in the verse at hand connotes God as a bird of prey; since the Spirit is *hovering* (rachaph) over the primal waters in Genesis, perhaps this same “bird” is offering tereph here, the fruits of chaos. Such tereph is bound up with divine *fear*, yare’ being the verb. Furthermore, tereph may be seen in conjunction with God’s covenant of which he is *mindful*, another instance of zakar.

**Vs. 6: He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations.** Power (koach) related to *works* (mahaseh again), namely, something physical endowed with divine strength. These works are bound up with heritage of the goym; not the goym proper but their *heritage*, nachalah. “The good land which the Lord your God gives you for an *inheritance*” [Dt 4.21].

**Vs. 7: The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.** Mahaseh here used with respect to God’s hands, that is, a direct correlation between physical and spiritual realities. Because of this correlation, God’s works are both ‘emeth and misphat; the Hebrew text uses these terms as nouns, not adjectives, thereby equating them with mahaseh. Similarly, his *precepts* (paqad being the verbal root; cf. Ps 106.4 for one of a varied uses of this word) are worthy of ‘emeth, the adjective being used; they also may be said to spring from God’s hands.

**Vs. 8: They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.** Note the shift from physical creation (“works”) to precepts which here are stated as being *established* (samak) for all eternity; the lahad leholam is used to emphasize this durability. Although precepts have obtained this divine status, they are still to be carried out in ‘emeth and yashar, two qualities which reflect in space and time God’s eternal nature and his precepts.

**Vs. 9: He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and terrible is his name!** Peduth or *redemption*, from the verbal root padah, *to loose*. “Is my hand shortened, that it cannot *redeem*” [Is 50.2]? In the verse at hand, peduth is on the same plane as God’s covenant; note that it is forever as opposed to redemption where this term is not mentioned. Reference is most likely to Exodus and Mt. Sinai. The divine shem as being both qadosh and nora’ reflects this. “Who is like you, majestic in holiness, *terrible* (nora’) in glorious deeds, doing wonders” [Ex 15.11]?

**Vs. 10: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who practice it. His praise endures forever!** The first part of this verse is similar to Prov 1.7 which has *knowledge* (dahath) for *wisdom* (chakmah). In both cases note that *fear* (yire’ath) and *beginning* (re’shyth) are to be equated. Since this realm is spiritual and transcends familiar concepts of temporal extension, re’shyth is not to be understood in this conventional fashion. Something like “In the *beginning* God created the heavens and earth” [Gen 1.1] is intended.

Sekel (*understanding*), from the verbal root sakal, *to be prudent*. In the context of divine fear such prudence implies watchfulness that fear governs one's moral life. "Good *sense* wins favor by the way of the faithfulness is their ruin" [Prov 13.15].

Psalm 111 concludes on a note similar to its beginning with mention of *praise* (tehilah). Here it is more a statement of fact, namely, that praise *endures* (hamad) forever.

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### Psalm One-Hundred and Twelve

**Vs. 1: Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments!**

Another acrostic psalm. The second sentence is similar to Ps 1.1: 'Ashry is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,' only here substituting yare'. Note only fear but *delight* (chaphats) with respect to divine *commandments* or mitswah (singular). "Now this is the *commandment*, the statutes and the ordinances which the Lord your God commanded me to teach you" [Dt 6.1]. Not only is chaphats mentioned by intensified by me'od which connotes excessiveness.

**Vs. 2: His descendants will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed.** Fear and great delight do not only affect the present *generation* (zerah, *seed*) but future generations by making them *mighty* (gibor, in the sense of being like a warrior). Such blessedness is the opposite of: "You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me" [Dt 5.9].

**Vs. 3: Wealth and riches are in his house; and his righteousness endures forever.** Hon (*wealth*, in the sense of substance) and hoshar (*riches*), from a verbal root meaning to prosper, build. "Because you have asked for this (wisdom) and have not asked for yourself long life or *riches*...behold, I now do according to your (Solomon) word" [1 Kg 3.11-12]. Both desirable commodities are in the dwelling much like offspring. Note the distinction of these from this man's (cf. vs. 1) *righteousness* (tsedaqah) which outlast material possessions by hamad (*standing*) forever.

