A STUDY OF WISDOM PSALMS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

by

Yeol Kim (B.Sci., M.Div., Th.M.)

Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Philosophiae Doctor

in the Faculty of Theology (School of Biblical Studies and Bible Languages)

at the North-West University

Promotor : Prof. Dr. H.F. van Rooy

Potchefstroom

2008

רֵאשִׁית חָכְמָה יִרְאַת יְהוָה
שֵׂכֶל טוֹב לְכָל-עֹשֵׂיהֶם
תְּהִלָּתוֹ עֹמֶדֶת לָעַד׃

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all who follow His precepts have good understanding.
To Him belongs eternal praise.

-- Psalm 111:10

Acknowledgement

First and foremost I would like to acknowledge the goodness and loving kindness of the LORD to my family and to me during the years in a foreign country, and especially the opportunity to study the Word of God.

On the human side, I would like to express my thanks to my promoter, Prof. Herrie, for his patience with and guidance to a weak-hearted foreign student. For many years he has encouraged me in my work, provided me with many details and suggestions for research and carefully read the manuscript. In this respect, my deep appreciation also goes to all his family for their sincere love and all the kind concern for my family and for me. Furthermore I would like to express my thanks to the professors of the Theological School Potchefstroom for their teaching and fellowship which enabled me to have a Reformed perspective on doing theology.

For the completion of my doctoral study, I am deeply indebted to many people. Hence it is a pleasure to acknowledge the support, assistance, and guidance of numerous individuals who have helped me to complete this work. Among them, I would like to stress my gratitude to some brothers and sisters in Christ for their love and prayers. It is a pity that I cannot mention their names here, because they wish to remain anonymous like the good neighbour in the Bible: "But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing" (but our Heavenly Father knows their names and their efforts!).

Many churches, ministers and congregation members have helped me by prayer and with financial support during my extended study. Among them, I would like to thank the Kosin University Church, the Boondang Central Church, the Buamjeil Church, and the Nadrim Church. I also will not forget the love and fellowship of dominee Fanie and many members of the Gereformeerde Kerk Potchefstroom-Noord. Baie Dankie aan almal! Dit was verkwiklik om by julle te wees.

I also wish to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Shinkwang Church and the Jamsiljoongang Church, since they have provided all sorts of tangible and intangible support and encouragement. During my years of ministry, they instilled in me the belief that the pursuit of the knowledge of the Word of God is my highest calling, and that ideas do have the power to change people's lives.

Finally and most importantly, I need to thank my family in Korea and in the USA. They have constantly prayed for me and supported me through many years of my study with a true bond of love in Christ. Without their love and support, this thesis would have been far less vibrant and colourful. Among them, I especially acknowledge Rev. Chong-Han Kim of blessed memory, for his spiritual insights and prayer which enabled me to maintain the spiritual balance in this study.

And most of all, my supreme gratitude goes to my wife and children. My children, Eun-Hyeong (Benjamin) and Dar-Hyong (Debbie), who have been very patient with Daddy's hours in the office for study and at least tried to remind me that there is much more to life than work. Hwa-Tae, my wife, put up with a student husband for more than two-thirds of our eighteen years of marriage. Somehow, she understood why I needed to pursue my long period of study, loved me through it, and kept me from taking myself too seriously along the way. She has unquestionably sacrificed the most for this study.

This book is therefore dedicated to my wife and children, who rekindled my interest in the true wisdom of the journey of our life.

I humbly ask the Lord of all mercy to use all the outcomes of the present study as a stepping stone towards a richer and more insightful understanding of the reality of wisdom psalms and psalmic wisdom in the Old Testament.

At completion of my doctoral study, I confess my faith with this Word:

"Whom have I in heaven but Thee?
and besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth.
My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever!"
(*Psalm 73:25-26*)

Looking forward to the Feast of Harvest (חַג הַקָּצִיר, *Exodus 23:16*)
Yeol (*Joël*) *Kim*

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations of Bible versions are used in the present study:

AB Amplified Bible (1965, by Zondervan Publishing House)

BHK Biblia Hebraica, R. Kittel (3rd *ed.* 1937, by Württembergischen Bibelanstalt)

BHS Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, K. Elliger & W. Rudolf (3rd *ed.* 1987, by Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft)

CEV Contemporary English Version (1995, by American Bible Society)

DBNV Die Bybel Nuwe Vertaling (1983, by Bybelgenootskap van Suid-Afrika)

GNB Groot Nieuws Bijbel (1987, by Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap)

GNaB Gute Nachricht Bibel (1997, by Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft)

GW God's Word (1995, by God's Word to the Nations Bible Society)

JB The Jerusalem Bible (1968, by Darton, Longman & Todd)

KJV King James (Authorized) Version (1611/1769)

LEI Leidse Vertaling (1994, by Immportantia Publishing)

LXX The Greek Septuagint (1979, by Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft)
An ancient, and best known, Greek translation from Hebrew (and Aramaic) produced by Jewish scribes for Greek-speaking Jews, and later used by Greek-speaking Christians

NASB New American Standard Bible (1977, by the Lockman Foundation)

NCV New Century Version (1984, by the International Bible Society)

NIV New International Version (1984, by the International Bible Society)

NJB The New Jerusalem Bible (2000, by Korén Publishers Jerusalem)

NKJV New King James Version (1982, by Thomas Nelson, Inc.)

NLT New Living Translation (1996, by Tyndale Charitable Trust)

NRSV New Revised Standard Version (1989, by the division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA)

RSV Revised Standard Version (1971, by the division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA)

TEV Today's English Version (1978, by American Bible Society)
TEV is commonly called as "The Good News Bible"

Vulg. Biblia Sacra Vulgata (1994, *4th edition* by Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft)
The Latin translation of the Bible prepared by Jerome, and later accepted as the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church

The following abbreviation of the Qumran Text is also used in the present study:

DTAQ Die Texte aus Qumran (4th *ed.* 1986, by Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

IV. PSALM 49 AND WISDOM

V. PSALM 112 AND WISDOM

VI. CONCLUSION and IMPLICATIONS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

1. Need for the Present Study

The Book of Psalms is one of the best-loved and most-used books of the Old Testament and has served as the primary resource for the liturgical and devotional life of the people of God throughout the centuries from very early times to the present day. The fourth-century Nicene-Church Father, Athanasius, summed up one important reason for this when he said that while most of Scripture speaks *to* us, the Psalms speak *for* us (see Lucas, 2003:1).

The Book of Psalms is a record of God's call and of His people's inspired response, enacted a thousand times in history. It exposes the pulsing heart of Biblical Israel. In it, we find the life-blood of the faith of God's people. In it are Biblical Israel's songs of faith, expressing joy and confidence in God. In it are Biblical Israel's prayers out of times of despair, tragedy and alienation. Down the centuries, the people of God have found in the Psalms the language of praise and complaint, trust and doubt, petitions and thanks, which has nourished their relationship with God. The Book of Psalms is a treasury of faith for many believers to be drawn on in every situation in life, giving expression as they do to every mood of the believer from near despair to the serenity that finds its outlet in praise and thanksgiving. It is prayed and sung by the faithful: many modern hymns, for example, are paraphrases of Psalms or have been based on Psalmic themes. The Psalter, therefore, becomes the 'portable sanctuary' of the faithful in all times and places.

In this respect, Psalms studies have traditionally been regarded as an inspirational and rich area of the Old Testament studies. By studying the Book of Psalms, we put ourselves in closest touch with the ebb and flow of the people's relationship to God. In academic circles, dozens of learned articles and books dealing with the Book of Psalms are written every year.

Yet in spite of all this attention, or maybe because of it, the study of the Book of Psalms is one of the most problematic in the Canon. When examined closely, questions surrounding authorship, setting, composition, interpretation, message, theology, application and function all contribute to the book's complexity. Anyone putting forth a new study of the Book of the Psalms, therefore, must first plot where the new work stands in relation to work that has gone before.

The first step in our study, then, is to discuss the history and present state of the subject. The purpose of our survey is to point out major problems in the previous studies on the subject of especially wisdom psalms and to find out new study directions of the subject from the present situation.

1.1 Background of the Study of Wisdom Psalms

Within the Old Testament, certain books and literature stand apart from the rest because of their marked didactic character and a quite distinctive literary style (see Clements, 1976:122). These books and literature are generally designated as wisdom literature and regarded as coming from a wisdom context (see Dell, 2000a:348). All scholars take this term, wisdom literature, when applied to the canonical Old Testament books,[1] to refer to the books of Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes (cf. Waltke & Diewert, 1999:295). Some scholars also add to these three books the Song of Songs[2] (e.g. Kaiser, 1978:165; Clifford, 1998).

---

[1] By the canonical Old Testament books in this study is meant the Protestant Old Testament. The Jewish canon (Hebrew Bible or *Tanach*) is identical with the Protestant Old Testament although in a different enumeration and arrangement. In the Apocrypha and the Roman Catholic Old Testament, some more books of wisdom literature are found, such as Ecclesiasticus (Ben Sirach) and the Wisdom of Solomon (see Bosman, 1986:1-8; Crenshaw, 1981:149-189). We also find wisdom literature in the Pseudepigrapha, e.g. 1 Esdras 3:1-5:3; Baruch 3:9-4:4; and 3 Enoch (Dell, 2000a: 351).

[2] There are also smaller sections of texts, rather than whole books, that are commonly viewed as wisdom literature (e.g. 1 Samuel 16:17; 24:13), and certain Old Testament narratives that display a particular interest in human relationships and interactions also regarded as wisdom literature (e.g. the Joseph narrative of Genesis, see Von Rad, 1966:46-50; also see, wisdom in the Old Testament

In the Psalter, we also find a number of psalms that have a certain kinship with the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. This occurrence in the Psalter of a number of psalms having special affinity with wisdom literature was first postulated by Gunkel, and identified as *Weisheitsdichtung* (wisdom poetry) (see Gunkel & Begrich, 1933:392; cf. Whybray, 1995:152). Since the time of Gunkel, almost all scholars agree that there is a category of psalms that can usefully be designated as 'wisdom psalms' (Day, 1992:54).

The task of tackling wisdom psalms, however, is a complicated one, since the investigation of wisdom literature is an awkward question in itself. The past couple of decades have seen a fascination with wisdom literature in the scholarly community and yet no real consensus has been reached on the issues of definition, nature and context of wisdom literature (see Dell, 2000b:64-76). Yet, as Morgan (1981:125) remarks, "there is, perhaps, no collection of writings outside wisdom literature itself which contains so much evidence of wisdom literary forms and teachings as the Psalms". This suggests that, while it is complex, the task of tackling wisdom psalms is worthwhile. The following survey of the research history of wisdom psalms seems to sketch the complicated situation of the study of wisdom psalms.

1.2 Historical Survey of the Study of Wisdom Psalms

It was Hermann Gunkel who first identified within the Psalter a genre that he called *Weisheitsdichtung* (wisdom poetry). Gunkel affirmed the existence of

---

narrative by Gordon, 1995:94-105). Furthermore, the so-called Succession Narrative of 2 Samuel 9-20 and 1 Kings 1-2 is included as wisdom literature by Whybray (1974:109-111) on the grounds that God is very much behind the scenes. Some scholars have even turned their attention to finding wisdom literature in the prophetic books and apocalyptic prophecy. For example, the book of Isaiah and the wise (see Whedbee, 1971; also Williamson, 1995:133-141), the book of Jeremiah and the wise (McKane, 1995:142-151), the book of Daniel and wisdom (Mastin, 1995:161-169), the book of Amos and wisdom (Terrien, 1962:108-115; also Soggin, 1995:119-123), the books of Joel and Amos and wisdom (Wolff, 1977), and the book of Hosea and wisdom (Macintosh, 1995:124-132).

Weisheitsdichtung in the Psalter, which he found, yielding form-critical and thematic elements common to both Biblical and extra-Biblical sapiential text (see Gunkel & Begrich, 1933:381-397). After he compared the Psalter to the wisdom literature in the Old Testament and wisdom writings of the ancient Near East on the ground of formal and content characteristics, he identified the following criteria: admonishing 'sons'; wisdom vocabulary (wisdom, instruction, riddles, proverbs); comparison; rhetorical question; the proverb of numbers; and benediction. He also regarded 'the fear of YHWH' and retribution as wisdom characteristics. To the category of wisdom Psalms he assigned six psalms, Psalms 1, 37, 49, 73, 112 and 128, as more fully developed wisdom psalms. He also discerned in Psalms 127 and 133 the linking of pithy proverbs although he admitted that there were other psalms showing evidence of wisdom influence (Gunkel & Begrich, 1933:381-397).

As Crenshaw (2001:87) says, however, the use of the term *Weisheitsdichtung* by Gunkel has produced more confusion than light in the scholarly community because it remains unclear what he meant by wisdom poetry. Gunkel already recognized that wisdom psalms do not constitute a *Gattung* like the other types of psalms that he identified, which is that they have no distinctive *form* of their own, but can only be distinguished by other criteria (see Gunkel & Begrich, 1933:393-394; also Whybray, 1995:152). Yet Gunkel's acceptance of the presence of sapiential discourse and existence of wisdom themes as important criteria for isolating wisdom psalms has remained a compelling methodological consideration (Kuntz, 2000:147).

As a result, since Gunkel — and until very recently — most of the discussion of this subject has been devoted to attempts to establish criteria for the identification of wisdom psalms. Amongst others, the following scholars have made remarkable contributions to the identification of wisdom psalms.

Sigmund Mowinckel (1960:205-224; also 1962:104-125), one of Gunkel's pupils, accepted his form of critical approach but struggled to understand the wisdom psalms from a different vantage point because he believed that 139 out of 150 psalms were written for cultic purposes or worship in the temple, and struggled with the

other 11 (see Mowinckel, 1962:111). He eventually named them *learned psalmography*, which originated in the circle of the sage. With respect to *learned psalmography*, however, because a life-setting within the temple liturgy did not seem to fit, Mowinckel tried to make sense of these prayers as non-cultic by nature. Rather than being oriented towards public worship, the *learned psalmography* were thought to be more private compositions that were written as *didactic prayers* directed to God, but also were intended to instruct the youth in sapiential ideas. He identified a corpus of *learned psalmography* in which he adopted Gunkel's methodology of focusing on sapiential forms and wisdom themes. On the basis of sapiential forms (saying, proverb and exhortation) and wisdom themes (theodicy, retribution, the contrast between the righteous and the wicked), Mowinckel identified the following *learned psalmography*: Psalms 1, 19B, 34, 37, 49, 78, 105, 106, 111, 112 and 127.

Mowinckel's suggestions regarding the manner whereby *learned psalmography* was utilized in the context of school instruction, which had no direct connection with official acts of worship, agreed substantially with the studies of Herman L. Jansen and P.A. Munch. According to them, wisdom poetry arose as a pious practice among the sages, who found it useful for edification and for instruction of their pupils.

Munch (1937:112-140) was very definite in speaking about *Schulandachts-psalmen* (devotional psalms) that were used in devotions at school and in the synagogue (e.g. Psalms 19B, 25, 119), and *Unterrichtspsalmen* (instructional psalms) that were used for instruction in the wisdom schools (e.g. Psalms 32 and 34, Psalms of Solomon).

Jansen (1937:55-72) acknowledged that wisdom poetry was used for edification and instruction in teaching, and that it served for purposes of prayer at home or in the Temple without being associated with official worship. He examined sapiential psalms not only in the Psalter, but also in a rather broad expanse of later intertestamental literature including the Psalms of Solomon, the Prayer of Manasseh, Sirach, the Wisdom of Solomon, Daniel, Baruch, I, II and III Maccabees, Esther, Judith and Tobit. For Jansen, the wise were responsible for the formation of late Jewish psalms in intertestamental literature. Their form and content, therefore, were

transformed by the sapiential writers who gave the originally cultic genres sapiential character and wrote them not primarily for usage in the temple cult, but rather as instructional material for sages within the circles of the wise, which are the school, temple and synagogue. While Jansen's attention was more directed to inter-testamental sapiential poems than to their Biblical counterparts, he insisted that there were wisdom psalms in the Psalter: Psalms 1, 37, 49, 73, 91, 112, 127, 128 and 133, which were written by the sages in the context of a wisdom school located near the temple for the two-fold purpose of cultic devotion and sapiential instruction.

Munch's distinction between devotional psalms and instructional psalms, however, hardly points to different social settings or traditional lists, and Jansen's comments about similarities between later psalms in Sirach and other deutero-canonical literature and *learned psalmography*, likewise, obscure a significant time-lapse (see Crenshaw, 2001:88).

In this regard, Aage Bentzen (1948:161) was more cautious when limiting wisdom compositions to Psalms 1, 112 and 127, which could show the pure type of wisdom literature. For him, Psalm 119 is no *didactic poem*, but a sort of psalm of lamentation, comprising a multitude of types of poetry. He even commented that not every psalm on contemplating the problem of retribution is *didactic* just because it is dealing with the theme. In that connection, Psalm 73 is a psalm of thanksgiving, Psalm 25 a lamentation, Psalm 37 speaks the language of gratitude. Psalm 49 is most probably — according to determination by means of examination of contents, not of form — what was called a 'psalm of confidence'. Psalm 32 is also a psalm of thanksgiving, like Psalm 49 a fulfilment of the vow. Finally, he made a following sceptical conclusion: "(T)he theory of 'didactic poems' in the Psalter has — as Mowinckel has pointed out — often been exaggerated" (Bentzen, 1948:161).

In a perceptive form-critical essay, Roland Murphy (1963:156-167) tried to distinguish 'pure wisdom psalms' from other wisdom-related psalms that could be placed in a cultic setting. Murphy (1963:156-167; see also 1969:569-602) proposed the following seven rhetorical elements in deciding on the classification of wisdom

psalms: (1) 'better than' sayings; (2) numerical sayings; (3) use of similes; (4) the address 'my son', customary in wisdom schools; (5) alphabetical acrostic pattern; (6) the approving word 'blessed'; and (7) comparisons and admonitions that are used to exhort one to good conduct.

Moving beyond stylistic form to content, Murphy extended his list of criteria for identifying wisdom psalms even further to include conventional wisdom motifs in various psalms. These include the following five wisdom motifs: (1) the juxtaposition of a sharp contrast between the righteous and the wicked; (2) practical advice about everyday human behaviour that results in either welfare or misfortune; (3) the notion of two ways; (4) fixation on the problem of retribution; and (5) the premise that 'the fear of YHWH' is the starting point of wisdom. Arguing that only a cumulative approach would suffice, Murphy identified that seven psalms could be assigned to the category of wisdom psalms: Psalms 1, 32, 34, 37, 49, 112 and 128; together with brief snippets of sapiential material: Psalms 25:8-10, 12-14; 31:24-25; 39:5-7; 40:5-6; 62:9-11; 92:7-9; 94:8-15. Murphy (1963:167) also identified the *milieu sapiential* as the appropriate background of wisdom psalms (but not precisely the 'life-setting') from which the wisdom psalms proceed, because there is no reason to postulate such a *milieu* for the others, which show wisdom influence.

Eissfeldt (1965:124-127) also found some psalms of an instructional nature. He recognized that some of these, in the style of the hymn, extol the high value of wisdom. Others, like the wisdom sayings, contain admonitions to goodness and warnings against evil, while yet others raise a problem, more precisely the vexatious problem as to why so often things go well for the godless but badly for the pious. For the origin of wisdom poems, he insisted that these poems derived from the circles of the wise who here go beyond the form of the wisdom saying which is really their original province and make use of the song form for the expression of their feelings, reflections, admonitions and warnings. Therefore these wisdom poems reveal a whole wealth of indications to show that their compilers are very familiar with the wisdom sayings.

At the same time, Eissfeldt admitted that the boundaries between the type to

which the songs belong within the Psalter and outside it, are everywhere fluid, so there is only limited validity in separating out the wisdom songs from among them. Yet, he identified the following wisdom poems in the Psalter, which belong here at any rate: Psalms 1, 37, 49, 73, 78, 91, 112, 128 and 133. After making some explanations of the wisdom character of a certain group of wisdom poems, he again concluded: "(I)t nevertheless remains true that the real home of this type of poetry is not the cultus, but the realm of the wise" (see Eissfeldt, 1965:127).

For Gerhard von Rad (1970:69-71), wisdom psalms remain obscure for one cannot speak of a particular *Gattung* of didactic prayers. According to him, we do not have the criteria to determine non-cultic psalms. Von Rad saw the general impression of the didactic quality and a prevalent theological reflection to point out non-cultic psalms. These psalms belong to several *Gattungen* used by the wisdom teachers as a channel to explain their own insights and problems. He called theses psalms prayers in the mouth of the wise. They have a dual character, viz. that of a prayer to God and of education for learners, with prayer as dominant characteristic. Typical of the way in which the prayer became a literary form, for Von Rad, is the note that is formed by those poems that deal with meditations or solutions for those problems that threaten faith. Another group is the Torah-psalms, which celebrate the revelation of YHWH's will as the source of all knowledge and as an indispensable guide in life. The *Gattung* of the *Gerichtsdoxologie* (judgment doxology) was also first developed into an important literary prayer-form by these teachers. Grounded in his own view of wisdom psalms, Von Rad included the following 11 Psalms into the group of wisdom psalms: Psalms 1, 34, 37, 49, 73, 111, 112, 119, 127, 128 and 139. Among those wisdom psalms, Psalms 49, 73 and 139 are, especially, *die Problem–oder Reflexionsdichtungen* (the problem or reflection poetry).