**Vs. 4: Light rises in the darkness for the upright; the Lord is gracious, merciful and righteous.** The *rising* (zarach; verb implies scattering) here which is of the moral (yeshar, *upright*) and spiritual order intimates dawn. "And nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your *rising*" [Is 60.3]. Three characteristics of God effect such rising: *gracious* (chanun), *merciful* (rachum) and *righteous* (tsadyq), all of which were encountered earlier.

**Vs. 5: It is well with the man who deals generously and lends, who conducts his affairs with justice.** Chanun or *gracious* as in vs. 4 is applied here to a person who lends (lawah). This verb connotes making an association: "That they (tribe of Levi) may *join* you and minister to you" [Num 18.2]. Another trait in vs. 5 is *justice* (mishpat), associated with the verb kul (*to conduct*); kul implies a measuring. "The heaven of heavens cannot *contain* you" [2 Chron 6.18].

**Vs. 6: For the righteous will never be moved; he will be remembered forever.** Another use of tsadyq as in vs. 4, here associated with moral stability as seen in conjunction with the verb mut which intimates the *shaking* of the earth (cf. Ps 104.5). Mut is equivalent to perpetual *remembrance*, zakar being the verbal root of the noun used here.

**Vs. 7: He is not afraid of evil tidings; his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord.** Shemuhah (*tidings*), from the verbal root shamah, *to hear*. Such a man is unlike Dan 11.44: "But *tidings* from the east and the north shall alarm him." This lack of fear results from a *firm* (nakun; from kun as Ps 108.1) heart unlike the mut action of vs. 6. Such stability *trusts* (batach) in the Lord.

**Vs. 8: His heart is steady, he will not be afraid, until he sees his desire on his adversaries.** Heart which continues the theme of constancy amid fluctuation, this time as *steady* or *samak* which has another connotation as in Ps 3.5: “I awake, for the Lord *sustains* me.” In the verse at hand, *samak* counters the natural tendency of *fear, yare’*. Had (*until*) intimates that a constant heart remains so only until (according to the Hebrew text) “he sees upon (literally, in) his enemies.” It is as though the heart of such a person is transferred...moves out...through seeing and quells adversaries.

**Vs. 9: He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever; his horn is exalted in honor.** A verse quoted in part, 2 Cor 9.9. Pazar for *distribute*; “freely” lacking in the Hebrew text. The verb also means to disperse in the negative sense: “Only acknowledge your guilt, that you rebelled against the Lord your God and *scattered* your favors among strangers under every green tree” [Jer 3.13]. ‘Evyon for *poor* as in Ps 86.1. As a result of this two-fold generosity, the person whom the psalmist holds up as an example for imitation is righteous; rather, it is a proper noun (*tsedaqah*) almost distinct from him as though he were its agent. *Horn* or *qeren* is symbolic of power as in Ps 75.4; in the verse at hand, *qeren* is associated with *kavod*.

**Vs. 10: The wicked man sees it and is angry; he gnashes his teeth and melts away; the desire of the wicked man comes to nought.** The object of sight is the above mention righteous man’s *qeren* be honored. The verb here is *kahas* as in Dt 31.29: “Provoking him (God) to *anger* through the work of your hands.” The gnashing of teeth here is reminiscent of Mt 8.12: “While the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.” The melting away of vs. 10 is vivid when used in this context, suggesting a fading away into *nought* (*avad*, the verb *to perish* is used) of that gnashing sound.

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### Psalm One-Hundred and Thirteen

**Vs. 1: Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord!** Three occurrences of *halal* (*praise*) this time in conjunction with the Lord’s servants (could refer to the collective identity of Israel) and directed to his *shem* which is mentioned in the next verse.

**Vs. 2: Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore!** A shift from the *halal* of vs. 1 to an aspiration that the divine *shem* be blessed as opposed to an “active” blessing. Note the time span involved: from the present time to *halom*, *forevermore*, which may be taken as a *kairos* where the past, present and future are compressed into a single moment.

**Vs. 3: From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the Lord is to be praised!** Now that the psalmist has extended the Lord’s *shem* from the present into eternity, he is more specific, that is, he speaks of a particular day or from sunrise to sunset. This may be taken as a means to project the experience of a given day into that *kairos* just noted.

**Vs. 4: The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens!** This *height* (*rom*, adjective) may be taken as the sun overhead as following the delineation of a day’s span from dawn to night in vs. 3. The Lord as sun thus shines down upon “all *nations*,” *goym*, not just Israel. Divine *kavod* transcends the heavens, most likely referring to the starry night sky; note that the Lord’s name is not mentioned as being praised at night (vs. 3).

**Vs. 5: Who is like the Lord our God, who is seated on high.** Again, the Lord may be taken as the sun at its zenith, “on *high*,” *gavoah*. This term can refer to human arrogance as well as pride. “We have heard of the pride of Moab—he is very *proud*” [Jer 48.29]. The act of sitting can allude to God as a judge.

**Vs. 6: Who looks far down upon the heavens and the earth?** A continuation of vs. 5 which continues the theme of divine condescension through the rest of this psalm. The verb *shaphal* for “look far down” more accurately means *to become low*. It can have a negative sense, the consequence of arrogance. “And the lofty will be *brought low*” [Is 10.33]. As applied to Jesus Christ, *shaphal* can refer to his incarnation and/or

humiliation: “Christ Jesus...emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being found in the likeness of men” [Phil 2.7].

The sense of the Hebrew continues with “to behold (things) in heaven...” Here the psalmist presents God’s vision in terms of shaqaph as used in Ps 102.19: “That he *looked down* from his holy height, from heaven the Lord looked at the earth.”

**Vs. 7: He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap.** A verse reminiscent of Lk 1.48.53, Mary’s Magnificat, which is rooted in 1 Sam 2.4-8. This verse may be better understood in light of Ps 113’s presentation of God’s transcendence which is shared with the poor or dal and needy or ‘evyon. Although haphar as *dust* is used, it can allude to “You are *dust* and to *dust* you shall return” [Gen 3.19], that is, as a restoration of Adam to his original divine eikon. ‘Ashpoth or *ash heap*: “Who were brought up in purple lie on *ash heaps*” [Lam 4.5]. The only other occurrence is 1 Sam 2.8, the root of Mary’s Magnificat already pointed out.

**Vs. 8: To make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people.** Nadyv or *prince* as an adjective means voluntary. “Whoever is of a *generous* heart, let him bring the Lord’s offering” [Ex 35.5]. With this in mind, God makes the poor and needy sit with such persons, forming, as it were, a council for God. Note that nadyv is mentioned twice: by itself and in conjunction with *people*, ham.

**Vs. 9: He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. Praise the Lord!** Barrenness was considered a curse, unable to continue a family. In the verse at hand, haqar is the noun for *barren woman*. “You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be male or female *barren* among you” [Dt 7.14]. The Hebrew text reads “He makes the barren woman to keep house,” that is, to maintain it; yashav is the verb here which basically means to dwell. Thus the haqar becomes like the woman of Prov 31.15: “She provides food for her household.” The verb samach is used here for *make joyous*. Ps 113 closes with the same words as it opened, halelu-yah.

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### Psalm One-Hundred and Fourteen

**Vs. 1: When Israel went forth from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language.** Two divisions encountered several times earlier in the Psalter: Israel and Jacob; former exits the country of Egypt and latter is called a house, a more personal description. Note that of the other eleven sons Joseph was his father Jacob’s favorite; Joseph summoned him to Egypt to live there. This personal side is further enhanced by Jacob leaving not a land but a people of *strange language*, lafaz, the only occurrence of this word.

**Vs. 2: Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his dominion.** *Sanctuary*: qadesh, from the verbal root *to be holy*; *dominion*: memshalah. “There was nothing in his house or in all his *realm* that Hezekiah did not show them” [2 Kg 20.13]. The former may be said to be contained by the latter. Although Israel is larger in physical scope, Judah is more important in spiritual matters.

**Vs. 3: The sea looked and fled, Jordan turned back.** A combination of both the Exodus (Moses being the leader) and the crossing of the Jordan after Israel’s wandering for forty years in Sinai (Joshua being the leader). Here the (implied) Red Sea first looked and then *fled*, nus. “Until the day breathes and the shadows *flee*” [Sg 2.17]. The Jordan River reversed its course implying Joshua taking twelve stones from the river bottom and setting them as a memorial to Israel’s twelve tribes (cf. Jos 4.1-10).