R.B.Y. Scott (1971:190-201) pointed out the vagueness on which psalms are characterised as wisdom psalms. He found that most scholars think Psalms 1, 37, 49 and 112 are wisdom psalms. He analyzed these four psalms and extracted from them wisdom criteria that he used as a key to unlock the rest of the psalms in finding wisdom psalms. After analyzing four psalms, he formulated some formal and

thematic criteria. According to him, the most important formal feature is that these Psalms are not addressed to YHWH in prayer or praise but to people. The tone is also in varying degrees hortatory, didactic, testifying and reflective. For him, the second formal feature is the use of some wisdom vocabulary and turns of phrase, and the adoption of wisdom stylistic forms such as proverbs, precepts, similes, illustrations from nature, rhetorical questions, and the teacher's call for attention, and the alphabetical structure. For the use of wisdom vocabulary, especially, Scott made a notable contribution to provide the list of 77 wisdom vocabulary terms that might prove "useful in assessing wisdom influence in other parts of the Old Testament such as the prophetic writings and the psalms" (see Scott, 1971:121-122).

As for content, he pointed out the following criteria: (1) the antithetical ways of life of the righteous and the wicked; (2) the appropriate rewards and retribution in store for each; (3) the qualities and behaviour of the righteous as evoking admiration and imitation; (4) the study of the written Torah as the focus of pious meditation and as a source of delight; (5) the worth of righteousness expressed in terms of life and vitality; (6) affirmation of and exhortation to personal trust in YHWH; and (7) the search for the understanding of problems of faith. From the greatest measure of affinity with the quartet of psalms, Scott selected the following twelve psalms as wisdom psalms: Psalms 1, 19B, 32, 34, 37, 49, 78, 112, 119, 127, 128 and 133.

J. Kenneth Kuntz (1974:186-222) has contributed an indepth analysis of wisdom psalms; a study distinguished by an explicit delineation of methodological criteria and their application to possible wisdom psalms. He used rhetorical (formal) and thematic (semantic) wisdom criteria to select the wisdom psalms. He deduced evidence of four kinds: (1) rhetorical elements; (2) vocabulary; (3) thematic elements; and (4) form. He especially focused on seven rhetorical and four thematic criteria that figure in the establishment of a wisdom psalm classification. In ascending order of importance, Kuntz's seven rhetorical criteria are: (1) the 'better' saying (*tôb-Spruch*); (2) numerical saying; (3) admonitory address to sons; (4) rhetorical question; (5) simile; (6) admonition (*Mahnspruch*) with and without motive clause; and (7) *'ašrê* formula. Kuntz's four crucial, and oft-related, thematic

elements that dominate psalmic wisdom are: (1) the fear of Yahweh and veneration of his Torah; (2) the contrasting life styles of the righteous and wicked; (3) the reality and inevitability of retribution; and (4) miscellaneous counsels on everyday conduct. Moreover, the stylistic nature of psalmic wisdom is further characterized by the alphabetic acrostic arrangement of cola in Psalms 34, 37 and 112, and by abundant second-person discourse directed horizontally to men, rather than vertically to God. On this basis, Kuntz accepted R.E. Murphy's seven candidates and nominated two others — Psalms 127 and 133. For Psalm 127, he found the prominent tone of impersonal observation (*Spruch*, discourse), suggestive simile in verse 4, *'ašrê* formula in verse 5, and thematic focus on the safe and happy family. Also in Psalm 133, he found celebration of fraternal harmony and use of the declarative proverb. Kuntz, therefore, tried to make a case for nine wisdom psalms: Psalms 1, 32, 34, 37, 49, 112, 127, 128 and 133. Recently, he added Psalm 73 in his identification because he thought the wisdom dimensions of this poem are of sufficient magnitude to warrant its inclusion to wisdom psalms (Kuntz, 2000:149).

Kuntz concludes his investigation by briefly considering two different areas: the delineation of literary structure of wisdom psalms and the possible life situations in which they evolved. For the first consideration, Kuntz places wisdom psalms within three subcategories that are based on literary structures: 'sentence wisdom psalms' (Psalms 127, 128 and 133); 'acrostic wisdom psalms' (Psalms 34, 37 and 112); and 'integrative wisdom psalms' (Psalms 1, 32 and 49). For the possible social context for wisdom psalms, Kuntz suggested possible cultic (temple and synagogue) and non-cultic (home, street, city gate, court) life-setting, though he concluded that this matter continues to defy special precision.

Perdue (1977:261-343) also notably contributed to our topic, seeing that he offered a copious chapter covering 'didactic poems and wisdom psalms' in his published dissertation, *Wisdom and Cult*. As far as the methodology of identifying wisdom psalms is concerned, he added the methodology of new stylistics, namely a method of investigation of the sapiential structure, to the commonly used criteria of the presence of sapiential forms, language and themes. On the ground of his

methodology, Perdue scrutinized eleven psalms that he embraced as 'long didactic poems', attesting to the talents of both pre-Exilic and post-Exilic Israelite sages. Based on his assumption that one simple wisdom form plays a central role in each of the poems under inspection, he organized them according to three subcategories.

The first category of long didactic poems is the 'proverb poem' in which an extended poem may appropriate elements from sapiential categories such as the instruction or from the major psalmodic genres such as the thanksgiving and the lament, but the structure and content of the poem are developed around a simple proverbial saying. Psalms of this category are Psalms 1, 34, 37, 73, 112, 19B and 127. The second subcategory of didactic poetry is the *'ašrê poem* in which a 'happy' saying provides the basic for the content and structure of the developed poem. There are two such didactic poems in the Psalter: Psalms 32 and 119. The third category of didactic poetry is that of 'riddle poems', a classification based on the presence of one or two riddles that provide the structure and content of the developed poem. Two psalms could be included within this category: Psalms 49 and 19A.

After long analyses of didactic poems, Perdue (1977:323-324) convincingly concluded that not only are these poems characterized by wisdom language (forms and terms) and themes, but also by a didactic structure that at times focuses on a brief wisdom form: a proverb, a riddle, or an *'ašrê* saying. For the milieu and purpose of the poems, he regarded the poems as originating in a wisdom context, possibly a school, and used for instructional purposes, though it is possible that several were intended to serve as the contributions of certain sages to cultic literature. For him, Psalms 19 and 119 were probably written by pious, post-Exilic sages who considered Torah to be the focal point of true, divine wisdom. At the same time, several didactic poems were reflective poems, which dealt with the theology and ritual of the lament-thanksgiving cycle as the proper, sagacious response to suffering. Psalms 32 and 34 contain model thanksgiving psalms while Psalm 73 is comparable to the Sumerian 'man and his God', 'I will praise the Lord of wisdom', and Job, in that the poet anguishes over the authenticity of the faith and practice of the lament-thanksgiving cycle. Finally, Perdue found a number of didactic poems that are

neither cultic literature not reflections and instructions that broach the cultic realm. These didactic psalms are Psalms 1, 37, 49, 112 and 127. Perdue (1977:324) suggested that their inclusion in the Psalter is probably due to the editorial work of post-Exilic scribes who included these didactic poems along with the cultic psalms.

Following the popular criteria for the identification of wisdom psalms, Walter C. Kaiser (1978:165-166) used two categories of the criteria, namely formal (literary style) and thematic (content), for distinguishing wisdom psalms. According to him, the following distinct style of wisdom psalms may be assembled: (1) alphabetic structure such as acrostic psalms; (2) numerical sayings, e.g. 'three yea four'; (3) 'blessed' sayings (*'ašrê*); (4) 'better' sayings; (5) comparisons, admonitions; (6) the address of father to son; (7) the use of wisdom vocabulary and turns of phrases; and (8) the employment of proverbs, similes, rhetorical questions and words such as 'listen to me'. He also found the following examples of wisdom themes: (1) the problem of retribution; (2) the division between the righteous and the wicked; (3) exhortations to trust personally in the Lord; (4) the fear of the Lord; and (5) the meditation on the written law of God as a source of delight. Using both the formal and thematic criteria, Kaiser found four psalms, Psalms 1, 37, 49 and 112, as easily classified wisdom psalms. Then he added Psalms 19B, 32, 34, 78, 111, 119, 127, 128 and 133 to the wisdom category along with the four wisdom books of the Old Testament namely Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon.

A more exacting investigation of the vocabulary unique to wisdom literature and Psalms came from Hurvitz's (1988:41-51) exemplary study. His working hypothesis is that if there is such a thing as 'wisdom psalms', we might assume that these texts have absorbed words and expressions that were current specifically in wisdom literature. By identifying phraseology and terminology characteristic of wisdom literature, he found only one word, the noun *hōn* (הון: *wealth*) and one expression, the imperative *sūr mērā'* (סור מרע: *turn from evil*), which are indicative of their peculiar wisdom milieu. In other words, for Hurvitz, on the basis of language, both compositions may definitely be classified as 'wisdom psalms'. Minimally then,

this approach associates four psalms with sapiential speech (Psalms 112:3 and 119:14 have הון; Psalms 34:15 and 37:27 use סור מרע). Hurvitz's attempt to isolate a distinctive terminology in the Psalter that is lacking in the Old Testament beyond the classical wisdom books is helpful but not definitive because such an analysis is by nature limited, since it seeks to reveal the 'wisdom dimension' of certain psalms by means of linguistic criteria alone.

An alternative investigation of wisdom psalms came from Whybray (1995: 152-160; see also 1996:36-87) who continuously holds the opinion that there was in Biblical Israel an intellectual tradition, which was the product of the educated class (see Whybray, 1974:70-71). He insisted that this wisdom tradition was carried over and carried further than just the books of Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. In this regard, for Whybray, the relationship between wisdom piety and the Torah piety of the late post-Exilic period was a close one although the two are not identical. Furthermore, the Torah psalms and wisdom psalms might be considered together because both types of psalms stand out thematically from the generality of the Psalms and in general present the same problems for the composition of the Psalter.

From this ground, his concern moved to whether and to what extent older psalms, originally intended for cultic use, may have been reinterpreted or reoriented by means of additions or interpolations in order to make them suitable for devotional or instructional use. It is important to discover whether there was a systematic editorial attempt to convert the collection of psalms into a wisdom or Torah Psalter. His primary concern, therefore, related to canonical structure of wisdom psalms in the Psalter.

As far as Whybray's criteria for wisdom psalms are concerned, the term 'wisdom psalm' can only properly be used of a psalm that employs modes of thought especially characteristic of the books that are generally recognized as wisdom literature in the Old Testament: this means primarily Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes. The literary form of such psalms is not of main importance because the wisdom

literature employs a number of different forms, and there is no single characteristic form. In this manner, a wisdom psalm does not necessarily take the form of a prayer addressed to God, but rather of a lesson addressed to the reader.

Instead, the characteristic language or terminology used by some wisdom books is usually a pointer to it being a wisdom psalm when it occurs in a psalm. Another equally clear pointer is a disposition to reflection, especially on personal experiences and on the problems and implications of religious faith and of the human condition in general. Therefore Whybray's (1996:37) surest criterion for wisdom psalms is a general conformity to the concerns of wisdom literature proper.

From his criteria mentioned above, Whybray designated twelve psalms as pure wisdom psalms (Psalms 8, 14, [=53], 25, 34, 39, 49, 73, 90, 112, 127, 131 and 139). He also thought the sages often inserted brief sections into various psalms to give them a sapiential character (Psalms 18:21-25; 27:11; 32:8-9; 86:11; 92:6-10, 13-15; 94:8-15, [12-13 is secondary]; 105:45; 107; 43; 111:2; 144:3-4; 146:3-4).

In his introduction to Old Testament wisdom and in his recent articles, James L. Crenshaw (1981:181-183; see also 2000:9-17; 2003:155-158) was sceptical of the efforts of researchers to find the influence of wisdom in literature outside the books of Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. He noted the disparity that exists among the scholars concerning which psalms should belong to this category. He also referred to the difficulties that beset the scholars in explicitly distinguishing the boundaries between psalms that are actually written by the wise and those that demonstrate sapiential influence in terms of forms and themes.

Yet, he did not deny that the wise of Israel took part in cultic life and influenced it directly even though we know so little about the authors of wisdom psalms and their social context. He thus wanted to limit himself to what can definitely be affirmed: some psalms resemble wisdom literature in stressing the importance of learning, struggling to ascertain life's meaning, and employing proverbial lore (Crenshaw, 2000:15). From this view, he proceeded to examine possible psalmodic candidates for this wisdom genre. He mentioned two groups of psalms that show the affinity between the psalms and wisdom: viz. discussion literature (Psalms 37, 39, 49

and 73) dealing with the fairness of God in the light of the welfare of the wicked, and Torah meditation (Psalm 1) dealing with the prosperity of those who live according to the Torah.

The latest investigation of wisdom psalms came from C. Hassell Bullock (2001: 199-212), although his main concern is related to the literary structure and the theological motif in wisdom psalms. He nevertheless made a valuable contribution for identifying wisdom psalms. He had taken R.B.Y. Scott's list of seventy-seven wisdom vocabulary terms, added some of his own, and used the list to analyze wisdom psalms.[3] On one occasion, John Day (1992:54) asked an intricate question of the classification of particular psalms as wisdom psalms due to the difficulty of deciding how many wisdom characteristics a psalm must possess before it may legitimately be so described. For this question, Bullock (2001:204) answered that "it depends on the preponderance of wisdom ideas (motifs), which is really the primary criterion for determining whether a psalm is a wisdom psalm". Then he made a similar conclusion to the most scholars in identification of wisdom psalms that "it seems appropriate to type a psalm as a wisdom psalm when it meets criteria, style as well as motif, (*which he*) outlined". On this basis, he had identified Psalms 32, 34, 37, 49, 73, 112, 127, 128 and 133 as wisdom psalms.

Then we must hear a voice from South Africa. In his two articles, the South African specialist of wisdom literature, J.A. Burger, made a decent contribution to compile a set of criteria to be used to identify wisdom psalms in the Psalter (see Burger, 1991: 213-230; also 1989:75-95). After researching major opinions on the discussions of the identification of wisdom psalms by prominent scholars, he evaluated the formal as well as the content aspects of the wisdom criteria for identifying wisdom psalms. He also made an evaluation of the wisdom criteria in comparison with the traditional wisdom books of Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. His main concern for evaluating the wisdom criteria was to avoid an arbitrary way of

[3] For the valuable numbered list of wisdom terms, see Bullock, 2001:204.

using content and formal wisdom criteria.

After evaluating content as well as formal wisdom criteria, he ascertained that the formal and content criteria might be used together in recognizing wisdom psalms. For formal criteria, he found the following 10 criteria: (1) the 'blessing' formula; (2) the 'better' proverb; (3) the alphabetic structure; (4) the numbers proverb; (5) the 'son' formula; (6) the rhetorical question; (7) the comparison; (8) the admonishment; (9) wisdom vocabulary; and (10) the proverb. For content criteria, he recognized the following 6 criteria: (1) the righteous against the wicked; (2) retribution; (3) the two ways; (4) the fear of YHWH; (5) respect for the Torah; and (6) practical advice for everyday life.

In the conclusion of his article, *Wysheidskriteria vir die klassifikasie van psalms as wysheidspsalms* (Wisdom criteria for classification of psalms and wisdom psalms), Burger (1991:228-229) again sounded a note of warning that these criteria may not be used haphazardly, but a certain discipline should be applied. Then he formulated the following norm for identifying wisdom psalms: an increased number of content as well as formal wisdom characteristics should be present, and several of both should be present together in a wisdom psalm. Keeping his own norm, he identified the following as wisdom psalms: Psalms 1, 32, 34, 37, 49, 112, 127 and 128.

From the historical survey reflected above of the research on wisdom psalms, one can recognize that there is a group of psalms that has a sufficient commonality of stylistic, structural, thematic and contextual characteristics, and that has a close affinity with other wisdom literature of the Old Testament to justify their label as wisdom psalms. The exact number and the precise criteria for the identification of wisdom psalms, nonetheless, remain as debated problems amongst scholars.

1.3 A New Direction for the Study of Wisdom Psalms

The historical survey reflected above of the study of wisdom psalms helps us to clarify the present situation of the study subject and points out some necessary directions of the study.

First of all, the historical survey on the subject shows that a little progress has been made along the study of the identification of wisdom psalms, seeing that there is still quite an amount of difference of opinion concerning the criteria and the number of psalms that should be included in this category (Anderson, 2000:188; also see Crenshaw, 2001: 87-95). As Murphy (1976:456) already predicted, "no two authors will agree in listing these psalms".

As a result, some scholars are very cynical about the scholarly pursuit of the identification of wisdom psalms. Ivan Engnell (1970:99) held a position that "the Book of Psalms does not contain any 'wisdom poems', at all" based on a cultic perception of the Psalter in which he was heavily invested. In his essay on Psalm 73, J. Luyten (1979:63) affirmed that "a genre 'wisdom psalm' as such cannot be reconstructed". In his presidential address to the Society of Biblical Literature, James L. Mays (1987:3) also asserted that "the classification 'wisdom psalms' is itself ambiguous". Recently, James Crenshaw's minimalist perception of wisdom psalms seems to equate the scholarly search for the identification of wisdom psalms with a 'chasing after wind' to use Qoheleth's phrase (see Kuntz, 2003:145; cf. Crenshaw, 2001:87-95). Consequently, Crenshaw wants to be content with holding gold dust in his hand rather than discovering gold nuggets from the study of wisdom psalms after having a harsh argument with Kuntz on the research problem of the classification of wisdom psalms (see Crenshaw, 2000:9-17; Kuntz, 2003:145-154; and Crenshaw, 2003:155-158).

Thus far, we cannot expect the scholars in our topic to sing in unison. Admittedly, any answer to the question of the criteria identifiable in a given psalm as a wisdom psalm could be rather arbitrary. However, by finding a different bypass for the study of wisdom psalms, it might be possible to discover nuggets of gold, which enrich our understanding of Biblical wisdom literature, rather than specks of gold dust (see Kuntz, 2003:152-153; cf. Crenshaw, 2003:155-158). Therefore, we must establish the problem of the study of wisdom psalms from a different angle, namely not from the phenomenon but from the root.

This complicated question of the categorization of wisdom psalms, if we think

about the root of the problem, seems to be the result of the deductive character of traditional form criticism in which psalms are forced to be grouped into similar modes without regard for the individuality of each psalm (see Muilenburg, 1969:1-18; also Longman, 1985:58-60). Those problems of subjectivity and overgeneralization are generally regarded as the greatest dangers of psalm studies (see Howard, 1999:366-368).

Then the question arises as to why we continue to pursue this line of study, especially while a large number of studies have been conducted on the discussion of determining the criteria for wisdom psalms, but little is known about the content and message of wisdom psalms. Then why we do not move our study in another direction?

This question brings us to the task of careful reading of wisdom psalms in order to understand their specific content and message. There especially is a shift of current scholarly attention in psalm study, as Mays (1995:152) rightly observes, from focusing on psalms grouped according to categories and on the setting, to a concern with distinctive literary features of particular psalms. Crenshaw (1995:32) also says that "the current interest in aesthetics — which is literary artistry — throughout the Hebrew scriptures will naturally extend to wisdom literature" when he predicts the general direction in which the study of wisdom literature will move (see also West, 1992:423-431). Therefore a study of literary artistry of wisdom psalms, such as the poetic, stylistic and rhetorical features, is demanded in order to understand the specific content and message of wisdom psalms.

Another relevant question that needs to be clarified is the question concerning the context of wisdom psalms. Wisdom psalms have traditionally been regarded as essentially literary compositions from a late period, possibly part of the final editing of the Psalter (see Dell, 2000a:368). Wisdom psalms thus are regarded as having given the Psalter its final form and are generally regarded as non-cultic by nature (e.g. Mowinckel, 1960:205-244; see also Dell, 2004:445-447). It has recently been increasingly recognized, however, that to deny that such compositions can be used

for purposes of worship is to take a very narrow view of worship (Whybray, 1995:154). At the same time, wisdom and worship of Israel may have found important points of contact from earliest times, as shown by the close integration of different genres in wisdom psalms and in the hint of wisdom influence found more widely in the Psalter (see Dell, 2000a:368; cf. Farmer, 1998a:149-150). As a result, this complicated question concerning the context of wisdom psalms demands a balanced inductive form-critical discussion in which the form-critical questions are elucidated from the texts themselves (see Longman, 1985:59-60). The present study therefore suggests that, without a careful study of the content of wisdom psalms, the literary genre and life-setting of wisdom psalms would be difficult to wield. In each case the question of context of wisdom psalms therefore is subordinate to the question of content in the present study.