**Vs. 4: The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.** Two parts here: mountains *skipped* or raqad, as in Ps 29.6: “He makes Lebanon to *skip* like a calf.” As noted there, raqad connotes dancing. Hills (raqad implied) like lambs, smaller or friskier animals. While a note of joy is intended, this verse may be associated with the fear of the native inhabitants when Israel crossed the Jordan: “When all the kings of the Amorites...and all the kings of the Canaanites...heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan...their heart melted,

and there was no longer any spirit in them" [Jos 5.1]. Compare the last words of this verse to a different context: "There was no more *spirit* (ruach) in her (Queen of Sheba, 1 Kg 10.5).

**Vs. 5: What ails you, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back?** The Hebrew reads, "What to you...?). Reference again to the Red Sea and its flight and Jordan River to its reversal of course. In a sense the latter is a more significant physical event in that the Jordan simply did not part like the Red Sea but reversed its course (cf. Jos 3.16). Note that this came about not by God in his transcendence as at the Exodus but by God's presence in the ark (cf. vs. 13).

**Vs. 6: O mountains, that you skip like rams? O hills, like lambs?** The same as vs. 5 only put in the form of a question. Again, not raqad for *to skip*, as if both mountains and hills gathered around Israel to form a dance. Cf. Ex 15.20: "Then Miriam...and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dancing." Here the word for *dancing* is mecholah (verbal root is chul, *to twist, turn around*) as in Sg 6.13: "Why should you look upon the Shulammitte as upon a *dance* before two armies (or 'dance of Mahanaim')?"

**Vs. 7: Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob.** The verb *to tremble* (chul) was noted in vs. 6 regarding the verbal root of mecholah; thus vs. 7 intimates a form of dance akin to raqad already mentioned. Chul has two objects: YHWH and "God of Jacob." The former clearly points to divine transcendence and the latter intimates Joseph-as-son-of-Jacob whose bones Moses took from Egypt (cf. Ex 13.19-20). Note that there is no mention of Joseph's bones when Joshua led Israel across the Jordan River.

**Vs. 8: Who turns the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a spring of water.** Cf. Ex 17.6 and Num 20.11, both of which occurred after crossing the Red Sea and before crossing the Jordan River, thus taking place in between two rivers, as it were. For pool and spring, cf. Ps 107.35. Note that the first event took place "in the sight of the elders of Israel" (vs. 6); the second, when Moses and Aaron "gather the assembly together before the rock" (vs. 10).

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### Psalm One-Hundred and Fifteen

**Vs. 1: Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!** This verse opens with an acknowledgment of God's *glory* or kavod in contrast to the idols described in later verses. Note that the psalmist asks God to give his kavod to his name due to his chesed and 'emeth, both of which were depicted in the previous psalm. The preposition hal (*on*) is used with respect to kavod being "on" these two divine characteristics shown to Israel.

**Vs. 2: Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?"** In the light of Joshua's crossing of the Jordan River such *nations* (goym) may refer the Amorites and Canaanites (cf. Jos 5.1, as in Ps 114.4), as well as other peoples Israel had difficulty subduing before they established their nation.

**Vs. 3: Our God is in the heavens; he does whatever he pleases.** An answer to the "Where is their God?" of vs. 2, shamym (*heavens*), or in a real sense, "no" where. Despite this transcendence, God follows his own *pleasure*, chaphats. Such delight is reflected in the divine Torah as noted in as Ps 1.2, "His *delight* is in the Law of the Lord."

**Vs. 4: Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.** Such *idols* (hotsev, singular) belong to those who ask the where-ness of Israel's God in the first verse. Hotsev can also mean *pain*: "When the Lord has given you rest from your *pain* and turmoil" [Is 14.3], that is (can be implied), rest from those occasions when Israel fashioned idols in place of YHWH. While Moses was on Mt. Sinai, Aaron made a gold calf from the gold (most like taken from their despoiling of Egypt, cf. Ex 32).

Vss. 5-7 speak of idols as having the semblance of human senses: speaking, seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling and walking, all of which are implied in vs. 1's question, "Where is their God?" With regard to the golden calf

in vs. 4, Moses broke the tables of the divine law at the base of Mt. Sinai (cf. Ex 32.19) and then ground the golden calf (cf. vs. 20), two actions which form a unity. Most likely the shattered tables did not mix with the ground idol but remained separate.

**Vs. 8: Those who make them are like them; so are all who trust in them.** Keeping in mind Israel's idolatry at Sinai, the people were "grounded" and "scattered" like the golden calf. For their punishment, Moses summoned the Levites to slay three thousand men (cf. vs. 28). Such is the false *trust* or *batach* as in Is 42.17: "They shall be turned back and utterly put to shame who *trust* in graven images, who say to molten images, 'You are our gods.'"