As far as the question of the context of wisdom psalms is concerned, the canonical context of wisdom psalms needs to be considered as well, since there has been a paradigm shift in Biblical studies whereby texts are now read as literary entities and canonical entireties (see Howard, 1999:329). This is manifested in the studies of the Psalter in several ways, the most important of which is the attention to the Psalter as a coherent book, as a canonical whole (cf. Howard, 1999:329). The initiative of this canonical approach to the Psalter was taken by Childs who observed that form criticism "seems now to be offering diminishing returns" (Childs, 1976: 378). Childs suggests that the move beyond form criticism be made by directing attention to the final shape of the Psalter in order to determine how the meaning of individual psalms may be affected by their titles and by their placement in the canonical structure of the Psalter (see McCann, 1993a:18). Since Childs, scholars have devoted a great deal of attention to investigating the canonical structure of the Psalter (see Howard, 1999:332-344). Although this has renewed the interest in the study of the canonical shape of the Psalter, the discussion of the question of wisdom psalms in a broader canonical context has recently been introduced by Wilson (1992:129-142) and Whybray (1995:152-160). Wilson's study, however, is a proposal about what he calls 'wisdom frame' in the Psalter, and Whybray's

discussion is limited to the so-called *Torah*-psalms (for him, Psalms 1 and 119). An investigation of the canonical shape of wisdom psalms therefore is needed in order to gain an understanding of wisdom psalms in a broader canonical context. How the canonical context creates or reinforces theological message of wisdom psalms should therefore be considered for the present study.

From this perspective, the present study proposes that the new direction the study of wisdom psalms should follow is the direction of focusing more on the content first, then context and theological message of wisdom psalms. The importance of this new direction has been recently recognized by some scholars. Kuntz recently insisted that "as is the case with royal psalms, content more than form defines wisdom psalms" (Kuntz, 2003:151). Dell's recent studies on wisdom psalms find a similar problem: "One problem with ranging wisdom psalms together on the basis of form is that the wisdom grouping is not really a form-critical category because the links tend to be more thematic than formal" (Dell, 2000b:65). McCann says in the theological introduction to psalms, "my interest is not simply literary matters as such, but rather ... how repetition highlights theological content" (McCann, 1993a:19).

The present study therefore attempts not to add one more to the many attempts at identifying wisdom psalms in the Psalter, but to consider the question as to what the content, context and theological implications of wisdom psalms are. This is the central problem to be researched in this study.

The main aim of the present study therefore is to read wisdom psalms more effectively in order to grasp their content, context and theological implications. In this way, the central theoretical argument of this study is that beneficial insights and perspectives on wisdom psalms, and subsequently on wisdom literature of the Old Testament in general, can be achieved when more attention is paid to their content first, then to their context and theological implications. In other words this study is interested in what wisdom psalms teach about God and God's wisdom with regard to humanity and its commission, and what the purpose of wisdom psalms is.

2. Methodology and Scope

2.1 Methodological Consideration for the Study of Wisdom Psalms

Recent discussions of Biblical interpretation illustrate its complexity as Tate (1997:xxii) rightly expressed: "(S)cholars have dislodged the text from its historical mooring and set it adrift in a sea of relativity, where there are as many meanings of the text as there are waves of the sea". This complexity can be regarded as the result of the use of a diversity of exegetical methods. Most scholars, however, have a certain exclusivity that manifests itself when they claim that their own specific approach and accompanying method is the only legitimate one, and the only one that can lead to valid results (Kim & Van Rooy, 2000:285). Due to this 'exclusivity within diversity', Jonker specifies the necessity of a multidimensional exegetical approach that "evade(s) the problems posited by variety and exclusivity in exegetical praxis" (Jonker, 1993:102). A multidimensional approach does not mean that one 'super method' is created by amalgamating the 'strong' points of every available exegetical strategy. Such a methodological integration would be eclectic and subjective, and would deny the plurality of existing approaches (Kim & Van Rooy, 2000:285). Rather a multidimensional approach attempts to understand and establish the relationship between the facets of this complexity (cf. Jonker, 1998:2). In this regard, a multidimensional reading can be presented in its own way according to the literary context of the text, due to the fact that the exact application of the interpretative process depends on the particular text and its context.

For the interpretative process of the poetic literature, a three-dimensional reading used along with the lines of semiotic literary theory is suggested by some South African scholars (see Prinsloo, 1992:225-251; Prinsloo, 1994:78-83; also Gräbe, 1990:43-59; cf. Kim & Van Rooy, 2005:113-115). This is the intra-textual, extra-textual and inter-textual reading of the poetic text. Semiotic literary theory's

basic premise is that texts are determined by a number of codes that are essentially social in character. The extra-textual relations refer to biographical particulars of the author and author's world (cultural and social environment). Inter-textual relations refer to the relations between a specific text of the same author or date or genre or similar theme and motif. Intra-textual relations refer to the network of relations that exist at different levels in any given text. In this regard, the analysis of intra-textual relations is of the utmost importance for the interpretation of the text (Gräbe, 1984:137-138). This importance of the intra-textual relations is based on the communicative function of the Biblical text, since the communicative interaction can only become known to the interpreters through and by means of the texts (more specifically Biblical texts) (see Prinsloo, 1994:83; also Jonker, 1996:404; cf. Deist, 1986:17-38). Therefore a valid interpretative process should start from the reading of the intra-textual relations. The next step should be the reading of the extra-textual relations based on the insight obtained from the study of the intra-textual relations in order to avoid the danger of the subjectivity in reconstructing the environment of the text by imposing the reader's own idea (see Kim & Van Rooy, 2003:468-469). Following this, the inter-textual relations should be considered with the outcomes obtained from both the preceding relations (the intra-textual and the extra-textual relations). At the level of the inter-textual relations, one must be aware of the danger of subjectivity again, because one could discover inter-textual affinities from every relationship, even from every word. Therefore a certain guideline for the inter-textual reading must be given, such as morphological, syntactic and semantic (thematic) affinities (see Tanner, 2001:49-56).

As considered, this kind of three-dimensional reading, namely the intra-textual, the extra-textual and inter-textual reading is in correspondence with the main concern of the present study. From the intra-textual reading, the text's basic codes will emerge to clarify the content of the proposed wisdom psalms. Then the extra-textual reading will help the reader to understand how the content functions in its context with regard to the context of wisdom psalms. Finally, the inter-textual reading will help the reader to understand the way in which the content is

theologised with other inter-textually related texts concerning the theological implications of wisdom psalms. Therefore the present study will employ the three-dimensional reading, namely the intra-textual reading, the extra-textual reading and the inter-textual reading, in order to study the content, context and theological implications of wisdom psalms more effectively.

2.2 Scope and Procedure of the Study of Wisdom Psalms

As this study is an attempt at a thorough exegesis of wisdom psalms, a preliminary process of selection of certain wisdom psalms is necessary. While scholars differ widely from one another in categorizing certain psalms into the group of wisdom psalms, some kind of scholarly consensus is reached on some psalms as indicated in the listing below.

	Suggested Wisdom Psalms by Scholars																								
Gunkel	1							37		49	73						112			128					
Mowinckel	1			19B			34	37		49		78			105	106	111	112		127					
Munch				19B	25	32	34												119						
Jansen	1							37		49	73			91				112		127	128		133		
Bentzen	1																	112		127					
Eissfeldt	1							37		49	73	78		91				112			128		133		
Murphy	1					32	34	37		49								112			128				
Von Rad	1						34	37		49	73						111	112	119	127	128				139
Scott	1			19B		32	34	37		49		78						112	119	127	128		133		
Kuntz	1					32	34	37		49	73							112		127	128		133		
Perdue	1			19		32	34	37		49	73							112	119	127					
Kaiser	1			19B		32	34	37		49		78					111	112	119	127	128		133		
Hurvitz							34	37										112	119						
Whybray		8	14		25		34		39	49	73		90					112		127		131		139	
Crenshaw	1							37	39	49	73														
Bullock						32	34	37		49	73							112		127	128		133		
Burger	1					32	34	37		49								112		127	128				
TOTAL Nomination	13	1	1	5	2	8	12	14	2	14	9	4	1	2	1	1	3	15	6	11	10	1	6	2	

As can be seen from the list above, there is a core list of wisdom psalms that occurs in most scholars' identification, namely Psalms 1, 37, 49 and 112. Furthermore, the wisdom elements and themes are so dominant in those psalms, these four psalms are often called 'authentic wisdom psalms' or '*bona fide* wisdom psalms' or 'easily classified wisdom psalms' (see Scott, 1971:192-197; Kaiser, 1978:166; and Kuntz 2003:151-152). Therefore it is logical to choose those four wisdom psalms as the main objects of the study, seeing that the main concern of the present study is an investigation of the dominant content, and its context and theological implications of wisdom psalms. Thus the present study will concentrate on a thorough exegesis of those four 'authentic wisdom psalms' in order to understand their unique content, context and theological implications. In turn, why these psalms are easily classified as wisdom psalms, will be clarified as the present study progresses.

Based on the aim and methodology of the study, the following steps are the proposed procedure of the present study:

After the introductory observations in Chapter I, a comprehensive reading of each wisdom psalm based on suggested three-dimensional reading, namely the intra-textual reading, the extra-textual reading and the inter-textual reading, will be undertaken in Chapters II–V; one chapter for each wisdom psalm. For each wisdom psalm, a short introductory remark will be given for the first part of the study of each wisdom psalm. Then the Massoretic Text and the author's own translation of each wisdom psalm will be presented with some discussions of translation problems in order to establish the best textual base for the study. Next the poetic structure and poetic content of each wisdom psalm will be analysed, based on the intra-textual reading of the psalm. Thereafter the literary genre and life-setting of each wisdom psalm will be taken into consideration, based on the preceding study of poetic content and its extra-textual clue from the content. From then on, the canonical context of each wisdom psalm will be discussed on the basis of inter-textual

relationships of the psalm. Finally, all the preceding study outcomes will be synthesised in order to grasp the overall message of each wisdom psalm specifically with regard to the wisdom perspective of the psalm and its theological implications.

In the conclusion of the present study, a comparison regarding the similarities and differences of the content, context and theological emphasis within the proposed wisdom psalms will be presented in order to synthesize the entire study outcome and its overall theological implications. Thereafter, some remarks of the possible practical theological implications of wisdom psalms and some suggestions for future research on the topic of wisdom psalms will also be presented as an application of the present study for the contemporary readers.

CHAPTER II

PSALM 1

and

WISDOM

Chapter II
PSALM 1 AND WISDOM

1. Introduction

Our first promising candidate for the study of wisdom psalms is Psalm 1. To begin the study of wisdom psalms with Psalm 1 is meaningful because this psalm both invites and encourages God's people to meditate the Torah of YHWH. In terms of Psalm 1, the present study also can be figured out as an endeavour of meditating the Torah of YHWH. As blessing is promised for those who meditates the Torah of YHWH, the present study also anticipates to be blessed with those blessings: "(T)hose are happy who apply their endeavour to heavenly wisdom" (Calvin, 1965:25).

This psalm is often titled 'the two ways' or 'choice between two ways': the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked; the way of wise and the way of folly. The 'way' in Psalm 1 could be understood as a metaphor of life's journey. In this respect, the present study can also be regarded as a journey of seeking the wise way of reading the wisdom psalms. Thus it is again meaningful to start this journey with the signpost of the wise way in Psalm 1.

In order to seek the blessed and wise way of heavenly wisdom, the present study will now proceed to analyse the poetic features of Psalm 1, and afterwards attempt to show how the poetic features of this psalm can help us to understand the content, the context and the message of the psalm.

This chapter will be organized in accordance with the study procedure as considered in the introduction of the present study. After presenting the Massoretic Text of Psalm 1, a translation will be proposed with some discussions of translation problems in order to establish the best textual base for the study. Then the poetic structure and content of Psalm 1 will be analysed, based on an intra-textual reading

of the psalm. Thereafter the literary genre and life-setting of Psalm 1 will be taken into consideration, based on the preceding study of poetic content and its extra-textual clue from the content. From then on, the canonical context of Psalm 1 will be discussed on the basis of inter-textual relationships of the psalm. Finally, all the preceding study outcomes will be synthesised in order to grasp the overall message of Psalm 1 with specific regard to the wisdom perspective of the psalm and its implications.

2. Text and Translation of Psalm 1

Text

1	אַשְׁרֵי הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא הָלַךְ בַּעֲצַת רְשָׁעִים
	וּבְדֶרֶךְ חַטָּאִים לֹא עָמָד וּבְמוֹשַׁב לֵצִים לֹא יָשָׁב:
2	כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה חֶפְצוֹ וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ יֶהְגֶּה יוֹמָם וָלָיְלָה:
3	וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ שָׁתוּל עַל־פַּלְגֵי מָיִם
	אֲשֶׁר פִּרְיוֹ יִתֵּן בְּעִתּוֹ וְעָלֵהוּ לֹא־יִבּוֹל
	וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה יַצְלִיחַ:
4	לֹא־כֵן הָרְשָׁעִים
	כִּי אִם־כַּמֹּץ אֲשֶׁר־תִּדְּפֶנּוּ רוּחַ:
5	עַל־כֵּן לֹא־יָקֻמוּ רְשָׁעִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט וְחַטָּאִים בַּעֲדַת צַדִּיקִים:
6	כִּי־יוֹדֵעַ יְהוָה דֶּרֶךְ צַדִּיקִים וְדֶרֶךְ רְשָׁעִים תֹּאבֵד:

Translation[3]

1[4] *a.* Blessed is the man

[3] This is my own translation. All quotations from Psalm 1 in this study are taken from this

b. who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,

c. nor stands in the way of sinners,

d. nor sits in the seat of scorners;

2 *a.* But in the Torah of YHWH is his delight,

b. and in his Torah he meditates day and night.

3 *a.* And he is like a tree

b. planted by streams of water,

c. that will yield its fruit in its season

d. and its leaf will not wither,

e. and in whatever he does, he will prosper.

4 *a.* Not so the wicked!

b. but they are like chaff

c. that the wind drives away.

5 *a.* Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment,

b. nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

6 *a.* Indeed, YHWH knows the way of the righteous,

b. but the way of the wicked will perish.

Translation Notes

Verse 1*bcd*. הָלַךְ ... עָמַד ... יָשַׁב — walks ... stands ... sits

The verbs are translated as present tense because Hebrew perfect is occasionally used to denote an action finished in the past but continuing its effect into present, like the English perfect with *have* (see Gesenius & Kautzsch, 1910:311-312; also Waltke & O'Connor, 1990:470-475). For the cases of Psalm 1:1 and Psalm 2:1,

translation unless stated otherwise.

[4] In citing the Psalms and other passages of Scripture, the numbering and the versification of the BHS text are used throughout the present study rather than the numbering and the versification of LXX, Vulg., or most modern translations.

especially, Davidson (1901:58) claims that the present tense must be used in English translation for such cases. Kraus (1988:113) also agrees on this point in referring to the theory of Bergsträsser: "In poetry ... a further expansion of the use of the perfect with a present or future meaning led to a complete blurring of the differences between the meaning of the tenses and to an anomalous promiscuity in the use of all tense indications ... respecting the present and the future. Examples of changing tense for the expression of the present and the future without evident reason: ... Ps. 1:1ff ...". Most modern translations (DBNV, GNB, GNaB, GW, JB, KJV, NASB, NCV, NIV, NJB, NKJV, NLT, NRSV, RSV, TCV and TEV) and many scholars (Weiser, 1962:102; Buttenwieser, 1969:850; Anderson, 1972a:58; Kraus, 1988:112-113; and Terrien, 2003:69) translate the verbs as the present tense.

Verse 1*bc*. בְּעֲצַת ... בְּדֶרֶךְ — in the counsel ... in the way

Syriac (Peshitta) transposes בעצת and בדרך. This reading is probably suggested by Syriac that הלך בדרך is more at home in Hebrew usage than הלך בעצת. Though this change would be viewed as an improvement in the sequence of thought, it is not necessary (see Craigie, 1983:57). Therefore we should read the phrase with the Massoretic Text and interpret the phrase transmitted there in the sense of 'to follow their counsel' (e.g. II Chronicles 22:5; Micah 6:16; Psalm 81:13, Jeremiah 7:24) (see Kraus, 1988:113).

Verse 3*e*. וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה יַצְלִיחַ — and in whatever he does, he will prosper

BHS suggests that this line is a gloss or a late addition, derived from Joshua 1:8. It has been even proposed to be deleted by BHK. However, the fact that a similar text is found in Joshua 1:8 is not a very convincing reason to delete it from the psalm (Vogels, 1979:413). Furthermore, the syntax is ambivalent, and the words of this line could give an explanation of the metaphor applied before. In this regard, the line is best taken as referring not merely to the tree, but to the righteous (צדיק) (see Craigie, 1983:58; also Kraus, 1988:113).

Verse 4*ab*. לֹא־כֵן הָרְשָׁעִים כִּי אִם־כַּמֹּץ אֲשֶׁר־תִּדְּפֶנּוּ רוּחַ — Not so the wicked! but they are like chaff that the wind drives away.

LXX adds an emphatic repetition, οὐχ οὕτως (*not so*), after 4*a* (*Not so the wicked!*). In the same manner, the LXX adds ἀπὸ προσώπου τῆς γῆς (... *from the face of the earth*) after 4*b* (*but they are like chaff that the wind drives away*). Vulg. follows the rendering of LXX: *non sic impii non sic: sed tamquam pulvis quem proicit ventus a facie terrae*. The words may have been added for stylistic reasons or as decorative appendages. However, these additions are not necessary, and the Massoretic Text makes adequate sense (see Craigie, 1983:58; cf. Kraus, 1988:113; contra. Anderson, 1972a:61).

3. Poetic Structure of Psalm 1[5]

Psalm 1 is generally regarded as a finely crafted piece of poetic literature (Craigie, 1983:59) or, differently expressed, a work of art (*Kunstwerk* – Gunkel, 1926:3; cf. Merendino, 1979:45), since the psalmist confronts the listener/reader with a specific vivid literary structure (Gitay, 1996:232).

Some scholars have argued that Psalms 1 and 2 were originally a single piece (e.g. Brownlee, 1971:321-336). This problem has posed investigators with the question whether it should be read as unity within itself or with the second psalm.

[5] Since clear terminology is basic to any scientific study, the terms, which will be used for analyzing Hebrew poetry, are now defined. In this study, stanza means a subunit within a poem, and strophe means a subunit within a stanza. The strophes in their turn are made up of one colon or more cola. A colon constitutes an independent linguistic unit containing at least one verb-phrase (which can also be a nominal statement) and one noun-phrase. The requirement of independence is not met, and a unit is subordinated to another through the presence of particles, it is termed a comma. Several sub-commata can be embedded into one comma and several commata into one colon. This defined terminology will be adhered to throughout the present study as far as is possible (see Watson, 1995:11-15, 160-200; also Botha, 1991:385-387; cf. Prinsloo, 1994:81-82).

However, a careful examination of the internal unity and strophic structure of Psalm 1 supports the view that it is a self-contained literary unity (see Willis, 1979:381-401). Furthermore, the view of treating Psalm 1 and psalm 2 as a single psalm is valid only if the subject matter, intention and *Sitz im Leben* of these two psalms is basically the same, and if together they present a unified strophic structure (see Willis, 1979:401; cf. Lipiński, 1968:330-333; also Bardtke, 1973:1-18). As a matter of fact, there is an obvious difference in style, metre, structure and subject-matter between Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 despite the repetition of certain words in both psalms (see Botha, 1991:381-382; also Prinsloo, 2000:2). Therefore the present study treats Psalm 1 as a complete and self-contained coherent unity.

Despite the aesthetic quality and self-contained unity of this psalm, the structure of Psalm 1 has been the most recent bone of contention in research (see Botha, 1991:382). Consequently, much work has been done on the structural analysis of the psalm, but no consensus has yet emerged (see Willis, 1979:381-401; Cole, 2002:75-88; also Vos, 2003:636-643). Scholars have proposed a variety of analyses of the arrangement and poetic structure of Psalm 1.

For instance, Beaucamp (1969:435-437) understands Psalm 1 as an affirmation (*Blessed is the man ...*), based on two justifications, each beginning with כִּי: (1) first justification — a contrast between the fate of the wicked and the fate of the righteous (verses 2-5); (2) second justification — a contrast between God's interest in the righteous and the perishable fate that awaits the wicked. However, it may be noted that verse 2 begins with כִּי אִם and not simply with כִּי, and that כִּי אִם recurs in verse 4.

Calès (1936:96) finds a threefold division along a similar line with Beaucamp. According to Calès, verse 1 contains a definition of the righteous and verses 2-3*b* describe the present or immanent fate of the righteous while verses 3*c*-6 contain a contrast between the fate of the righteous and that of the wicked both now and especially in the final judgment. This analysis, however, fails to recognize that verse 2 and perhaps most or all of verse 3 deal with the characteristics of the righteous man

and not with his fate.

Several scholars (e.g. Weiser, 1962:103) think that Psalm 1 can be divided into three strophes of two verses each: (1) a description of the righteous man (verses 1 and 2); (2) a contrast between the righteous and wicked in common Palestinian figures (verses 3 and 4); (3) the final fate of the righteous and the wicked (verses 5 and 6).

Still others divide Psalm 1 into three strophes: a description of the righteous' quality– (1) analytically (verses 1-2); (2) in imagery (verse 3); (3) in contrast to the fate of the wicked (verses 4-6) (see Kissane, 1953:2-4; also Briggs & Briggs, 1906:3-7; cf. Anderson, 1972a:58-63; also Kittel, 1914:2-3; Kirkpatrick, 1921:2-4; Gunkel, 1926: 1-3; and Scroggie, 1948:48-50).

Alden (1974a:7-9; also 1974b:11-28) notices a chiastic arrangement in Psalm 1. He finds a four-point division in the psalm, but subdivides the first and last sections because there are key words that tie the two halves together. 'Stand' in verse 1 and verse 5 is used in the former verse of the righteous and in the latter of the wicked. 'The Lord (YHWH)' is mentioned in verses 2 and 6. The 'wicked' occurs in verses 1 and 6. 'Way' is found in verses 1 and 6 as well. So, for Alden (1974a:7; also 1974b: 14), each verse actually composes a separate section as follows:

1 A^1 – The blessed man stands not with the wicked.

2 A^2 – The blessed man chooses God's law.

3 B – Green tree illustrates righteous man.

4 B – Brown chaff illustrates wicked man.

5 A^1 – The wicked man stands not with the righteous.

6 A^2 – God chooses the righteous man.

Dorsey (1999:175-178) also finds similar four-part symmetries in Psalm 1. This structural scheme allows the psalmist to underscore, by matched repetition in units A and A′ and in units B and B′, particular themes and points. In this configuration, the positions of emphasis are generally the opening and closing units as follows:

A Righteous keep separate from the wicked (1:1-2)

Righteous do not stand in the assembly of wicked

Righteous avoid the way of the wicked

B Fruitful, secure state of righteous (1:3)

Righteous compared to well-watered, permanent, green, fruitful trees

B′ Barren, insecure state of wicked (1:4)

Wicked compared to dry, wind-driven, brown, useless chaff

A′ Wicked will be kept separate from the righteous on judgment day (1:5-6)

Wicked will not stand in the assembly of righteous

'Way of the wicked' will perish, in contrast to the 'way of the righteous'

Most above-mentioned analyses fail to take account of some significant factors in this psalm. First of all, there is not a natural break between verse 2 and verse 3. In fact, verse 3 continues the description of the righteous man in verses 1 and 2 under the figure of a tree. Rather the division comes at the end of verse 3, and thus verse 4 begins with the strong contrast 'not so (לֹא־כֵן)'. Furthermore, in verses 1-3, the singular is used of the righteous throughout, while the plural is used of the righteous in verses 5 and 6. In addition, verse 6 can be regarded as the final conclusion of the psalm because verse 6*a* mentions YHWH's final affirmation of the way of the righteous.

The reason for the above-mentioned disagreement of the poetic structure of the psalm among various scholars can be found from a compelling character of structuralistic approach (Prinsloo, 2000:3). This problem therefore calls for a more intra-textual based structural analysis of the psalm.

From the intra-textual viewpoint, the poetic structure of Psalm 1 can be divided on the basis of the poetic devices such as synonymous parallelism, antithesis and chiasmus.

In verses 1 and 2, a nominal statement (*Blessed is the man* ...) is augmented by five relative commata. A set of three synonymous parallelisms is found in the three relative commata (1*bcd*). The relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר is found only once (1*b*), but it is

represented through ellipsis of two *waw* copulatives (1*cd*). The verbs and prepositional phrases in 1*b* (הלך בעצת רשׁעים – *walks in the counsel of the wicked*) and 1*cd* (עמד ... בדרך – *in the way of ... stands*; ישׁב ... במושׁב – *in the seat of ..... sits*) are chiastically ordered to form a unity. Then the last two commata (2*a and* 2*b*) form an antithesis to the synonymous parallels of the first three commata (1*bcd*). The adversative particles (כי אם) and other *waw* copulatives in verse 2*ab* also constitute ellipsis of the adversatives. In addition to their being adversatives, verse 2*a* and 2*b* are thus to be read as relative commata as well (see Botha, 1991:386). Therefore verses 1 and 2, which consist of a nominal statement with five relative commata, form the first colon of the psalm.

The same poetic devices recur in verse 3*abcd*. A statement (*he is like a tree* ...) is followed by three relative commata (verse 3*bcd*). The three relative commata are constructed with the use of a passive participle (verse 3*b*), the relative pronoun (verse 3*c*), and a *waw* copulative, which constitutes ellipsis of the relative pronoun (verse 3*d*). Here a kind of synonymous-sequential parallelism (see Watson, 1995:156-157) is discernable in the verbs and the nouns: שׁתול על־פלגי מים (*planted by streams of water*) // ערהו לא־יבול (*fruit yields*) // פריו יתן (*its leaf will not wither*). Verse 3*abcd* could thus be regarded as the second colon of the psalm. Verse 3*e* is yet another statement (*he will prosper*), preceded by its own relative comma (*in whatever he does*). Subsequently, verse 3*e* could be regarded as the third colon of the psalm. This colon may also be considered a fourth synonymous-sequential parallelism followed by proceeding relative commata in the second colon (3*bcd*).

Then verse 4 begins with the strong contrast 'not so (לא־כן)', which indicates the natural division between verse 3 and verse 4. In verse 4, another nominal statement (4*a*: *Not so the wicked!*) is followed by an adversative nominal statement (*but they are like chaff*) in verse 4*b* with its own embedded relative comma (*that the wind drives away*) in verse 4*c*. The על־כן (*Therefore*), which introduces verse 5, could be seen as a consequential clause that is subordinate to the main clause in verse 4*a* (*Not so the wicked! ... Therefore, the wicked will not stand* ...). The *waw*

copulative in verse 5*b* constitutes ellipsis of the עַל־כֵּן (*therefore*) and of לֹא־יָקֻמוּ (*will not stand*) of verse 5*a* and therefore introduces yet another consequential comma (... *nor [will] sinners [stand]* ...). Thus verses 4 and 5 can be considered the fourth colon of the psalm.

Finally, verse 6 is introduced by an affirmative כִּי (*indeed*), and it is followed by a final adversative comma in verse 6*b* (... *but the way of the wicked will perish*), which is embedded in verse 6*a*. Thus verse 6 is the fifth independent colon of the psalm.

Then these five linguistically divided cola can be divided into three sections according to their syntactic and semantic relationships in each of the sections. The first three cola (verses 1 and 2, verse 3*abcd* and verse 3*e*) can be grouped together due to their having the same subject, while the singular is used of the righteous throughout. Then strong contrast is found between the first section (verses 1-3) and the second section (verses 4-5) of the psalm, seeing that the first section portrays the way (i.e., conduct and fate) of the righteous and the second section portrays the way (i.e., conduct and fate) of the wicked. While the first section and the second section of the psalm are antithetically related to each other, the final colon (verse 6), which introduces a new subject, is seen as the encompassing final statement. The third section of the psalm can thus be regarded as the final antithesis of the psalm, due to the fact that verse 6 strongly contrasts the final fate of the righteous and the final fate of the wicked.

Even though the first strophe (verses 1-3) uses more negations, the overall mood of the first strophe is positive, while the mood of the second strophe (verses 4-5) is negative. In this structural division, the movement of the psalm also revolves around and demonstrates the contrast of two ways of life positively and negatively. This structural contrast can be elucidated as encouragement by the profile of the righteous — discouragement by the fate of the wicked — motivation for promise and determent (see Gerstenberger, 1988:40-42).

When all these observations on linguistic, syntactic, semantic and poetic

devices are taken into consideration, Psalm 1 can be divided into the following segments:

Strophe *A* (verses 1-3) : The way of the righteous (*positive*)
Strophe *B* (verses 4-5) : The way of the wicked (*negative*)
Strophe *C* (verses 6) : The final contrast of the two ways (*summary*)

This strophic division is supported by many scholars such as Ridderbos (1962: 69-75), Kidner (1973:47-49), Vogel (1979:410-416), Craigie (1983:60-61), Stuhlmueller (1983a:57-61), Prinsloo (1984:8-23), Miller (1986:81-82), Kraus (1988: 113-114), Gerstenberger (1988:40-42), Broyles (1999:41-43) and Vos (2005: 52).

4. Poetic Content of Psalm 1

Strophe *A* (verses 1-3): The Way of the Righteous (*positive*)

Strophe *A* begins with the so-called אשרי formula, a congratulatory exclamation that is so characteristic of Biblical beatitudes and congratulations (Gerstenberger, 1988:40). The word אשרי occurs 45 times in the Old Testament.[6] Among them, 26 occurrences are concentrated in the Psalter[7] (see Cazelles, 1974:445-448). The investigation of the high occurrence of the word אשרי in the Psalter, based on the genre study of the psalms indicates that the stereotypical אשרי formula characterizes known wisdom psalms or can occur in the wisdom-influenced elements of other psalms (Gunkel & Begrich, 1933:392). In the wisdom context, the word אשרי is frequently used as a predicative salvation saying, which focuses praise on a person (or group) for his/her beneficent well-being and establishes the person as exemplary

[6] 26 times in the Psalter, 8 times in the Proverbs, also Deuteronomy 33:29; 1 Kings 10:8 (2 times); 2 Chronicles 9:7 (2 times); Isaiah 30:18; 32:20; 56:2; Job 5:17; Ecclesiastes 10:17; and Daniel 12:12.

[7] Psalms 1:1; 2:12; 32:1,2; 33:12; 34:9; 40:5; 41:2; 65:5; 84:5,6,13; 89:16; 94:12; 106:3; 112:1; 119:1,2; 127:5; 128:1,2; 137:8,9; 144:15(2 times); and 146:5 (cf. Kidner, 1973:47).

with a particular exhortative character (see Sæbø, 1997:196). Furthermore, אשרי is in the plural, the inflectional form denoting intensity. This 'plural of intensity' communicates energetic focusing on the basic idea inherent in the Hebrew root (see Gesenius & Kautzsch, 1910:396-401). It is the highest form of happiness that the psalmist has in mind. It thus connotes a joyful exclamation and an enthusiastic observation: "Oh! How fortunate is the man!" (Kraus, 1988:115). In this regard, it is quite obvious that the psalmist of Psalm 1 uses the exclamation אשרי as well as the amplifying paradigms of the righteous and the wicked to form a strong exhortative discourse.

This discourse is first started with three negations that introduce the blessed person from a negative perspective. This forms a rhetorical significance because it is an unexpected line creation, since the formulaic statements of אשרי frequently provide full affirmative declarations in the immediate following sentences (e.g. Psalms 33:12; 34:9; 40:5; and 84:5). The definition of the objective of the אשרי is delayed to verse 2, and instead, a long, negative sentence is inserted. This unexpected line creates a dramatic tension because the broken pattern makes noticeable the psalmist's deliberate attempt to capture the audience's full attention (cf. Gitay, 1996:233-235). These kinds of unexpected lines stimulate curiosity, and both content and form are now the object of the audience's concentration.

The formulaic אשרי is interrupted with three negatives that form a well-constructed symmetry in the three relative clauses. Each clause consists of: (1) לא + a verb in the perfect tense; (2) a preposition ו + a noun denoting the activity or environment of the wicked; and (3) a term for the wicked in the masculine plural. Here, the first clause and the second clause form a chiastic pattern, and the second clause and third clause are synonymous parallelism. By using this kind of symmetric pattern, the psalmist tries to keep the listener/reader in suspense, and thus to gain or hold their attention and have them thinking with the poet as the poet attempts to drive home the desired concept (see Willis, 2000:167-171).

These three negative descriptions do not represent three kinds of activities of the wicked or successive steps in a career of evil, nor do they form a climax as some

exegetes think (e.g. Kirkpatrick, 1921:3; also Leupold, 1959:34-35). Instead, the parallelism in these three descriptions is poetically synonymous (Anderson, 1974: 231-234; see also Broyles, 1999:42), and profoundly portrays the totality of evil in the form of three relative clauses.

The perfect mood of the Hebrew verbs in each case furthermore emphasizes a sense of discontinuity (see Joüon & Muroaka, 1991:361-362). It connotes that the righteous are never involved with anything tainted with evil (cf. VanGemeren, 1991:54). In the second clause, especially, one of the most pervasive Biblical images, *the way*, is used. The imagery of *the way* is a powerful figure that conveys double meaning, in other words one's conduct and one's destiny. In conduct, the righteous way is described negatively by a refusal to engage in the kinds of activities that are typical of the wicked, sinners and scoffers (see Miller, 1986:82-83).

These three negative descriptions have cleared the way for what is positive in verse 2 where 'the Torah of YHWH' stands opposed to the counsel of the wicked in verse 1. Here the righteous is positively identified by his/her association with 'the Torah of YHWH'. Although the term Torah can be used of the Law, or of the Pentateuch, or even of the whole Old Testament, its significance in this psalm is the most fundamental one, namely instruction in the sense of the merciful revelation of the will of God (Kraus, 1988:116-117; see also Von Rad, 1975:190-203). The Torah of YHWH, especially, appears in the known wisdom psalms or wisdom influenced psalms as a life-giving statement of YHWH's will and one's attitude towards the Torah is joy and delight (cf. Liedke & Petersen, 1997:1415-1422). In contrast with the wicked way in verse 1, the righteous way is positively described as a constant devotion to the Torah of YHWH, which means making the Lord's instruction one's chief delight. In this regard, the use of the imperfect tense, as opposed to the perfect tense in verse 1 for the wicked, also conveys a sense of endlessness, seeing that the imperfect represents actions, events, or states which are regarded by the speaker at any moment as still continuing or in process of accomplishment (see Gesenius & Kautzsch, 1910: 313).

In verse 3, the statement regarding the righteous' consistent meditation of the Torah is followed by the tree metaphor. It is the familiar depiction of the blossoming tree, a characteristic element in the geographical landscape of the ancient Near East.[8] This image is functional, aiming to give a concrete figure to the abstract concept of the destiny of the righteous by means of the explicit comparative vehicle, the preposition כ (*like*). The psalmist explicitly employs through the metaphor the strategy of the quasi-logical argument of comparison (see Gitay, 1993:137-141) in order to persuade its listener/reader to adopt the psalmist's assertion of the happiest future of the righteous.

The metaphor that describes the righteous is introduced not with an active verb, but with a passive participle that denotes the opposite of movement – 'planted'. It signifies that the tree is not spontaneously growing by itself in the wilderness where the amount of rainfall varies. Instead, the tree in this metaphor has been deliberately planted; an effort has been connoted to secure its growth. The tree is furthermore watered by פלגי, which probably means artificial water channels made for the purpose of irrigation (cf. Psalm 46:5; also Proverbs 21:1; Ecclesiastes 2:5-6; Isaiah 30:25). The imagery of the fruit and the leaf further affirms the sure prosperity of the tree. This tree metaphor therefore denotes that planned preparation and careful labour have guaranteed the successful growth of the tree.

To this successful tree metaphor is added an insertion that soberly states a fact and makes a transition from illustration to fact: *and in whatever he does, he will prosper*. This broken simile again attempts to capture the listener's/reader's full attention that the tree metaphor is not merely an illustration but the psalmist's religious reality (see Gitay, 1996:240). Thus the destiny and the reward of the righteous are secured — to those who make a constant effort to follow the way of the Lord through meditating on the Torah.

---

[8] For the relationship between Psalm 1:3 and Amen-em-opet (an ancient Egyptian wisdom literature) 4:8-12, which metaphorically describes the 'silent man' in a parabolic saying as a fruitful tree which prospers, while the 'heated man' is presented as a desiccated tree which is eventually cut down, *see* Pritchard (1955:421-425) and the discussion by Bryce (1979:97-120).

Therefore in Strophe *A* the contrast between the righteous way and the wicked way is quite clearly manifested by the choice of words describing the characters of the righteous and the wicked. The wicked are represented with various terms such as רשׁעים (*the wicked*), חטאים (*sinners*) and לצים (*scoffers*). On the contrary, the objective of the righteous, the Torah, is just twice repeated without variation. Here, the aesthetic rule of the word-pairs seems to be broken because the same word with no variation is unusually used in two parallel members of a verse (see Watson, 1995:130-135). However, there seems to be an emphasis here on the word *Torah*, seeing that it was more important for the psalmist than his rule of style (cf. Kraus, 1988:113). In this regard, this repetition is functional; it increases the feeling of existence (Gitay, 1996:235). This stands in contrast with the various sorts of the wicked with the three synonyms. While the way of the wicked is manifold, the way of the righteous is only one: the way of the Torah. There is no other way. Therefore Strophe *A* is organized in a sharp either/or contrasting fashion (cf. Brueggemann, 1984:38-39).

Strophe *B* (verses 4-5): The Way of the Wicked (*negative*)

Strophe *B* portrays the way (i.e. conduct and fate) of the wicked. When the wicked are introduced in verse 4, the life of the wicked is summarized succinctly in the brief simile. It denotes unstable motion, a scattering action. The language used here reflects the practice of winnowing grain at harvest time (see Craigie, 1983:61). Chaff is something light and useless, which would be blown away when the grain is tossed into the air. The wicked are thus depicted in the simile as lightweights, persons without real substance or worth.

This image of chaff presents a striking contrast to the image of the tree in verse 3. In contrast with the image of that which is firmly grounded and enduring, here we have the image of that which is blown away and disappears. In these two images of the tree and chaff therefore "the contrast could not be more sharply drawn" as Brown (2002:56) insists. The persuasive goal in these metaphors is to

establish a sharp contrast between the rewarding future for the righteous and the perishable ending for the wicked. The contrast is even reinforced quantitatively by the varying lengths of the similes. The first, the description of righteous, is detailed and three lines long. Much can be said of the character and destiny of the righteous by means of the simile of the planted tree. On the contrary, the second, the description of wicked, contains a single short relative clause. For the wicked described by the simile of chaff, there is nothing to say except that the wind drives it away to nothingness (cf. Alter, 1985:116; also Miller, 1986:82). In the teaching of wisdom, this black-white technique doubtlessly has a pedagogical purpose: it is to be pointed out unmistakably how the life of the righteous differs from that of the wicked (Kraus, 1988:119).

Therefore the simile in verse 4 is intended to describe both the wicked and their destiny. The wicked are thought of as having become worthless in themselves, and their life as empty and without permanence, as long as they continue their present way of life.

The emptiness of the wicked depicted by the image of chaff in verse 4 is now further elaborated on in verse 5. The two lines of verse 5 form a synonymous parallelism reflecting essentially the same thought, that is, the wicked hold no weight or place in the congregation of the righteous. The individual of verse 1, who made the choice to reject the way with the company of the evil characters, now has companionship. There is a fellowship of the righteous from which the hardened wicked are excluded. The wicked will not stand in the judgment, and consequently in the congregation of the righteous.

Here judgment implies divine judgment in general: every act by which YHWH separates the righteous from the wicked and shows his reign in the world (see Sarna, 1993:45). This judgment can also have an eschatological thrust looking beyond the cultic present to the ultimate judgment of God, and to a purified congregation of the righteous in which sinners will be unable to participate (see Tate, 2001:52-53). In this regard, the final end of the wicked is no relationship with God; their way comes to nothing. God is absent from the life and destiny of the wicked.

The implication of Strophe *B* therefore is that God constantly judges the wicked in this life, but a time will come when he will conclusively remove them among the righteous. The image used in verse 4 is of all that is worthless and without permanence, very much in contrast to the firmly rooted, fruitful tree in verse 3 of Strophe *A*. It implies that human activity without God has no lasting value. The wicked cannot withstand the judgment of God, whether it comes in the present by means of adversity, or on the Day of the Lord. They are judged by being alienated from the congregation of the righteous.

Strophe *C* (verses 6): The Final Contrast of the Two Ways (*summary*)

The final verse of the psalm expresses the fundamental contrast of the righteous and the wicked in a very exceptional way by means of antithetical parallelism. The word *way* is found in both lines of the verse, serving in the first as the object, and in the second as the subject. In the first line, the predicate, *knows*, is a transitive verb, whereas in the second the predicate, *perishes*, is intransitive, making this part of the verse appear passive. Therefore in this verse the two lines speak in different languages; one in the language of the righteous and the other in the language of the wicked.

This exceptional literary device therefore is not accidental, but rather a carefully planned rhetorical device for the concluding remark of the final contrast between the righteous and the wicked. In this regard, the only mention of a divine action in this psalm is also elaborately withheld until the last verse for the same purpose. At last, the Lord appears as a grammatical subject: *for YHWH knows the way of the righteous*. The reason for the certainty of the judgment lies in God's knowledge of the affairs of people. *God knows!* The rich semantic range of the verb יָדַע (*to know*) elucidates why God's knowledge of the righteous becomes the antonym of the fate of the wicked, which is being perished. Emotional ties, empathy, intimacy, sexual experience, mutuality and responsibility are all encompassed within the usage of the verbal stem of this word (Sarna, 1993:46-47). By declaring *YHWH knows the way of*

the righteous, the psalmist is thus affirming that God maintains a special relationship with the righteous. The righteous experiences the presence and providence of God in every aspect of life. God is the subject of the life of the righteous: God acts, leads and directs, and the righteous can only be the object of this divine activity.

On the contrary, the way of the wicked is described with an antithesis: *but the way of the wicked will perish.* For the wicked, no divine action is explicitly predicated: it simply *will perish.* It denotes that the wicked do not perceive the discerning eye and the guiding hand of God. The wicked themselves are not even accorded the dignity of being proper grammatical subjects of an active verb. The way of the wicked on which, at the beginning of the psalm, the righteous did not stand is here, at the end, seen to lead nowhere or to perdition. In verse 1 it is possible to *stand in the way of sinners*, but verse 5 states that *the wicked will not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.* Sinners do have a *way* in verse 1, but in verse 6 *the way of the wicked will perish.*

In Strophe *C* the final contrast of the two ways, or two life styles, are therefore defined in terms of the relationship with God. YHWH knows the way of the righteous. To be known by YHWH means to be in an intimate relationship with God. Intimacy with God is the real source of the blessedness with which the psalm begins. In this respect, the final contrast of the psalm calls for faith in God's way for the righteous, and confidence that those ways bring the blessing of the intimate relationship with God. Thus the way of the righteous is the way of everlasting relationship with God.