**Vs. 9: O Israel, trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield.** An exhortation to have correct *batach*: YHWH is both Israel's *help* (*hezer*) and *shield* (*magen*). "The Lord is my strength and my *shield*" [Ps 28.7].

**Vs. 10: O house of Aaron, put your trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield.** The same exhortation applied to Aaron's descendants, most likely with the golden calf incident in mind.

**Vs. 11: You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield.** Again, with the references to the preceding verses in mind, this exhortation can refer to the Levites who carried out Moses' order to slay their fellow Israelites who worshiped the gold calf.

**Vs. 12: The Lord has been mindful of us; he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron.** *Zakar* for *to be mindful* which as often noted, refers to propagation into the future and here with an eye on future blessing which is threefold: us, house of Israel and house of Aaron. Such blessings may be seen in light of the renewal of the covenant at Sinai after Moses broke the tables at the same mountain. This renewal continues with a detailed account of the tabernacle and its adornments, right to the end of the Book of Exodus. "For throughout all their journeys the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel" [Ex 40.38, the very last verse]. Note that the cloud was *on* the tabernacle and the fire was *in* it.

**Vs. 13: He will bless those who fear the Lord, both small and great.** Two categories of people who yare' the Lord: small and great, both of which can apply to the house of Israel and Aaron just mentioned.

**Vs. 14: May the Lord give you increase, you and your children!** The verb *to increase* (*yasaph*) is a reflection of vs. 12's *zakar* (from which the noun *male* is derived), that is, increase or propagation into future generations. The preposition *hal* (*on*) is used for both "you" and "children," implies an awareness coming "from above" or divine transcendence.

**Vs. 15: May you be blessed by the Lord, who made heaven and earth!** The preposition *l-* (*to*) also signifies direction-towards-which, as if to suggest divine *blessing* (*barak*) is process of growth (*to* "you" and "children" of vs. 14). The two poles of heaven and earth form the sphere in which this towards-ness functions.

**Vs. 16: The heavens are the Lord's heavens, but the earth he has given to the sons of men.** A sharp distinction between the two speaks of heaven and earth, as if to signify the proper domain of human propagation (cf. *zakar* and *yashaph* of vss. 12 & 14). *Shamym* are joined to YHWH by the preposition *l-* (*to*) which as noted in vs. 15, signify direction-towards-which and in this case, heavens are exclusively belonging to God. Perhaps the giving of 'erets intimates a new Garden of Eden.

**Vs. 17: The dead do not praise the Lord, nor do any that go down into the silence.** Two categories of people: those who are already dead and those in the process of descending into *silence*, *domah*, another name for Sheol. Cf. Ps 94.17: "If the Lord had not been my help, my soul would soon have dwelt in the land of *silence*." The verse at hand posits a sharp distinction between the noise of *praise* (*halal*) and its lack.

**Vs. 18: But we will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the Lord!** The *time* (*heth*, *nun* or *now*, *LXX*) is a *kairos* event or awareness of the occasion when the psalm at hand is being composed. It is

intended to stretch indefinitely into the future, had-halom. The concluding exclamation of halelu-yah occurs in the present tense, i.e., in the present heth, which transcends the temporal domain. Such halelu-yah is the result of what Israel expects to achieve while putting it into practice “from this time.”

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### Psalm One-Hundred and Sixteen

**Vs. 1: I love the Lord because he has heard my voice and my supplications.** ‘Ahav for *to love* which here is connected with God’s positive response to the psalmist’s voice and *supplication*. The former is singular and the latter (techinah, singular) is plural, thereby signifying repeated entreaties. “The Lord has heard my *supplication*” [Ps 6.10].

**Vs. 2: Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.** The “because” can refer to the Lord having heard the psalmist’s supplication; the verb natah for *incline* (cf. Ps 17.6) implies a bending down (from heaven) to listen. While God is in this position, the psalmist decides to call upon him “in my days,” that is, according to the Hebrew text. In other words, the psalmist realizes his chronos-logical time and wishes to align it with God’s eternity.