The poetic content of Psalm 1 therefore instructs us that blessedness involves not only enjoying oneself but delight in the teaching (Torah) of God. The goal of life is to be found not in self-fulfilment but in praising God. Prosperity does not involve getting what one wants; rather, it comes from being connected to the source of life - God. The righteous in Psalm 1 are not primarily persons who make the proper choices or implement the proper policies, but those who know that their lives belong

to God and that their futures are secured by God. The prosperity of the righteous is real but hidden. It is an openness to and connectedness with God that sustains life amid all threats and temptations by the wicked.

In this regard, the psalmist proposes the meditation on the Torah as a constant practice by which a person shapes his/her conduct and from which flows everything else in life. The psalmist skilfully concentrates the integral life that comes from meditation on the Torah into a tree image. In this sense, the scenery is remarkable: a tree is planted by streams of water, which guaranties irrigation, foliage and fruit in season. It means the person who absorbs the Torah produces fruit. The faithful, those who nourish themselves on the Torah, are blessed because God knows their way. The wise person who lives by the Torah is successful because he depends on God and he who seeks the divine will succeed by studying the Torah. Therefore the psalmist of Psalm 1 invites the listener/reader who hears or opens the Psalter to choose the blessed end and the means to attain it: that is, the way of Torah.

5. Literary Genre and Life-Setting of Psalm 1

By virtue of its language and content, Psalm 1 is classified as wisdom psalm (*Weisheitsdichtung*) or wisdom song (*Weisheitslied*) by many scholars (Gunkel, 1926:1; Weiser, 1962:102-103; Craigie, 1983:58; Prinsloo, 1984:13; and VanGemeren, 1991:52). In fact, Psalm 1 is rich in wisdom elements and themes.

As far as wisom lexical terms are concerned, Psalm 1 contains the following nine wisdom terms: blessed is ... (אשרי), way (דרך), know (ידע), righteous (צדיק), delight (חפץ), sinner (חטא), counsel (עצה), scoffing (ליץ), angry (כעס), desire (תאוה) and wicked (רשע) (see Scott, 1971:121-122; Kuntz, 1974:201, 206).

For stylistic (or rhetoric) wisdom features, Psalm 1 has the so-called אשרי formula of verse 1. In verse 2, the אשרי formula is followed by the psalmist's delight of YHWH's Torah. In this respect, this psalm is related to Psalm 112 because Psalm 112 also commences with the אשרי formula and the psalmist's 'delight is in his

commandments' in verse 1. Similes in Psalm 1:3-4 are also regarded as a wisdom feature, due to the fact that the Israelite sage usually used the carefully formulated illustration from nature for his pedagogical purpose (see Kuntz, 1974:198-199). The admonition with rhetorical power in Psalm 1 is also considered one of the wisdom rhetorical features.

Thematically, Psalm 1 exhibits all four of the thematic criteria suggested by Kuntz (1974:211-215). Firstly, the veneration of the Torah in Psalm 1:2 is a very important wisdom theme. Especially, the sage's fear of YHWH is frequently implied by expressions, which venerate the Torah as that which stands at the very centre of the wise man's pious reflections. Secondly, the contrasting life style of the righteous and the wicked in Psalm 1 is also prominent theme of wisdom literature. Thirdly, the reality and inevitability of retribution in Psalm 1 can also be regarded as one of the important wisdom themes. In this regard, the two-way theology in Psalm 1 voices the considerable confidence that rewards and punishments are extended to mankind in just measure. Finally, the fact that man is mindful of the company that he keeps in Psalm 1:1 is also one of Kuntz's (1974:215) thematic elements of wisdom psalms under the title of miscellaneous counsels to every day conduct.

Therefore the language, content and teaching of Psalm 1 clearly reflect the thought of wisdom literature in general and the Book of Proverbs in particular (cf. Proverbs 2:12-15, 20-25). In this respect, Psalm 1 can be regarded as one of the authentic wisdom psalms (see Craigie, 1983:58; Kuntz, 1974:210; also Kraus, 1988:114).

Others would call this psalm a 'didactic poem' that is believed to be composed for educational purposes by wise men (Leupold, 1959:31-33; Mowinckel, 1962:111-114; and Buttenwieser, 1969:850-852; also Kraus, 1988:113-114). This psalm serves the educational intentions of its author very well through the lucidity of its structure, by its simple language using familiar figures of speech and by the challenging character of its exhortation (cf. Weiser, 1962:102-103). This observation can illuminate the life-setting of this psalm as an educational setting. Within such an educational setting, the psalm could be used to exhort the believing community to be

faithful to YHWH and to his Torah. Concentration on the Torah and dissociation from non-believers were absolute prerequisites for survival (see Gerstenberger, 1988:43-44).

The liturgical setting of this psalm is also traceable from the so-called אשרי formula of the psalm. The אשרי formula opens the Psalter in Psalm 1:1, and is found at the end of Psalm 2. It occurs in the concluding collections of the Psalter, such as the end of Book I (41:2), Book III (89:16) and Book IV (106:3), and finally appears quite often in the last book of the Psalter (8 times). This evidence indicates a connection between אשרי and the liturgical use of this word in the Israelites' worship (see Cazelles, 1974:446).

Some scholars trace the liturgical setting of this psalm from the allusion of the liturgical congregation in verse 5. The background of the congregation could be actual cultic rituals by which those whose conduct did not confirm with the Torah of the congregation were excluded from worship at the holy place (see Tate, 2001:52). In this sense, the congregation of the righteous is the fellowship of those who are permitted to praise God at the sanctuary (cf. Psalms 111:1; 118:19-20).

It is difficult to decide whether or not such an actual cultic setting is intended in this psalm. Yet, the liturgical use of this psalm is still noticeable. In this regard, this psalm could have been used in the litugical service for the educational purpose of the worshipping community.

6. Canonical Context of Psalm 1

There is almost unanimous scholarly agreement that Psalm 1 was placed intentionally at the beginning of the Book of Psalms (McCann, 1992:118). In this regard, Psalm 1 serves as an introduction to the Psalter, describing the joy of the righteous in the study of the Torah of YHWH. Here the image of a tree planted by streams of water is used to illustrate the way in which a relationship with God can lead to spiritual nourishment for the whole Psalter (cf. Cohn-Sherbok, 1996:164).

While Psalm 1 represents an intentional introduction to the Psalter, the introductory function clearly belongs to Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 together. Neither of the psalms has its own superscriptions, and they are bound by several literary links, including the crucial אשרי formula, which forms an envelope structure (Psalms 1:1; 2:12).

In the canonical relationship of Psalms 1 and 2, the meditation on the Torah of YHWH in Psalm 1:2 is contrasted with the vain and empty plotting in Psalm 2:1. Psalm 2, like Psalm 1, ends with the words 'will perish' and 'way'. The rebellious kings and rulers of the earth perish in the way (Psalm 2:12; cf. Psalm 1:6). The blessing of the individual in Psalm 1:1 has a significant corresponding term in Psalm 2:12, where the individual has become many. Structurally, the two psalms mirror one another: Psalm 1 begins with a person who resists the pull of the majority (verses 1-3) and then speaks of the many wicked (verse 4-5). Psalm 2 introduces many peoples and nations and their rulers who set themselves up against God and God's anointed. The many rebel against individuals. First the nations and kings speak (verse 3); then God (verse 6) and God's anointed (verses 7-9, 10-12) speak. In this manner, correspondence between the heavenly King and God's anointed king is an important feature of Psalm 2. The human king is not equal to or identical with, but in certain respects corresponds to the divine sovereign. The final intention and declaration of Psalm 2 thus is *the Lord reigns* in the midst of history whose powers deny it (Mays, 1994b:47-48).

Therefore, while Psalm 1 counsels the listener/reader to be open to God's instruction, including the subsequent psalms, Psalm 2 introduces the basic content of that instruction, namely that God's reign will change as the Psalter proceeds, nothing will alter the pervasive proclamation of God's reign, which is first articulated in Psalm 2:11-12. Thus blessedness essentially belongs to those who 'take refuge in' the reign of God (Psalm 2:12). Then the entire Psalter will be about the 'blessed' life, and it will affirm throughout that this life derives fundamentally from the conviction that God reigns in the world (see Mays, 1994a:12-22).

This main theme of the entire Psalter, namely the Lord reigns, is clearly

manifested even at the end of the Psalter (see Jüngling, 1998:784). The concluding *Hallel* of the Psalter (Psalms 146-150) calls on the 'kings of the earth', 'the peoples', 'the princes' and 'all rulers of the earth' to praise God (Psalm 148:11). Thus the end of the Psalter turns back to its proemium in Psalms 1-2 (cf. Psalms 2:2, 10 // 149:7-8, as well as the 'iron' in Psalm 2:9 // 149:8 and 'judgment' in Psalm 1:5 // 149:9).

Yet another aspect of the final form of the Psalter points in the same direction. The importance of Psalm 1 and its introductory claim calls attention to other Torah psalms, seeing that expressions of the importance of Torah are scattered throughout the Psalter. In this regard, Mays (1987:8-9) highlights the particular importance of the three Torah psalms, Psalms 1, 19 and 119.

Among three Torah psalms, Psalm 119 is the longest psalm in the Psalter. The orderly structure of the psalm reflects the harmony a life of fidelity promises. The comprehensiveness with which it treats Torah suggests that the Torah itself covers every dimension of life. Psalm 119 includes features of several other types of psalms. It "praises the Lord, makes petitions, describes trouble, confesses need, makes vows, tells of salvation, asserts trust, describes the wicked — and so on" (Mays, 1987:7). The psalmist is often vulnerable, even afflicted, and calls out in trust to God. All these other types and appeals have led some to classify the psalm as a lament (Soll, 1991:59-86). In Psalm 119, however, all of the other psalmic features function pedagogically to encourage devotion to the instruction of the Lord. In the psalm, the psalmist frequently speaks of meditating on the Torah (verses 15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 97, 99 and 148). At the same time, the psalmist repeatedly prays for discernment or for some kind of divine illumination. Therefore Torah piety in Psalm 119, like wisdom, is both acquired through one's own reflective living and bestowed by God (see Bergant, 1997:63-64). Canonically, Psalm 119 occupies a central position in Book V of the Psalter. In this placement it is intended to instruct the faithful how to live in reliance on the Lord (Wilson, 1985:222-228).

In Psalm 19, the first part (verses 1-6) is hymnic, praising God: the second part (verse 7-14) extols the Torah. In the first part of the psalm, cosmic order is depicted in the regularity of day to day and night to night (verse 2) as well as in the universal

governance by the sun (verse 6). As in the first part of the psalm, this section creates the context for understanding the second part. The celebration of Torah that follows should be read through the lens of this initial cosmic order by God. In the second part of the psalm, the Torah of the Lord is extolled and its effects are celebrated. It is perfect and trustworthy, right and clear, pure and true — all standard wisdom characteristics that exemplify proper order (Bergant, 1997:56). The benefits that the Torah can grant are the blessings of a happy life. These are some of the delights that will be enjoyed by one who meditates on the Torah day and night (cf. Psalm 1:2).

When taken in relation to Psalms 1, 19 and 119, as well as portions of other psalms that emphasize the centrality of the Torah, the effect is as follows: "Taken together, this harvest of texts contains a profile of an understanding of the Lord's way with people and the world that is organized around Torah. Torah applies to everything" (Mays, 1987:8). Consequently, the Psalms are to be read as instruction. That is to say, the effect of Torah psalms is to orient the reader to hear the entire collection as instruction (McCann, 1992:120).

In this way, standing at the beginning of the Psalter, Psalm 1 intends that all the psalms should be read through the prisms of Torah obedience. As an entry point into the Psalter, Psalm 1 asserts that the Psalter is intended for and intends to evoke and authorize a community of joyous obedience (see Brueggemann, 1991:65-66). The songs that follow in the Psalter, so Psalm 1 proposes, can be sung only by those who gladly participate in this community of obedience.

In this regard, it is probable that both Psalm 1 and Psalm 150 have been carefully selected and placed as they are, in order to provide a special framing for the canonical shape of the Psalter. As a remarkable song of praise, Psalm 150 is intentionally placed as a conclusion to the entire collection of the Psalter because Psalm 150 is the only psalm that completely lacks reason or motivation of praising the Lord in the Psalter. Psalm 150 is situated literally and theologically at the end of the process of praise after all of the motivations of God's people have been

expressed and no more reasons need to be given. By Psalm 150 the people of God therefore fully know the reasons for praise, learned through the course of Torah obedience manifested in Psalter. From the perspective of Torah obedience embraced by the shape of the Psalter, the Psalter should be opened with Psalm 1 and ought to be closed with Psalm 150 because obedience is the unavoidable initiating point of praise, and praise is the appropriate culmination of obedience (see Brueggemann, 1991:67-68).

In this respect, the Psalter makes an assertion about the shape of life lived in the covenant between God and his people through the canonical shape of the collection of the Psalms, since the perimeters of the collection of the Psalms are obedience (Psalm 1) and praise (Psalm 150). Life derived from and ceded back to YHWH begins in obedience and ends in praise.

In summary, after Psalm 1 orients the listener/reader to obey what follows as instruction, Psalm 2 introduces the essential content the Psalter intends to teach — the Lord reigns! In this way, Psalms 1 and 2 anticipate the content, theology and function of the entire Psalter. The central theological affirmation of the Psalter is that the Lord reigns! Given the importance of Torah psalms, the way of the reign of the Lord is instructed through the Torah of YHWH. The canonical framework of the Psalter manifested in the relation between Psalm 1 and Psalm 150 insists that obedience to the Torah of YHWH is indeed the premise and condition of praise; only the obedient of Torah can praise the Lord. In this sense, the canonical function of Psalm 1 is to instruct the faithful how to live in reliance on the reign of God and how to move from glad duty of Torah obedience to utter delight of unfettered praise.

7. Wisdom Implications in Psalm 1

The didactic character of this psalm is closely related to the wisdom (influenced) literature of the Old Testament. In proverb style, this psalm uses the

sharp contrast of the righteous and the wicked by means of two opposing ways of living: commending one and denouncing the other. This sharp contrast between the righteous and the wicked has been regarded as one of the characteristic wisdom themes (cf. Davidson, 1990:17). The contrast is connected to the theme of punishment and reward, which is also one of the most central preoccupations of wisdom literature (cf. Dell, 2000b:71).

The opening word of this psalm, אשרי, is a wisdom form, and connected with righteous living of one's daily life in the Old Testament. As already mentioned above, this word occurs 45 times in the Old Testament, of which 26 times are in the known wisdom psalms or wisdom-influenced psalms, indicating the didactic character of many psalms. It occurs 12 times in wisdom literature, 8 of those occurring in the Book of Proverbs. The happy person fears God (Psalms 112:1; 128:1; Proverbs 28:14), walks in the Lord's way (Psalm 119:1; 128:1), cares for the poor (Psalm 41:1; Proverbs 14:21) and follows the Lord's instructions (Psalm 119:2; Proverbs 29:18). Happiness is also connected with participation in worship (Psalms 65:5; 89:16) and can be found in family life (Psalm 127:5). Like many wisdom pedagogical techniques, this macarism describes how life works in certain situations and shows the desirability of a particular manner of behaviour (see Bergant, 1997:54-55). With אשרי sayings, the main theme of the psalm, that is the sharp contrast between the righteous and the wicked, forms a strong exhortative discourse.

The psalmist refers to the wicked by three nouns of comparison: רשעים (*the wicked*), חטאים (*sinners*) and לצים (*scoffers*). All these terms are usually found in wisdom literature to denote those whose behaviour is opposed to the ethics and laws of the righteous society based on the just order of the universe (see Perdue, 1977:271-272).

The parabolic saying depicted by the image of the fruitful tree is used to illustrate by means of a common sapiential metaphor. The tree is a familiar metaphor for the blessed life of the godly (cf. Jeremiah 17:7-8). In wisdom literature the tree is a metaphor for wisdom itself (Proverbs 3:18); and the fruit of the righteous is a tree

of life in that his speech and activities are life giving and restorative (Proverbs 11:30; 15:4). Likewise, the parabolic saying of the image of the chaff is paralleled in other wisdom literature (Job 21:18) and used to depict metaphorically the character of the wicked.

In wisdom literature, 'way' is also understood in a metaphorical-figurative sense. The life of a person can be described as the 'way' on which one finds oneself. This terminology acquires special significance in wisdom literature (e.g. Proverbs 1:15) and for the religious realm (see Sauer, 1997:343-346). It refers to the course of life that one chooses as well as the destiny that such a choice effects. This causal relationship explains the well-known wisdom motif of divine retribution (see Sabourin, 1969:261). The way of the righteous is rewarded with prosperity; the way of the wicked brings on punishment. This divine retribution motif may describe some situations in life, but it also functions as an incentive for acceptable behaviour (cf. Bergant, 1997:54-55). In this regard, the Torah piety in the psalm answers to wisdom's question about how life is to be behaved (cf. Mays, 1987:4-5). The Torah of YHWH replaces wisdom and its human teachers. For this psalmist, the Torah is the medium from which one can learn the way and the will of YHWH and it shapes the structure of wisdom. The Hebrew word, הגה (*meditate*), means to mumble, sigh, whisper or reflect aloud; it presumes a visible manifestation (e.g. Joshua 1:8), and therefore it commits a person totally, body and mind, as the Lord's way sinks deeply within (see Stuhlmueller, 1983:60). This verb and its cognate nouns reappear in other wisdom psalms (Psalms 37:30; 49:4[3]). This psalm therefore encourages meditating on the Torah day and night as the way of true wisdom.

The final verse of this psalm, which is called a key proverb by Perdue (1977:273), is a common one in wisdom literature. The psalm sums it all up still more succinctly with the picture of the ways of wisdom and folly. This psalm, prefacing the whole Psalter, seems to have been placed as part of the YHWH's guidance in the way of wisdom. In the rest of the Psalter, we hear of the joys of that unceasing meditation on the Torah of YHWH and the happy results for the way of

the righteous. On the contrary, we also hear a great deal about the way of the wicked, the sinners and the scoffers, the pain they inflict, and the cries of those who suffer by their words and deeds. The final claim and wisdom of this psalm therefore is to lift up the role of the Psalter as a book of instruction for true piety (cf. Miller, 1986:86).

CHAPTER III

PSALM 37

and

WISDOM

Chapter III
PSALM 37 AND WISDOM

1. Introduction

Our second promising candidate for the study of wisdom psalms is Psalm 37. In the research history, this psalm has been regarded as the most easily identified of the list of wisdom (*or sapiential*) psalms (see Brueggemann, 1993:230). As Murphy (2000:88) states: "If ever a psalm could be classified as wisdom, it is this one". This is so because the psalm is acrostic in form and strongly didactic in content. At the same time, many scholars think the acrostic form of this psalm causes certain rigidity in the psalm and it becomes, to a certain degree, similar to the collections of wise sayings in the Book of Proverbs. However, a careful reading of this psalm reveals the psalm is not a long, flat instruction marked by sameness and consistency. There are a variety of points concerning abrupt rhetorical turns in the psalm. These points raise up issues, evidence tensions, display the difficulty in resolution and the urgency in the ongoing conversation of wisdom and faith. In order to understand this mode of discourse, this study will now analyse the poetic features of Psalm 37, and afterwards attempt to show how the poetic features of this psalm can help us to understand the content, the context and the message of the psalm.

This chapter will be organized in the same way as Chapter II (on Psalm 1). After presenting the Massoretic Text of Psalm 37, a translation will be proposed with some discussions of translation problems in order to establish the best textual base for the study. Following this, the poetic structure and content will be analysed, based on the intra-textual reading of Psalm 37. Afterwards, the literary genre and setting will be taken into consideration, based on the poetic content and the extra-textual clues of the psalm. Thereafter the canonical context of Psalm 37 will be discussed on the basis of inter-textual relationships of the psalm. The significance of the short

superscription of this psalm of David will also be taken into consideration in this part. Finally, all the preceding study outcomes will be synthesised in order to grasp the overall message of the psalm with special regard to the wisdom perspective of Psalm 37 and its implications.

2. Text and Translation of Psalm 37

Text

	1	לְדָוִד
(א)		אַל־תִּתְחַר בַּמְּרֵעִים אַל־תְּקַנֵּא בְּעֹשֵׂי עַוְלָה׃
	2	כִּי כֶחָצִיר מְהֵרָה יִמָּלוּ וּכְיֶרֶק דֶּשֶׁא יִבּוֹלוּן׃
(ב)	3	בְּטַח בַּיהוָה וַעֲשֵׂה־טוֹב שְׁכָן־אֶרֶץ וּרְעֵה אֱמוּנָה׃
	4	וְהִתְעַנַּג עַל־יְהוָה וְיִתֶּן־לְךָ מִשְׁאֲלֹת לִבֶּךָ׃
(ג)	5	גּוֹל עַל־יְהוָה דַּרְכֶּךָ וּבְטַח עָלָיו וְהוּא יַעֲשֶׂה׃
	6	וְהוֹצִיא כָאוֹר צִדְקֶךָ וּמִשְׁפָּטֶךָ כַּצָּהֳרָיִם׃
(ד)	7	דּוֹם לַיהוָה וְהִתְחוֹלֵל לוֹ
		אַל־תִּתְחַר בְּמַצְלִיחַ דַּרְכּוֹ בְּאִישׁ עֹשֶׂה מְזִמּוֹת׃
(ה)	8	הֶרֶף מֵאַף וַעֲזֹב חֵמָה אַל־תִּתְחַר אַךְ־לְהָרַע׃
	9	כִּי־מְרֵעִים יִכָּרֵתוּן וְקוֵי יְהוָה הֵמָּה יִירְשׁוּ־אָרֶץ׃
(ו)	10	וְעוֹד מְעַט וְאֵין רָשָׁע וְהִתְבּוֹנַנְתָּ עַל־מְקוֹמוֹ וְאֵינֶנּוּ׃
	11	וַעֲנָוִים יִירְשׁוּ־אָרֶץ וְהִתְעַנְּגוּ עַל־רֹב שָׁלוֹם׃
(ז)	12	זוֹמֵם רָשָׁע לַצַּדִּיק וְחֹרֵק עָלָיו שִׁנָּיו
	13	אֲדֹנָי יִשְׂחַק־לוֹ כִּי־רָאָה כִּי־יָבֹא יוֹמוֹ׃
(ח)	14	חֶרֶב פָּתְחוּ רְשָׁעִים וְדָרְכוּ קַשְׁתָּם
		לְהַפִּיל עָנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן לִטְבוֹחַ יִשְׁרֵי־דָרֶךְ׃
	15	חַרְבָּם תָּבוֹא בְלִבָּם וְקַשְׁתוֹתָם תִּשָּׁבַרְנָה׃
(ט)	16	טוֹב־מְעַט לַצַּדִּיק מֵהֲמוֹן רְשָׁעִים רַבִּים׃

	17	כִּי זְרוֹעוֹת רְשָׁעִים תִּשָּׁבַרְנָה וְסוֹמֵךְ צַדִּיקִים יְהוָה:
(י)	18	יוֹדֵעַ יְהוָה יְמֵי תְמִימִם וְנַחֲלָתָם לְעוֹלָם תִּהְיֶה:
	19	לֹא־יֵבֹשׁוּ בְּעֵת רָעָה וּבִימֵי רְעָבוֹן יִשְׂבָּעוּ:
(כ)	20	כִּי רְשָׁעִים יֹאבֵדוּ וְאֹיְבֵי יְהוָה
		כִּיקַר כָּרִים כָּלוּ בֶּעָשָׁן כָּלוּ:
(ל)	21	לוֶֹה רָשָׁע וְלֹא יְשַׁלֵּם וְצַדִּיק חוֹנֵן וְנוֹתֵן:
	22	כִּי מְבֹרָכָיו יִירְשׁוּ אָרֶץ וּמְקֻלָלָיו יִכָּרֵתוּ:
(מ)	23	מֵיְהוָה מִצְעֲדֵי־גֶבֶר כּוֹנָנוּ וְדַרְכּוֹ יֶחְפָּץ:
	24	כִּי־יִפֹּל לֹא־יוּטָל כִּי־יְהוָה סוֹמֵךְ יָדוֹ:
(נ)	25	נַעַר הָיִיתִי גַּם־זָקַנְתִּי וְלֹא־רָאִיתִי צַדִּיק נֶעֱזָב וְזַרְעוֹ מְבַקֶּשׁ־לָחֶם:
	26	כָּל־הַיּוֹם חוֹנֵן וּמַלְוֶה וְזַרְעוֹ לִבְרָכָה:
(ס)	27	סוּר מֵרָע וַעֲשֵׂה־טוֹב וּשְׁכֹן לְעוֹלָם:
	28	כִּי יְהוָה אֹהֵב מִשְׁפָּט וְלֹא־יַעֲזֹב אֶת־חֲסִידָיו
(ע)		לְעוֹלָם נִשְׁמָרוּ וְזֶרַע רְשָׁעִים נִכְרָת:
	29	צַדִּיקִים יִירְשׁוּ־אָרֶץ וְיִשְׁכְּנוּ לָעַד עָלֶיהָ:
(פ)	30	פִּי־צַדִּיק יֶהְגֶּה חָכְמָה וּלְשׁוֹנוֹ תְּדַבֵּר מִשְׁפָּט:
	31	תּוֹרַת אֱלֹהָיו בְּלִבּוֹ לֹא תִמְעַד אֲשֻׁרָיו:
(צ)	32	צוֹפֶה רָשָׁע לַצַּדִּיק וּמְבַקֵּשׁ לַהֲמִיתוֹ:
	33	יְהוָה לֹא־יַעַזְבֶנּוּ בְיָדוֹ וְלֹא יַרְשִׁיעֶנּוּ בְּהִשָּׁפְטוֹ:
(ק)	34	קַוֵּה אֶל־יְהוָה וּשְׁמֹר דַּרְכּוֹ
		וִירוֹמִמְךָ לָרֶשֶׁת אָרֶץ בְּהִכָּרֵת רְשָׁעִים תִּרְאֶה:
(ר)	35	רָאִיתִי רָשָׁע עָרִיץ וּמִתְעָרֶה כְּאֶזְרָח רַעֲנָן:
	36	וַיַּעֲבֹר וְהִנֵּה אֵינֶנּוּ וָאֲבַקְשֵׁהוּ וְלֹא נִמְצָא:
(ש)	37	שְׁמָר־תָּם וּרְאֵה יָשָׁר כִּי־אַחֲרִית לְאִישׁ שָׁלוֹם:
	38	וּפֹשְׁעִים נִשְׁמְדוּ יַחְדָּו אַחֲרִית רְשָׁעִים נִכְרָתָה:
(ת)	39	וּתְשׁוּעַת צַדִּיקִים מֵיְהוָה מָעוּזָּם בְּעֵת צָרָה:
	40	וַיַּעְזְרֵם יְהוָה וַיְפַלְּטֵם יְפַלְּטֵם מֵרְשָׁעִים וְיוֹשִׁיעֵם כִּי־חָסוּ בוֹ:

Translation[9]

1[10] Of David.

1 *a.* Fret not yourself because of evildoers;

b. nor be envious against wrongdoers,

2 *a.* for like the grass they will soon wither,

b. and like the green grass they will fade.

3 *a.* Trust in YHWH, and do good;

b. dwell in the land, and enjoy security.

4 *a.* Delight yourself in YHWH,

b. and he will give you the desires of your heart.

5 *a.* Commit your way to YHWH;

b. trust in him, and he will act.

6 *a.* He will bring forth your righteousness as the light,

b. and your justice like the noonday.

7 *a.* Be still before YHWH,

b. and wait patiently for him;

c. Fret not yourself because of him, who prospers in his way,

d. because of the man who carries out evil devices.

8 *a.* Cease from anger, and forsake wrath,

b. fret not yourself — it leads only to evil.

9 *a.* For evildoers will be cut off,

b. but those who wait for YHWH will possess the land.

10 *a.* Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more;

---

[9] This is my own translation. All quotations from Psalm 37 in this study are taken from this translation unless stated otherwise.

[10] In citing the Psalms and other passages of Scripture, the numbering and the versification of the BHS text are used throughout the present study rather than the numbering and the versification of LXX, Vulg., or most modern translations.

b. though you look well for his place, he will not be there.

11 *a.* But the meek will possess the land,

b. and delight themselves in abundant peace.

12 *a.* The wicked man plots against the righteous,

b. and gnashes at him with his teeth;

13 *a.* The Lord will laugh at him,

b. for he sees that his day is coming.

14 *a.* The wicked have drawn the sword

b. and have bent their bows

c. to cast down the poor and needy,

d. to slay those who are of upright way.

15 *a.* Their sword will enter their own heart,

b. and their bows will be broken.

16 *a.* Better is a little that the righteous has

b. than the abundance of many wicked.

17 *a.* For the arms of the wicked will be broken,

b. but YHWH upholds the righteous.

18 *a.* YHWH knows the days of the blameless,

b. and their inheritance will be forever.

19 *a.* They will not put to shame in evil time,

b. in the days of famine they will be satisfied.

20 *a.* But the wicked will perish

b. and the enemies of YHWH

c. Like the splendour of the pastures;

d. they vanish like smoke — they vanish away.

21 *a.* The wicked man borrows, and does not pay back,

b. but the righteous man is gracious and gives.

22 *a.* For those blessed by him will possess the land,

b. but those cursed by him will be cut off.

23 *a.* From YHWH, the steps of a man are established,

b. and in his way he will delight.

24 *a.* Though he fall, he will not be utterly cast down,

b. for YHWH upholds with his hand.

25 *a.* I have been young, and now am old;

b. yet I have not seen a righteous man forsaken

c. nor his seed begging for bread.

26 *a.* At all the day, he is gracious and lending,

b. and his seed becomes a blessing.

27 *a.* Depart from evil, and do good;

b. and dwell *in it* forever.

28 *a.* For YHWH loves justice;

b. he will not forsake his pious ones.

c. Forever they are preserved,

d. but the seed of the wicked will be cut off.

29 *a.* The righteous will possess the land,

b. and dwell in it forever.

30 *a.* The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom,

b. and his tongue speaks justice.

31 *a.* The Torah of his God is in his heart;

b. none of his steps will slip.

32 *a.* The wicked man watches the righteous,

b. and seeks to slay him.

33 *a.* YHWH will not leave him in his hand,

b. nor allow him to be condemned when he is judged.

34 *a.* Wait for YHWH,

b. and keep his way,

c. And he will exalt you to possess the land

d. when the wicked are cut off, you will see *it.*

35 *a.* I have seen a wicked man in great power,

b. and spreading himself like a native luxuriant tree.

36*a*. Yet he passed by, and behold, he was no more;

b. though I sought him, he could not be found.

37*a*. Mark the blameless man, and behold the upright,

b. for the future of that man is peace.

38*a*. But transgressors are destroyed together;

b. the future of the wicked will be cut off.

39*a*. And the salvation of the righteous is from YHWH;

b. he is their strength in the time of trouble.

40*a*. And YHWH will help them and deliver them;

b. he will deliver them from the wicked, and save them,

c. because they take refuge in him.

Translation Notes

Verse 3*b*. וּרְעֵה אֱמוּנָה — and enjoy security

The meaning of the phrase in the Massoretic Text is ambiguous and consequently, there are numerous alternative suggestions. The LXX suggests to emend אֱמוּנָה as ἐπὶ τῷ πλούτῳ αὐτῆς [=הֲמוֹנָהּ?] (*with the wealth of it*). The Vulg. follows the rendering of LXX: *pasceris in divitiis eius*. Dahood (1965:228), also following LXX, proposes 'faithfulness' to be rendered as 'riches': 'feed on its riches' (i.e. those of the Promised Land). However, this reading is questionable (see VanGemeren, 1991:299). Some commentators translate the verb רְעֵה as 'pursue' or 'keep' with the object אֱמוּנָה: 'keep faithfulness' (Kraus, 1988:401; cf. Weiser, 1962:312 – *keep upright in heart*). This proposal provides a parallel for 'do good'. It is, however, preferable to view the ambiguous command in parallelism with 'dwell in the land'.

Some commentators (Anderson, 1972a:293; Perowne, 1976a:315; cf. Terrien, 2003:317) take this parallel, and consequently translate the phrase as 'enjoy security', pointing to the meaning of a Qal of רעה II, 'associate with' (Brown *et al.*, 1979:945).

This rendering pre-supposes the imperatives in verse 3b (*dwell* and *enjoy*) has something of a future meaning (i.e. Trust in YHWH, and do good; *so will* you dwell in the land, and enjoy security). The imperative form in the Biblical Hebrew is occasionally used in the sense of future wishes, especially in the form of blessings (see Van der Merwe *et al.*, 1999:150-151). This rendering then accords well with other parts of the psalm where *dwelling in the land* is promised as a special blessing (verses 9, 11, 22, 29 and 34). Many modern translations (CEV, NCV, NJB, NLT, NRSV, TEV; cf. GNaB: *und wohnst in Sicherheit*; also LEI: *en weid er in veiligheid*) are in agreement with this rendering. Consequently, this study also follows this rendering and translates the phrase as 'and enjoy security'.

Verse 14*cd*. לְהַפִּיל עָנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן לִטְבוֹחַ יִשְׁרֵי־דָרֶךְ — to cast down the poor and needy, to slay those who are of upright way

BHK and BHS propose that these two lines are *perhaps* glosses to the original text. This suggestion is based on the grounds that these two lines interrupt the symmetric inclusion of verses 14 and 15 (see Briggs & Briggs, 1906:327; Kraus, 1988:403; also VanGemeren, 1991:302). However, the suggestion is conjectural and the two lines make good sense in the context (see Craigie, 1983:295-296). In the matter of explanatory glosses in the text-critical studies, especially, a fair amount of subjectivity could enter the picture. In other words what for one text critic is a gloss will be part of the original text for another. In fact, in many cases, the identification of glosses belongs more to the areas of higher criticism than textual criticism (see Brotzman, 1994:119-120; also Fishbane, 1985:44-65). Thus this study takes the Massoretic Text as the best text for this case.

Verse 28*c*. לְעוֹלָם נִשְׁמָרוּ (ע) — forever they are preserved

In this line, the letter ע of the acrostic psalm is missing, unless לְעוֹלָם (*forever*) be considered. So it is tempting to emend the Massoretic Text based on the LXX to עַוָּלִים לְעוֹלָם נִשְׁמָדוּ (*the wrongdoers are destroyed forever*). It then provides a

parallel with the next line, begins with an ע, and only assumes that the word עַוְלִים (*the wrongdoers*) has been left out and that a copyist corrected the verb from נִשְׁמָדוּ (*are destroyed*) to נִשְׁמָרוּ (*are preserved*). In this proposed reading, it is possible that the noun was omitted due to haplography, while the verb was subsequently altered. This variant is also supported by *4Q171 3-10, iv:1* (*4QpPs 37 IV, 1*—DTAQ) although the text is rather fragmentary (see Anderson, 1972a:299; VanderKam, 1994:50-51).

Craigie (1983:295-296) and Kraus (1988:402-403) accept this amendment while they argue about the symmetrical parallelism of the verbs 'be destroyed' and 'be cut off' in verse 38*b*. Bazak (1985:496-497), however, objected to this proposal. After a thorough analysis of Psalm 37 by way of structural geometric patterns, Bazak places verse 28*c* at the centre of his triangle number 7, which is composed of three double verses at the middle part of Psalm 37 (verses 27-28, 30-31, 32-33). For Bazak, placing a certain line or verse at the centre of a triangle means it retains a preserving power of the symmetrical construction of the psalm. He then convincingly concludes that "the omission of one or two verses out of the acrostic order is not because of a 'corrupt text' or anything similar, but that it is pre-planned and intended" (Bazak, 1985:496).

In fact, most of the alphabetic acrostic forms in the Old Testament are 'broken acrostics'. The normal mould that one would expect in an alphabetical acrostic would be 22 verses each beginning with letters of the alphabet running consecutively from א to ת in the conventional order. Surprisingly, in the Old Testament on can only find two occurrences that meet the criteria exactly: Proverbs 31:10-31 and Lamentations 1 (see Leeman, 1996:43-45). In the Psalter, for example, Psalm 145 comes close to fitting the normal mould, but it lacks a נ verse. For Psalms 25 and 34, each has an acrostic with the ו verse omitted and with a פ heading to the final verse. This study therefore also takes the 'broken order' of the acrostic pattern in verse 28c as it is. That is to say, it follows the rendering of the Massoretic Text for verse 28c: "Forever they (the righteous) are preserved". For the same reason, the ו verse (verse 39) is also taken as it stands for purposes of this discussion.

Verse 35*b*. וּמִתְעָרֶה כְּאֶזְרָח רַעֲנָן — and spreading himself like a native luxuriant tree

The meaning of the Massoretic Text is difficult to understand. The LXX suggests to the line as καὶ ἐπαιρόμενον ὡς τὰς κέδρους τοῦ Λιβάνου (*and lifting himself up like the cedars of Libanus*). The Vulg. follows the rendering of the LXX: *et elevatum sicut cedros Libani.* Some commentators make use of the rendering of the LXX, and translate the line similarly: "raising himself up defiantly like a cedar of Lebanon" (Weiser, 1962:313); "and flourish like the cedars of Lebanon" (Buttenwieser, 1969:856); "towering like a cedar of Lebanon" (Anderson, 1972a: 300); and "exalt himself like a green cedar" (Kraus, 1988:403); cf. "He was spread like a green cedar" (Terrien, 2003:319).

For some scholars, the crux of the matter in this line is how to read the verb מִתְעָרֶה. So Fitzgerald (1978:486) retains the text, and interprets it as a dialectical form. According to him, the ל and the ר are dialectical variants, which have been interchanged. Then the verb gives the unique reading מתעלה (*raise oneself*), since the *Qal* meaning of עלה is 'ascend or grow', being used of trees and vegetation. Craigie (1983:295-296) accepts Fitzgerald's proposal, and translates the line: "*flourishing* like a luxuriant native tree". However, the rendering based on this argument is somewhat forced. Briggs and Briggs (1906:331) suggest a somewhat different reading. They think the participle should be read with the first part of the line because the mistake of other interpreters is connecting the last participle with the simile. For them, all the terms set forth the terrifying strength of the wicked enemy whereas the simile gives an additional idea. So Briggs and Briggs (1906:324) translate verse 35: "I have seen the wicked (terrifying and making himself bare); he was like a luxuriant (cedar)". This rendering, however, breaks the (sym)metrical balance of the line. As VanGemeren (1991:306) rightly points out, there is no satisfactory solution, regardless of how one considers the problems.

This study therefore simply follows the Massoretic Text with the meaning

suggested by the standard dictionaries. It is suggested that one read the *Hithpa'el* participle (מתערה) as 'pouring himself [i.e. spreading himself out like a tree]' (Brown *et al.*, 1979:788); אזרח as 'a native tree, growing in its natural soil' (Brown *et al.*, 1979:280); and רענן as 'luxuriant, fresh' (Brown *et al.*, 1979:947). Koehler & Baumgartner (and Holladay) explain the words similarly: מתערה as 'to expose oneself [i.e. the one who raised himself]' (Koehler & Baumgartner, 1995:882) 'show oneself naked' (Holladay, 1988:282); אזרח as 'native, *full* citizen' (Koehler & Baumgartner, 1994:28; also Holladay, 1988:8); and רענן as 'luxuriant, leafy, full of leaves' (Koehler & Baumgartner, 1996:1269; also Holladay, 1988:343).

Taking all the suggested meanings of the words together, this study translates the line as: 'and spreading himself like a native luxuriant tree'. Some scholars and modern translations translate the line similarly: 'who spread out without shame like an ever green tree in its native soil' (Hirsch, 1960:281); 'and spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil' (Perowne, 1976a:319); 'and spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil' (AB); 'spreading himself like a luxuriant tree in its native soil' (NASB); 'and spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil' (NJB); and 'and spreading himself like a native green tree' (NKJV).

3. Poetic Structure of Psalm 37

The poetic structure of Psalm 37 should be viewed primarily in terms of its alphabetic acrostic scheme in which the initial letters of every second verse represent the sequence of the Hebrew alphabet in their appropriate order. In this psalm, all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are represented, and normal alphabetic sequence is followed with slight variations in the ע component and the ת component, as observed above. While the demarcation of verse lines is certain because of the acrostic scheme of the psalm, the sequence of the Hebrew alphabet does not always agree with the versification of the Massoretic Text that there are 40 verses in the psalm but 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet.

Besides the acrostic structure, the demarcation of the strophes and consequently the structure of the psalm, are not so transparent. This is to some extent the result of the high degree of synonymy (Fokkelman, 2000:139). Moreover, at first glance there seems to be little evidence of thought structure or logical development in this psalm. The intra-textual information is taken seriously, however, and this psalm reveals a structural order marked by formal and content signals.

As far as the formal or functional signal is concerned, the different speech acts in the psalm are the most obvious characteristic that can be used to divide the psalm into its relevant section (see Irsigler, 1998:586-588). The shifts in the direction of address expose the following major division (cf. Jüngling, 1998:816-817):

1) Address: admonitions and rationale (verses 1-11)
2) Exposition: instructional description (verses 12-26)
3) Address: admonitions with extensive rationale (verses 27-40)

For the content signals, three fundamental ideas recur throughout the psalm as follows:

1) Fret not yourself because of the wicked (verses 1, 7 and 8).
2) Trust and hope in YHWH. The righteous will not be put to shame but will possess the land (verses 3, 7, 11, 18, 19, 22 and 34).
3) The wicked will come to an evil end. Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more (verses 2, 9, 10, 20, 28, 36 and 38).

Even though the content signals of the psalm, namely three fundamental ideas, are unsystematically distributed throughout the psalm, the main ideas are used for the purpose of admonition in two address segments (verses 1-11 and 27-40), and for the purpose of pure instruction in the exposition segment (verses 12-26). Therefore the psalm comprises two exhortative segments (verses 1-11 and 27-40), and a purely instructional segment (verses 12-26).