**Vs. 3: The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish.** This verse is reminiscent of Jonah as noted with regard to Ps 88.17: “They surround me like a flood all the day long.” Chevel (singular) for *snare* also means *pain*: “Before her *pain* came upon her she was delivered of a son” [Is 66.7]. An alternate meaning is measuring *line*: “Your land shall be parceled out by *line*” [Am 7.17]. In the verse at hand, snares *encompass* the psalmist, ‘aphaph as in Ps 18.4: “The cords of death *encompassed* me.”

Metsar (singular) for *pang*, from the verbal root matsar meaning *to restrain*. Cf. Lam 1.3: “Her pursuers have all overtaken her in the midst of her *distress*.” Vs. 3 uses the verb matsa’ (*to find*) for lay hold; again, cf. Lam 1.3 which uses this verb as it plays on metsar: “but *finds* no resting place.”

The third part of the verse at hand uses matsa’ with reference to suffering in conjunction with tsarah (*distress*), another play on words. Yagon equals *anguish*.

**Vs. 4: Then I called on the name of the Lord: “O Lord, I beseech you, save my life!”** The psalmist calls (literally) “*in* (b-) the shem,” i.e., has presence-within the divine name. ‘Ana’ for *beseech* is an exclamation as in Jon 1.14: “We *beseech* you, O Lord.” Vs. 4 has for the object of ‘ana’ the *saving* (malat) of the psalmist’s life, again, reminiscent of Jonah; nephesh is used for *life*.

**Vs. 5: Gracious is the Lord and righteous; our God is merciful.** Two characteristics the psalmist recognizes in his distress: chanun (cf. Ps 111.4) and tsadyq. The second half of vs. 5 uses the first person plural pronoun as opposed to this psalm’s personal tone thus far. Rachum (from racham); a noun is *womb*.

**Vs. 6: The Lord preserves the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me.** The *simple* (pety, singular) derives from patah; it has a negative connotation in the sense of one who is silly or credulous: “The *simple* believes everything, but the prudent looks where he is going” [Prov 14.15]. The Lord has this person as the object of his shamar as in Ps 16.1: “*Preserve* me, O God, for in you I take refuge.”

The psalmist is close to identifying himself in second half of vs. 6 with a simple person, namely, when he was *brought low* or dalah, a verb which means *to hang down*; the noun *door* is also derived from this verbal root. When the psalmist-as-pety becomes so humbled, he is ready to be *saved* (yashah) or to be “Jesus-ed.”

**Vs. 7: Return, O my soul, to your rest; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.** Here the psalmist addresses his nephesh as though it were distinct from himself. *Rest* or menuchah is used as in Num 10.33 where the ark of God does the seeking: “to seek out a *resting* place for them.” Gamal as in Ps 13.6: “I will sing to the Lord

because he has *dealt bountifully* with me.” Here as in the verse at hand gamal uses the preposition hal, *on*.

**Vs. 8: For you have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.** Here *delivering* (chalats) and rest as in vs. 7 are synonymous, again, in reference to the psalmist’s nephesh. Dachah (*to stumble*) implies a pushing aside: “The wicked is *overthrown* through his evil doing” [Prov 14.32].

**Vs. 9: I walk before the Lord in the land of the living.** Such walking (future tense in the Hebrew text) can be taken in associated with Num 10.33 quoted in vs. 7, that is, as going with the ark of the Lord. In the verse at hand, such (future) walking suggests entering—like Joshua’s spies—the land of promise to spy it (cf. Jos 1.14-15) or where the promise of rest (the verbal root of menuchah, vs. 7) is located. Note that the psalmist goes *before* the Lord in imitation of the ark. Thus rest and living are equated.

**Vs. 10: I kept my faith even when I said, “I am greatly afflicted.”** Such *afflictions* (hanah being the verbal root) may apply to the difficulties experienced when Israel entered the Promised Land spied out by Joshua’s men. Me’od as *excessive* shows the extreme pains suffered during this process. Nevertheless, the psalmist as echoing Israel’s experience still *kept faith*, ‘aman being the verb used.

**Vs. 11: I said in my consternation, “Men are all a vain hope.”** Here the psalmist switches from personal affliction to the source, men as “vain hope” or in the Hebrew text, *liars* (kazav being the verbal root). He utters these words in his *consternation* or chaphaz which means *to make haste* as in Ps 31.22: “I had said in my *alarm*, I am driven far from your sight.” As noted there, the LXX has ekstasis.