This demarcation is further reinforced by the carefully designed poetic devices. In the first main section (verses 1-11), the idiom 'fret not yourself' is repeated three

times (verses 1, 7 and 8), and binds them together into a unit. Repetitions also clearly mark off the section as distinct: מרעים (evildoers) in verses 1 and 9; the *Qal* active participle of עשׂה in verses 1 and 7; and ענג (*take delight*) in verses 4 and 11. The section is also syntactically united by verbs in the imperative mood that give the exhortation to trust and hope in YHWH and warnings for avoiding irritation with arguments (כי in verses 2 and 9), and with motivating announcements respectively.

The second main section (verses 12-26) formulates throughout in a descriptive way, which portrays the contrasting ways of the righteous and the wicked. Syntactically all the cola in this section are statements. The description uses participle, (verses 12, 21 and 22) nominal (verse 16), as well as various verbal clauses (verses 14, 19 and 24). This section ends with a winning autobiographical confession narrative of the psalmist in the first-person affirmation form in verses 25-26.

The third main section (verse 27-40) is the concluding section in which the linguistic forms and the functions of the speech acts of the two preceding sections are combined. With verse 27, a syntactic change occurs because verbs in the imperative mood appear again in this section (verses 27, 34 and 37). The section begins with imperatives and ethical admonitions in verses 27-34, but rapidly moves on to final instruction and promise in verses 37-40 by way of the first-person affirmation form in verses 35-36. This section thus serves as a summary and deepening of what was said before.

The demarcating of the psalm based on these formal and content signals and poetic devices is even further strengthened by carefully formed internal order. The divine name, YHWH, appears 15 times in the psalm, with five instances in each of the three sections (verses 3, 4, 5, 7, 9; 17, 18, 20, 23, 24; and 28, 33, 34, 39, 40). The fate of the righteous is described as possessing of the land five times. Then these are chiastically distributed throughout the sections in the pattern of 2:1:2 (verses 9, 11: 22: 29, 34). The fate of the wicked is also distributed 4 times (verses 9, 22, 28 and 34) in juxtaposition to the fate of the righteous (cf. Jüngling, 1998:816-817). The

personal observation of the destruction of the wicked also can be found in each of three sections (verses 10-11; verses 25-26; and verses 35-36). The word לב (*heart*) is distributed in each of the sections (verses 4, 15 and 31), and the word טוב (*good*) is also in each of the sections (verses 3, 16 and 27).

Furthermore, the first main section and the third main section may be divided into two subsections each, on the basis of the apparent repetition and semantic relationship of form and content.

In the first main section (verses 1-11), the contents of the first two bicola (verses 1-2) are negative and the following four bicola (verses 3-6) are positive. Then verse 7, two bicola, is a summation of the preceding six bicola. The first bicolon of verse 7 is positive, which stands semantically parallel to the first two bicola (verses 1-2), and the second bicolon of verse 7 is negative, which is semantically parallel to the next four bicola (verses 3-6). These parallels form an inner chiastic pattern. Moreover, the idiom 'fret not yourself' is repeated in verses 1 and 7 to form an inclusio, which usually serves to demarcate a complete textual unit (Wendland, 2002:108). The chiastic parallel pattern and inclusion therefore bind verses 1-7 together into a subsection. In verses 8-11, verse 8 and subsequent verses (verses 9-11) are linked together by means of causal כי and conjunctive ו. This means that, while verses 8 and 9 are tied together by causal כי, verses 9-11 are bound together by ו conjunctions. This internal link makes verses 9-11 causal statements of verse 8 (especially, of the imperatives of the verse). In addition, יירשו־ארץ (*they will possess the land*) repeats itself in verses 9 and 11, and thereby binds them together as well. Thus verses 8-11 can be regarded as another subsection of the first main section.

In the third main section (verses 27-40), the first part (verses 27-34) consists mainly of imperatives and ethical admonitions. The root משפט is repeated in verse 28 (משפט – *justice*), verse 30 (משפט – *justice*), and verse 33 (השפטו – *he is judged*). Negative particle לא is also repeated in verse 28, verse 31, and twice in verse 33. These repetitions bind this section together into a subsection. This subsection is

concluded with the final admonition in the two-bicola verse (verse 34). The main idea then moves from admonition to final instruction and promise in verses 37-40 by way of the first-person affirmation form in verses 35-36. This subsection is interrelated by the noun רשע (*the wicked*), which appears in verse 35 in the singular form and in verses 38 and 40 in the plural form. While the first two bicola (verses 35-36) deal with the fate of the wicked, the last bicolon and tricolon (verse 39-40) present a concluding affirmation of how God will help the righteous. Therefore verses 35-40 can be regarded as the second subsection of the third main section.

Taking all above observations together, the structure of Psalm 37 can be schematized in the following manner:

Stanza I (verses 1-11): Exhortation, *Trust in YHWH alone!*
Strophe *A* (verses 1-7): Admonition, *Fret not yourself!*
Strophe *B* (verses 8-11): Promise, *The righteous will possess the land.*
Stanza II (verses 12-26): Instruction about the two contrastive ways
Strophe *C* (verses 12-26): *For the arms of the wicked will be broken, but YHWH upholds the righteous.*
Stanza III (verses 27-40): Exhortation, *Wait for YHWH, and keep his way!*
Strophe *D* (verses 27-34): Admonition, *Depart from evil, and do good!*
Strophe *E* (verses 35-40): Promise, *The salvation of the righteous is from YHWH.*

4. Poetic Content of Psalm 37

Stanza I (verses 1-11): Exhortation

In **Strophe *A* (verses 1-7)**, the first two bicola (verses 1-2) are negative and the following four (verses 3-6) are positive. The two bicola (verse 7) then summarizes the preceding six bicola by means of a chiastic parallel pattern as observed already. This strophe contains a concentrated series of imperatives: 3 negative (*do not*) imperatives and 9 positive (*do*) imperatives.

The א component (verses 1-2) consists of two bicola. The first bicolon (verse 1) and the second bicolon (verse 2) are linked together by means of the causal כי. In the first bicolon, the first colon (1*a*) and the second colon (1*b*) are in synonymous parallelism, in which both cola use negative אל in order to express negative commands in the second person. A strong alliteration between 1*a* and 1*b* is also obvious:

אל תתחר במרעים
אל תקנא בעשי עולה

This alliteration in the opening verse of wisdom psalm is remarkable, since the alliteration serves to assist memorization and arouses the attention of the listener(s) (see Watson, 1995:227-228). In the second bicolon (verse 2), the first colon (2*a*) and the second colon (2*b*) also form a synonymous parallelism, in which similes are used to depict the wicked. In the second colon (2*b*) a *hendiadys* is also used: ירק דשא (*green grass*).

In this א component, the most elemental wisdom form it is already evident that it consists of two prohibitions, plus a motivation introduced by the causal כי (see Brueggemann, 1984:42). For the vivid impact of motivation, similes are used to describe the nature of the wicked. Grass and green grass (*or herb*), common symbols of that which is transient and perishable (e.g. Psalm 90:5 and Isaiah 40:7), are taken from the rapid drying up caused by the Near Eastern sirocco and the sun (see Murphy, 2000:89). The imagery thus refers to the transitory prosperity that the wicked are to experience. Here retribution against the wicked is expressed in two metaphors of premature death.

The ב component (verses 3-4) and the ג component (verses 5 and 6) have YHWH as object in their first colon, and employ positive abstract terms such as delight, trust, justice, light and righteous. Action/result connections encourage the listener/reader to trust in God alone. In this manner, these two components contain a contrast to the opening verses, advocating not envy of the wicked, but trust in

YHWH. The negative warning in previous verses now gives place to the positive admonition, turning the attention from the wicked to YHWH.

In the ב component (verses 3-4), 'trust in YHWH, and do good' in verse 3 is an antithesis to 'wrong doers' in verse 1. This contrast implies that fretting and being envious would be a sign of mistrusting the judgmental reality of YHWH. These admonitions are obviously felt to be necessary in view of harsh reality. Instead of giving in to self-pity and hatred, the psalmist admonishes to trust in YHWH. Here trusting YHWH means faith, especially the more difficult aspect of faith — submission to His will in the hope of His resolution of dilemma (see VanGemeren, 1991:298). In this spirit of submission, the wise person can enjoy real security. Verse 4 employs a special form of Hebrew verb in its intensive and reflexive form (*Hithpa'el* form) that seeks a joy that is delicate and dignified yet always of this earth. The verb 'delight' is associated elsewhere with God's provision of resources for life (see Isaiah 55:2, 58:14 and 66:11). Verse 4*b* also suggests that only God's providence can be trusted.

In the ג component (verses 5 and 6), the psalmist returns to a reflection on the meaning of trusting YHWH. While in verse 3 trusting is expressed as 'doing good', verse 5 expresses trusting as a 'waiting for YHWH to act'. The Hebrew for 'commit' is literally 'roll', as though getting rid of a burden, but in the wisdom literature it comes to be used simply as a synonym for 'entrust' (e.g. Proverbs 16:3; see Kidner, 1973:150). The 'way' pertains to one's whole life including the negative feelings, nagging questions, and concerns of justice expressed in the opening verses of this psalm. In verse 6, the result of total commitment is powerfully expressed by striking similes that set forth the sure triumph of the righteous: *He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice like the noonday.* A legal connotation is also manifested in this verse.

The ד component (verse 7) consists of two bicola, and the central part of Strophe *A*, which summarizes the proceeding verses. The first bicolon (7*ab*) is

positive part with two positive imperatives, which is parallel to the verses 3-6, and the second bicolon (7*cd*) is negative, which is parallel to the verses 1-2, forming a chiastic pattern, as previously mentioned. The psalmist uses the preceding themes again in order to admonish the importance of patient waiting for God's due time. Moreover, the repeated idiom 'fret not yourself' serves to create an envelope figure with verse 1, and, at the same time, emphasizes the importance of this theme (see Schökel, 1988:78). The psalmist gives no illusions about prosperity because it is often obtained via evil devices and thus cannot serve as an unequivocal sign of God's blessing (see Broyles, 1999:180). Rather, the psalmist states the wise living that begins by being 'still before YHWH' and by waiting for his deliverance patiently.

Therefore in Strophe *A* the psalmist instructs the listener/reader by way of advocating patience — not to be achieved by observing the instant-success schemes of this world — but by learning to wait patiently for God's appropriate time. For this purpose, verses 1 and 7 advocate the listener/reader to 'fret not', while the parallel line in verse 1 provides another negative warning, 'be not envious'. The point is not to become irritated by ruling injustice. On the contrary, 9 positive imperatives (verses 3-5 and 7) are the heart of this psalm, encouraging the listener/reader to trust firmly in YHWH and wait for him patiently. The affirmation of God's promise for those who trust in him is also stated in various ways (verses 4-6) in order to encourage the listener/reader even more.

Strophe *B* (verses 8-11) has four bicola (verses 8-11), in which causal כִּי and conjunction וְ establish their inner relationship (see above). In the first bicolon (verse 8), two imperatives (8*a*) and the repeated idiom 'fret not yourself' (8*b*) are used to retain the inner relationship with the previous strophe, and, consequently, the causal כִּי (verse 9*a*) maintains the link between verse 8 and subsequent verses (verses 9-11). While the first colon (9*a*) and the second colon (9*b*) in verse 9 form an inner antithetical parallelism, the third bicolon (verse 10) is also antithetically parallel to the fourth bicolon (verse 11). This strophe repeats and further develops the themes

set forth in Strophe *A*, so as to affirm the promise for those who wait for YHWH patiently. In this strophe, the psalmist seeks to throw light on the subject in question from another angle.

In the ה component (verses 8-9), the warning of verses 1-2 (א component) is now reiterated. In verse 8, like the beginning of the psalm, wise living is dealt with using negative emotions — especially anger, wrath and fretting. Here the noun 'anger (חמה)' and the phrase 'fret not (חרה)' have similar root meanings: 'to be kindled' or 'to be hot' (Brown *et al.*, 1979:354, 404). In verse 9 the fundamental, two-sided statement is recorded: *For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for YHWH will possess the land.* This fatal contrast between the righteous and the wicked is repeated throughout the psalm in the manner of juxtaposition (verses 9, 22, 28-29 and 34). The emphasis on the possession of the land is also expressed in a word pair, ירשׁ // כרת. The term ירשׁ is used positively with the righteous person as an active subject. This term is used four times more in this psalm (verses 11, 22, 29 and 34), and all positively describe the blessing of the righteous as the inheritance of the land. On the contrary, the second verb of the pair, כרת is passive and used negatively, thus refusing to identify an active agent of 'cutting off'. This passive and negative term is used four more times in the psalm (verses 22, 28, 34 and 38).

In the ו component (verses 10 and 11), the theme of the preceding component is expanded further. The personal touch 'though you look carefully for his place' indicates the psalmist's faith of willingness to watch for empirical evidence. The intra-textual perspective gives the best possible definition of the meek: they are those who choose the way of patient waiting instead of self-assertion (see Kidner, 1973:150). 'Possess the land' implies that the wicked, who have taken more than their share, will be cut off in the end, leaving the meek in sole possession. In this regard, this motif is used as almost a refrain in this psalm (see verses 3, 9, 11, 22, 29 and 34).

Hence Strophe *B* gives precise reasons for not fretting about the wicked. On the

negative side: the wicked are not going to be around much longer. On the positive side is the assertion that the righteous will eventually possess the land and delight themselves in peace. In this regard, observing the downfall of the wicked is important because it demonstrates to the righteous that their way is the right way.

Stanza II (verses 12-26): Instruction about the two contrastive ways

Strophe *C* (verses 12-26) is a pure exposition that contrasts the behaviour and fate of the righteous and the wicked in proverbial form and ends with an autobiographical observation of the sage. As a descriptive part of the psalm, this strophe portrays the destinies of two contrasting ways, namely the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked. The description uses participles (verses 12, 21 and 22), nominal clauses (verse 16), and various verbal clauses (verses 14, 19 and 24).

The ז component (verses 12 and 13) and the ח component (verses 14 and 15) consist of five bicola. The first bicolon (verse 12) and the second bicolon (verse 13) are antithetical parallel, and the third and the fourth bicola (verse 14) and the fifth bicolon are also antithetically related to each other. This consecutive antithesis expresses the contrastive fate between the righteous and the wicked. In the first bicolon (verse 12), the subject (רשע) is gapped in the second colon (12*b*). In the second bicolon (verse 13), particle כי is repeated twice in the second colon (13*b*). The first one is the causal כי, and the second one introduces an object clause after a verb of perception (ראה – *he sees*). In the third bicolon (verse 14 *ab*) and the fourth bicolon (verse 14 *cd*), 14*a* and 14*b* are linked together by the conjunction ו, and 14*cd* are linked to 14 *ab* by means of two infinitives (*to cast down* and *to slay*). In 14 *bcd*, the subject is רשע in 14*a*. In the fifth bicolon (verse 15), the first colon (15*a*) and the second colon (15*b*) form an inner synonymous parallelism.

In the ז component (verses 12 and 13), the posture of the wicked changes from

being mere objects of temptation to the righteous, to that of active aggressors against the righteous. It provides the listener/reader with a precise picture of the 'bloody-minded'. The major tone of verse 12 is an experience common to the faithful, as is evident from the large number of individual laments in the Psalter (see Craigie, 1983:298). Here the righteous man/woman is described as a suffering party, the weak one, who sees himself/herself confronted by a great wicked power. At the same time, however, the wise psalmist points out the superior, the triumphant laughter of YHWH who already sees the day of destruction approaching the wicked (verse 13).

In the ד component (verses 14 and 15), the psalmist employs war images such as sword and bows that can provide the vivid impact on the aggressive character of the wicked. Here the imagery is used to enunciate the so-called 'boomerang principle' of evil (cf. Psalm 7:12-16). Sin ultimately recoils upon the wicked and destroys them. In this regard, verses 14-15 give an obvious picture of the retribution motif where the wicked are expected to perish by their own devices. This motif is especially forceful because an antithesis is deliberately drawn between the righteous and the wicked.

While verse 13 promises that the day (of judgment) for the wicked is coming, verse 15 articulates that the wicked will become their own victims. In verse 14*c*, a stereotyped phrase עני ואביון (*poor and needy*) is used to refer to all who have been deprived of their rights, and so must wait on God alone, for he is their only source of vindication (see Kraus, 1986:150-154). God does not act immediately, but 'laughs at the wicked' (verse 13*a*). He sees the end from the beginning and assures the righteous that the day of the wicked is coming (13*b*). That day is the terrible day when the wicked fall by their own scheming (verse 15).

The ט component (verses 16 and 17) and the י component (verses 18 and 19) consists of four bicola. In the first bicolon (verse 16), a proverbial statement is presented by means of comparison. Here טוב refers to an idea of relative worth (see Bowling, 1980:345- 346). This 'better than' phrase is typical of wisdom teachings (see Bryce, 1972:343-354), which has parallels in form and content in Proverbs

15:16-17 and 16:8. In the second bicolon (verse 17), the first colon (17*a*) and the second colon (17*b*) are in antithetical parallelism. These first two bicola are linked together by the causal כִּי. In the י component (verses 18 and 19), the motif of the land, which is one of main motifs of Stanza I, recurs. 'Their inheritance' in 18*b* refers to the land. Verse 19*b* also refers to the land that produces food for the righteous when there is famine elsewhere.

In the מ component (verses 16 and 17), the deprivation of the livelihood of the righteous by the rule of the wicked is implied. As a result, the righteous man has 'little' (verse 16). However, the wise righteous man knows that a 'little' with godliness is preferable to plenty with godlessness. Verse 17 is a moving picture of the strength of YHWH and his just acts against the wicked. In contrast, the arms — symbolically the strength of the wicked by which the righteous poor have been oppressed — will be broken. תִּשָּׁבַרְנָה (*will be broken*) in verse 15 is repeated here in order to describe the fatal end of the wicked.

In the י component (verses 18 and 19), the day of the wicked, which God sees in verse 13, is contrasted to the days of the blameless, which God knows. Here the term יָדַע (*know*) is used to express the covenantal commitment of YHWH. Because of this covenantal relationship between YHWH and the righteous, they are promised not to be put to shame in evil times. בּוֹשׁ (*shame*) in verse 19 is one of the core values in society in Biblical times. The Biblical value of 'shame' can be more precisely understood through its relationship to another important value, namely 'honour'. In Biblical Israel, 'honour' had to be publicly acknowledged to be valid (see Malina, 1981:47). Denial of any such claim to honour resulted in shame. In this connection, 'shame' can be defined as a result of a social process in which a claim to 'honour' was publicly denied. 'Shame' can therefore also be defined as an exposure of a man's weakness or foolishness (Botha, 1999:391). In this social background, the sure promise is given to the wise righteous in affliction: *The righteous will not put to shame (weakness or foolishness) in evil time, and they will be satisfied even in the*

days of famine. This implies the righteous person can have a special relationship with his/her God on the basis of God's covenantal 'knowing' of the circumstances of the righteous.

The כ component (verse 20), another two-bicola verse, is an antithesis of the ט component (verses 16 and 17) and the י component (verses 18 and 19). Here the wicked are described as איבי יהוה (the enemies of YHWH) by way of a synonymous parallelism. As in verse 2, the similes are used to depict the transitory nature of the prosperity of the wicked. In contrast to the righteous, the wicked ultimately vanish like smoke, they disappear. The demise of the wicked therefore is even used to comfort the righteous. From this central verse of the psalm, the psalmist switches to descriptions of what is good and what is bad.

The ל component (verses 21 and 22) consists of two bicola. Here the verbs are in introverted parallel, and, at the same time, the first colon (21*a*) and the second colon (21*b*) are antithetical parallel, and the third colon (22*a*) and the fourth colon (22*b*) are also antithetical parallel.

From verse 21, the thoughts, which developed in the ט component (verses 16 and 17) and the י component (verses 18 and 19), are reverted: the righteous become gracious givers and the wicked become ruthless takers. Aside from the general imperative to do good in verse 3, verse 21 is the psalm's first comment on the behaviour of the righteous. There is no suggestion here that the wicked person becomes poor or the righteous person wealthy. It is rather the ruthless ways of the wicked, not wealth, that brings judgment on the wicked, as implied in verses 7 and 12-16 of this psalm. In contrast, the righteous person often shows extreme generosity, even in poverty. So the righteous are blessed by God and are therefore guaranteed the possessing of the land.

In verse 22, the theological motif of possession of the land and its opposite, expulsion or extermination in juxtaposition, is repeated in reverse order: ירשׁ (*possess*) // כרת (*cut off*). The positioning of the motif is quite significant because the

ל component marks the beginning of the second half in the acrostic composition. Here the blessings and curses are reminiscent of those pertaining to the covenant (cf. Deuteronomy 27:11-26; 28:1-19).

The מ component (verses 23 and 24) has two bicola. The first bicolon (verse 23) and the second bicolon (verse 24) are linked by the concessive כי. The divine name, YHWH, is apparent in the first colon (23*a*) and the last colon (24*b*). Here the focus moves from the contrast between the righteous and the wicked to the blessings of the righteous. In verse 23, 'from YHWH' is in the emphatic position, which throws light on the source of the success of the righteous. For יחפץ (*he delights*), contextually either YHWH or the righteous may be subject. However, the righteous as subject is preferable because man's delight in doing God's will is the condition of the promise of verse 24. In verse 24*b*, verse 17*b* is repeated with the chiastic alternation of סומך and יהוה: verse 17*b* – יהוה צדיקים וסומך (*but ... upholds / the righteous / YHWH*) // verse 24*b* – כי־יהוה סומך ידו (*for YHWH / upholds / with his hands*). This repetition emphatically expresses the nature of divine support and protection. The righteous may fall in the way of life, but the divine hands ensure that he will not be utterly cast down.