**Vs. 12: What shall I render to the Lord for all his bounty to me?** Perhaps these words may apply to the psalmist in his chaphaz/ekstasis already noted. Note how easily the psalmist switches from agitation over human behavior to divine *bounty*, gamal being the verb as in vs. 7. Also the verb *to render* (shuv) is the same as *return* (vs. 7) used in conjunction with rest.

**Vs. 13: I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.** A response similar to shuv as in vss. 7 & 12; nasa’ or *lifting up*, that is, a vertical action directed towards heaven. This cup of “Jesus” (yeshuhoath) is a libation as in Ex 29.40: “a fourth of a hin of wine for a libation.” In the context of the New Testament, such a libation is equated with the divine shem or Jesus” and can allude to Christ’s sacrificial offering of himself.

**Vs. 14: I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.** A verse reminiscent of Ps 50.14: “Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and *pay your vows* to the Lord.” Refer to that section for shalam and neder. In the verse at hand, the psalmist’s (future) action is *before* (neged) “all the *people*” (ham), the congregation of Israel.

**Vs. 15: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.** A verse with New Testament overtones, especially in light of “Jesus” of vs. 13. Yaqar os used for *precious* with the sense of anything or anyone held dear. “The *lordly* price at which I was paid off by them” [Zech 11.13], referring to thirty shekels of silver, reminiscent of Judas. *Saints* are those who practice chesed and are so named. Compare “in the sight” (regarding the Lord) or literally, “in the eyes” with *before* (neged) the people of vs. 14.

**Vs. 16: O Lord, I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your handmaid. You have loosed my bonds.** The Hebrew text reads “I Lord because I am your servant.” The psalmist identifies himself as a havad and further specifies it with being the son of God’s *handmaid* (‘amah), a word implying a female slave. “If you will indeed look on the affliction of your *maid servant*” [1 Sam 1.11]. With these verse having New Testament overtones, ‘amah can intimate the Virgin Mary. “For he has regarded the low estate of his *hand maiden*” [Lk 1.48].

The *loosening* (patach) of *bonds* (moser, singular) refers to that of a yoked animal. “Now therefore do not scoff, lest your *bonds* be made strong” [Is 28.2]. Again keep in mind the Magnificat’s tone from which Lk 1.48 was cited.

**Vs. 17: I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the Lord.** Another reference to *sacrifice* (*zavach*) and *thanksgiving* (*todah*), themes found throughout the Psalter. In vs. 17 both are united with the calling upon the divine *shem*. Note the interplay of two prepositions: *to* (l-) and *in* (b-), that is, regarding the Lord and his name.

**Vs. 18: I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.** This verse is identical with vs. 14.

**Vs. 19: In the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!** The paying of vows first mentioned in vs. 14 is specified here, namely, as being in two places: the Lord's *courts* (*chatser*, singular) as in Ps 65.3: "Blessed is he whom you choose and bring near to dwell in your *courts*!" Refer to the references there, Jn 14.2 and Ex 27.9.

The psalmist moves from the (outer) plural courts to the very *midst* (*tawek*) or center of Jerusalem which was the temple. For another use, cf. Ex 14.29: "But the people of Israel walked on dry ground *through* the sea." Here *tawek* suggests passage as opposed to a dwelling or being in a specific place.

The typical exclamation *halelu-yah* concludes this psalm as with Ps 116 before it.

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### Psalm One-Hundred and Seventeen

**Vs. 1: Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples!** *Praise* (*halal*) with respect to *nations* (*goyim*) or those foreign or even hostile to Israel; *extol* (*shavach*) with respect to *peoples* (*ham*) or those not necessarily hostile to Israel. *Shavach* as in Ps 106.47: "and *glory* in your praise;" this verse refers to *nations* (*goyim*, most likely at enmity with Israel) from which the psalmist beseeches God to gather Israel.

**Vs. 2: For great is his steadfast love toward us; and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!** *Chesed* here is *steadfast* or *gavar* which implies a trait belonging to a warrior. The verbal root can also mean *to confirm*: "He shall *confirm* a covenant with many" [Dan 9.27]. *Chesed* and *gavar* thus are two opposites united as one with respect to God; both are *toward* (*hal-* or *on*) Israel.

The Lord's 'emeth may be taken separately although not necessarily and is a more transcendent characteristic as opposed to *chesed* which is noted in conjunction with people. The Hebrew text lacks "endures."

Note another instance of *halelu-yah*, the last being noted at the conclusion of Ps 116.

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