In Proverbs, one can find how the limits of human knowledge are occasionally indicated by contrasting the careful plans of man with the actual outcome decreed by the mysterious decisions of God (Proverbs 19:2; 20:24). In this component too, the steps of a person are established from YHWH; he makes firm the one whose way delights him; falls he will have, but YHWH will hold him up with his hand.

The נ component (verses 25 and 26) consists of a tricolon (verse 25) and a bicolon (verse 26). In the tricolic verse (verse 25), the psalmist appears for the first time in the psalm as an 'I' with three perfect forms. As a wisdom feature, the psalmist's own experience attests to the veracity of the teaching. It is obvious here that the psalmist is an old sage. He is appealing to his own experience and he affirms that he has never seen the righteous person forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

This verse must not be misunderstood as an indication that the psalmist has led a narrow or sheltered life: i.e. either this psalmist moved in very elite circles or was blind to what was going on around him (see Davidson, 1998:127). This statement is not to be taken in an absolute sense, because many times in the psalm he has referred to the hardships of the righteous (verses 7, 12, 14, 19, 24, 32, 33, 39 and 40). The point of the psalmist is, rather, that the righteous will not be permanently forsaken by YHWH. Then it is the benefit of old age because the aged person could only offer this wisdom from the perspective of age, for in the short run it might often appear that the righteous are forsaken. The purpose of this teaching is clear: every admonition is based on experience. Life, not theory, is its source.

After this personal admonition, the psalmist again turns his attention to the righteous and his relationship to YHWH. The righteous are ever gracious and lending. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word חוֹנֵן (*gracious*) is used for describing one of God's essential characteristics (see Exodus 34:6). The righteous are people whose character has been shaped by God's character: having known grace, they can be gracious. Because they trust God to protect and provide (verses 23-25), the righteous are able to know the happiness of giving. Having been blessed (verse 22), they become a blessing. In this personal admonition, the psalmist also speaks of the descendants (*seeds*) of the righteous. This description incorporates the so-called prophetic-eschatological feature.

Therefore in Strophe *C*, the righteous person is firstly described as the suffering body who sees himself/herself confronted by a great evil power. At the same time, the wise psalmist points out the superior, triumphant laughter of YHWH, who already sees the day of ruin approaching the wicked. The wicked will be devastated by their own deadly weapons. In view of this retribution and the conviction that God intervenes in the fortunes of life in the world, the wisdom saying comes to the conclusion that the slender subsistence of the righteous is better than the great wealth of the wicked. It is therefore clearly determinative for a person to be the righteous. In this mode of existence the righteous and the wicked are directly contrasted, and their

contrasting ways of life evaluated. In this way, verses 21-26 illustrate what was affirmed in verses 3-4, with verbal links of the words borrow/lend and graciously. The wisdom is obvious: those who trust in God are motivated and enabled to do good.

Stanza III (verses 27-40): Exhortation, *Wait for YHWH, and keep his way!*

Strophe *D* (verses 27-34) returns to the form of individual address. After the initial imperatives in verse 27, this strophe mainly focuses on the behaviour and fate of the righteous.

The ס component (verses 27 and 28*a-b*) and the ע component (verses 28*c-d* and 29) consists of four bicola. In the first bicolon (verses 27), three imperatives are linked together by ו conjunctions. The first bicolon (verse 27) and the second bicolon (verse 28*ab*) are tied together by causal כי. In the third bicolon (verse 28*cd*), the first colon (28*c*) and the second colon (28*d*) are antithetical parallel. In the fourth bicolon (verse 29), the motif of 'possessing the land' is repeated in the first colon (29*a*) and verse 27*b* is repeated in the second colon (29*b*), but this time with עליה (*in it*).

In the ס component (verses 27 and 28*ab*), verse 27 explicitly repeats the exhortation of verse 3: *Do good!* Here the motivation is linked to *who God is* and *how he cares for* his people in verse 28*ab*. The word משפת (*justice*) in verse 28*a* recalls verse 6, and anticipates verse 30. In the context of this psalm, justice (משפת) can be defined as the mysterious principle that YHWH promotes when he blesses the righteous and rejects the wicked (Kraus, 1988:407). On the basis of this testimony and experience, the exhortation in this component is appropriate for the righteous. In fact, it is the characteristic piety of Biblical wisdom: both on the negative and positive sides of ethical conduct (*Depart from evil and Do good*) with the imperative of apodosis (*Dwell in it forever*) (see Briggs & Briggs, 1906:329-330). The motivation added to the exhortation is noteworthy. The righteous person shall devote

himself/herself to an ethical life because God loves justice. The ethical character of the covenant is quite obvious here: it is obedience springing from faith, not a morality motivated by utilitarian, eudemonistic consideration (Weiser, 1962: 321).

In the ע component (verses 28*cd* and 29), four cola are chiastically ordered. The reversed order of כרת (*cut off*) and ירשׁ (*possess*) in 28*d* and 29*a* is the chiastic complement of verse 22. In this regard, this part is also parallel to verse 9 with the same verb order. Here the psalmist once more compares, as in verses 9, 17 and 22, the future fate of the wicked who are subject to the curse of God, with that of the righteous — to whom God has given the promise. He does so in order to erect a clear signpost for the people of God.

The פ component (verses 30 and 31) and the צ component (verses 32 and 33) consist of four bicola. In the first bicolon (verse 30), the first colon (30*a*) and the second colon (30*b*) are semantically synonymous parallel. פה (*mouth*) in 30*a* and לשׁון (*tongue*) in 30*b* are a word pair, and הגה (*utter*) in 30*a* and דבר (*speak*) in 30*b* are also a word pair. In the second bicolon (verse 31), the second colon (31*b*) is a result clause of the first colon (31*a*). In the third bicolon, the first colon (32*a*) and the second colon (32*b*) are semantically synonymous parallel. צפה (*watch*) in 32*a* and בקשׁ (*seek*) in 32*b* are a word pair. The antecedent of the suffix on להמיתו (*to slay him*) in the second colon is צדיק (*the righteous*) in the first colon. In the fourth bicolon (verse 33), the first colon (33*a*) and the second colon (33*b*) are also semantically synonymous parallel.

In the פ component (verses 30 and 31), four bodily images describe the character of the righteous: the *mouth* that utters of wisdom, the *tongue* that speaks of justice, the *heart* that receives the Torah of YHWH and the *feet* that are secure (*literally because none of his steps will slip*). This may be contrasted with 'the arms of the wicked' that will be broken (see Broyles, 1999:182). This component is remarkable because wisdom, justice, and Torah constitute a trio. Noticeable only here, out of the entire Psalter, do we find the root צדק accompanied by the root חכם.

In fact, the standard counterpart of צדק in Biblical Hebrew as a whole is ישר not חכם; and the pair צדק // ישר is extremely prevalent throughout the Psalter (cf. Psalm 32:11; 33:1; 64:11; 97:11 and 140:41). From this point, it is clear that Psalm 37 deviates from the accepted stylistic conventions of the Psalmodic poetry. It is, however, in full harmony with the phraseology current in wisdom literature (see Hurvitz, 1992:111). In this regard, this component deals with the powers in the existence of the righteous people who show the way and determine life. The intimate connection between thought and speech is also evident in this proverbial component. The heart (*mind*) directs the tongue and mouth in speech. Hence the heart instilled into the Torah of YHWH utters wisdom and justice (see Craigie, 1983:299). The vocabulary of verses 30-31 recalls Psalm 1:2. The word translated *utter* (הגה) appears as 'meditate' in Psalm 1:2, which also twice mentions 'the Torah of YHWH'. Here the righteous person meditates on or utters 'wisdom' (cf. Psalm 49:3; Proverbs 31:26), but wisdom begins with fearing YHWH (see Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10; and Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; 15:33), which is here so associated with *speaking justice.* The righteous are therefore those who do not pursue their own ways, but devote themselves to wisdom and the Torah of YHWH. Consequently, the Torah of YHWH is the solid foundation on which their just lives are built.

In the צ component (verses 32 and 33), the wicked person tries once more to devise an evil scheme. In fact, adverse reaction to true wisdom is always a reality. However, the wicked cannot tolerate true piety because YHWH will ultimately preserve the righteous. In this regard, verses 32-33 echo verses 12-15. Even though the wicked are so treacherous towards the righteous, YHWH is always with the righteous. YHWH alone takes control of the proceedings, and when the righteous is judged YHWH will not allow him to be condemned. This emphatic suggestion of the opposite will declare him righteous.

The ק component (verse 34), the concluding part of this strophe, is another two-bicola verse which offers a compact summary of this psalm's teaching. This verse repeats the imperative advice of Stanza I. In the confidence that God will not

forsake the righteous, the psalmist offers a final exhortation. The two imperatives (*wait for YHWH and keep his way*) admonish patient waiting and staying on the right way. In this exhortation, two parallel results are promised very personally to the conversation partner: *He will exalt you to possess the land and you shall see the destruction of the wicked.* For the word *wait*, same Hebrew word of verse 9, קוה is used in the *Pi'el* imperative form (cf. חול in verse 7). Waiting in the Biblical sense and in the context of this psalm, denotes a hopeful expectancy, which is never disappointed as long as one waits for the Lord (cf. psalms 25:3; 27:14; and 69:7). 'Keep his way' can be a command to observe the Torah of YHWH in the light of verse 31. From this one realizes that 'waiting' is not simply being passive: while we wait we need to keep his way (*His Torah*). In this regard, 'way' recalls the main wisdom theme of Psalm 1 where the way of the Torah is admonished. Followed by the exhortation, the promise for the righteous who wait for YHWH and keep his way, is again confirmed in the second bicolon (34*cd*) : 'And he will exalt you to possess the land; when the wicked are cut off, and you will see it'.

In strophe *D*, the juxtaposition of the righteous and the wicked with wisdom motifs is prominent. At the same time, this strophe serves to comfort the righteous, who are suffering, with sure promises. It is therefore entirely appropriate that these themes are followed by the wisdom exhortation to wait patiently for the Lord and walk in his way. For this, the future exaltation of the righteous and the future possession of the land are promised. One can then find the basic covenantal ideas from this strophe: the promise of the land, to judgment and salvation, and to blessing and curse. In this connection, the covenantal providence bestowed by the reign of God is clearly manifested in this strophe. It is therefore not a matter of retribution but the validity of God's promise and curse corroborated in this strophe.

Strophe *E* (verses 35-40) continues to play on the theme of the destruction of the wicked and the prosperity of those who are upright and peaceable. The firm promise of salvation and rescue from YHWH is then stated. This strophe consists of 5 bicola (verses 35-39) and one final tricolon (verse 40). After the imperatives and

ethical admonitions in verses 27-34, this strophe rapidly moves on to final instruction and promise.

The ר component (verses 35 and 36) consists of two bicola. The first bicolon (verse 35) is joined by syntax with the main clause in the first colon (35*a*), and a circumstantial clause in the second colon (35*b*). The object רָשָׁע (*a wicked man*) in the first colon is the subject of the second colon. The second bicolon (verse 36) is joined by syntax with the main clause in the first colon (36*a*), and a concessive clause in the second colon (36*b*).

In this component, the first-person affirmation form is obvious. This section thus serves as a summary and deepening of what was said before. In a style reminiscent of Job 5:3-4, the psalmist renews his appeal to his experience (cf. verse 25). At the same time, the seeking-and-not-finding of verse 36*b* is contrasted with the productive finding of verse 25*c* that also appears in the autobiographical style. Here the picture of happy and powerful wicked person is drawn in verse 35, but quickly everything changes: the wicked had vanished and careful investigations prove that the wicked could no longer be found (verse 36).

In this part, the tree simile from Psalm 1:3 is developed in reverse. The righteous in Psalm 1 is like a tree planted by water that flourishes and grows. Here, on the contrary, the wicked person flourishes at first 'like a native luxuriant tree' — but it is gone suddenly, for it has no protection against drought. In wisdom literature, the final state of anything is the determinant of its value (Clifford, 2002:190). In this regard, verses 35-36 articulate again the theme of the transience of the wicked (see verses 2, 10, 13-15, 17 and 20). This vivid eyewitness report has much in common with passages in wisdom literature of the Bible with their characteristic use of experience (e.g. Proverbs 7:6-23; 24:30-34).

The ש component (verses 37 and 38) consists of two bicola. The first bicolon (verse 37) is joined by syntax with the main clause in the first colon (37*a*), and a causal clause introduced by the causal כִּי in the second colon (37*b*). In the second bicolon (verse 38), the first colon (38*a*) and the second colon (38*b*) are semantically

synonymous parallel. At the same time, the first bicolon and the second bicolon are antithetically related to each other.

In the ש component, the emphasis on future is expressed by way of an antithesis. The psalmist invites the godly to draw lessons of wisdom from experience by marking the blameless man and by observing the upright. The righteous person is concerned with integrity, uprightness and peace (verse 37) as expressions of wisdom. The emphasis on future is another point of contact with wisdom literature, with their concern to think ahead to the 'future' or 'afterwards' of a matter (cf. Proverbs 5:4) (Kidner, 1973:153). In this regard, Israel's wisdom thinking opens up to the future. In the 'future', the results of the trial now in progress will become evident. Perhaps even for the psalmist here, the future extends beyond death (cf. Dahood, 1965:232). The psalmist therefore justifies this final emphatic exhortation to live a truly godly and righteous life, with the hope of which only the blameless man/ upright/peace can be assured. In this sense, the ultimate end of the two ways is that the righteous has a future, but the future of the wicked will be cut off (*no future for the wicked!*).

The ת component (verses 39 and 40) consists of a bicolon (verse 39) and a tricolon (verse 40). In the bicolon (verse 39), the first colon (verse 39*a*) and the second colon (39*b*) are nominal clauses, related to each other by their reference to YHWH (39*a* and *he* in 39*b*) and the righteous (39*a* and *their* in 39*b*). In the tricolon (verse 40), four verbs (עזר – *help*; פלט – *deliver*; פלט – *deliver*; ישע – *save*) are deliberately used to depict YHWH's action for the benefit of the righteous. The first colon (40*a*) and the second colon (40*b*) are semantically synonymous parallel, and the third colon (40*c*) is a causal clause introduced by causal כי. The divine name YHWH appears from the first colon of both verses (39*a* and 40*a*).

In this ת component, the psalm concludes with serene objectivity, the answer to the fretful impatience encountered at the beginning of the psalm. It affirms the ultimate salvation of the righteous, and their deliverance from the wicked. In this sense, the psalm does not try to solve the problem, but promises salvation and deliverance from the oppression by – and evil devices of – the wicked. While verse

39 clearly states the salvation of the righteous is *from* YHWH, verse 40 concludes the righteous take their refuge *in* Him. His initiative in sending — and the response of the righteous in taking — refuge is obvious: *the help that YHWH gives, and the refuge that YHWH is*. Therefore in this psalm salvation does not mean a trouble-free existence (verse 39; also see verses 19, 29) or the absence of opposition (verse 40; also see verses 7, 12, 14, 32, 35), but it does mean God's availability as a source of help and a reliable stronghold where we take our refuge in Him.

Therefore Strophe *E* continues to play on the main theme of the final destruction of the wicked and the prosperity of those who are upright and peaceable. After the sage's wise saying and a renewed admonition to mark the blameless man and the upright because the peaceable have a future, the strophe concludes this psalm with a negation of the future for the wicked and a promise that YHWH will save the righteous. The deliverance and help extended by YHWH is already a matter of experience, and that experience is the basis for the hope that YHWH will deliver from the wicked and save: thus providing a future.

All these intra-textual analyses of the poetic content of the psalm make it clear that the contrast between what is (*present*) and what shall be (*future*) provides the context for understanding the imperative exhortations as well as the attached promises in the psalm. Against this background, the psalmist speaks urgently to 'fretful people', urging them not to be enraged at the successful-*like* lives of the wicked. In fact, the success of the wicked is only for a short time like green grass. Eventually, the righteous poor and those who hope in YHWH will possess the land. However, the psalmist not only advocates the action/result connection, but also addresses the personal relationship with God. The psalmist urges to trust in God and describes the tenderness of the personal experience of God. Therefore the psalmist diverts one's preoccupation with material prosperity and success, and instructs the listener/reader to find their actual delight in relationship with YHWH. In this regard, the practical implication of this psalm is that one should pursue YHWH's way because in the end the righteous possess the land and the wicked will be cut off.

When, then, does it specifically promise believers, and what is the time frame of the judgment? For this, the psalmist skilfully refers to time. Prosperity tempts the impatient person who wants to see immediate results. But earthly prosperity is always temporary. 'A little while (verse 10)' is designated to them from God's point of view. The wicked have an appointed end. The day (verse 13; *singular*) of the wicked is in contrast to the days (verse 18; *plural*) of the blameless. Only the peaceable have a future (verse 37). In time they will get their just deserts, and the balance will be restored. In this sense, this psalm intentionally makes no hint of a certain time. Instead, the believers should always expect to be satisfied because God will always intervene in time for the righteous.

The sage therefore aims to teach the righteous to wait patiently for YHWH's time. This time motif is expanded to the journey motif in the psalm. The 'steps' and the 'way' illustrate a picture of pilgrimage, and the destiny is the land. It creates images of God's people moving towards God. The righteous are to walk, supported by faith in God. They have the final hope of having a permanent dwelling in God. Thus the righteous are those who take permanent refuge in YHWH.

5. Literary Genre and Life-Setting of Psalm 37

As stated in the introduction of this chapter, Psalm 37 is regarded as the most easily identified of the list of wisdom psalms or an example of an *appellative sapiential instruction* (see Brueggemann, 1993:229-230). This is so because the psalm consists of many typical wisdom features. This psalm contains the following twelve wisdom lexical terms: wisdom (חכמות), way (דרך), heart (לב), upright (ישר), righteous (צדיק), righteousness (צדק), know (ידע), evil device (מזמה), the blameless man (תם), the blameless (תמים), wicked (רשע) and wickedness (עולה) (see Scott, 1971:121-122; Bullock, 2001:204-206; cf. Kuntz, 1974:201-204). For Hurvitz (1988:49), סור מרע (*depart from evil*) in verse 27 is indicative of the peculiar wisdom milieu.

Thematically, the contrast between the two ways, namely that of the wicked and that of the righteous, clearly gives Psalm 37 the mark of wisdom thought. The antithetical ways of life are presented in verses 7, 9, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15, 16-17, 18-20, 21, 22, 32-33, 34 and 37-38. But stylistically it also has many features of wisdom.

Proverbial statements (verses 16, 21), wisdom admonitions (verses 1, 3,4, 5, 8), and similes and illustrations drawing upon nature (verses 2, 6, 20, 35) outfit this psalm with the features of wisdom. 'Autobiographical stylization' in verses 25 and 35 is also one of the typical forms of wisdom psalm or didactic poetry (Von Rad, 1972:37-38). The so-called טוֹב (*better*) saying is also more at home in the Biblical wisdom literature (see Murphy, 2000:88-89; Irsigler, 1998:587). The second-person discourse aimed horizontally towards man, rather than vertically towards God, in this psalm may be also cited as a further factor that characterizes this psalm as a wisdom psalm (see Kuntz, 1974:210).

In addition, the alphabet acrostic style of poetry lends assistance to wisdom's thought. In the acrostic pattern, the different proverbial forms in the couplets of the psalm, namely the bipartite admonition/warning and the representing saying, would be at home in the Book of Proverbs. All twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet also inscribe the thoughts of wisdom in this psalm with a sense of completion. The acrostic structure stresses the highly decorative character of this psalm as well as its non-oral character. It thus means that this psalm is intended to appeal to the eyes of the reader rather than to his/her ears (see Human, 1996:77; also Watson, 1995:191). By means of the alphabetic acrostic, Psalm 37 is designed to be memorized and subconsciously to be repeated for strong integral instruction. The listeners/readers are asked to memorize a psalm such as this to allow its words and sentences to seep into many segments of their thoughts and conversations.

This psalm's intense use of typical wisdom terms, literary features, its thematic ideas and feeling, and its strong exhortative tone jointly therefore defends its genre as a wisdom psalm.

Besides wisdom genre elements, the descriptive elements of this psalm could be located in complaints (see Psalms 5:10; 11:2; 12:3; and 36:2-5). The language of persecution especially reminds one of the individual laments. In this regard, one can say lament is replaced by teaching in wisdom psalms, since descriptive elements may function differently in different genres (see Gerstenberger, 1988:159). With the elements of complaints, the explanation of how the wicked and the righteous behave and fare, is an incentive for the congregation's endurance and obedience.

When these didactic wisdom elements and the elements of laments are taken together, one can realize that Psalm 37 is not simply a lesson of wisdom for the instruction in a 'wisdom school' of any kind. Rather, the psalm appears as a kind of 'sermon text': an instrument of instruction in the hands of a sage. In this regard, the main theme of the sermon would be the intense admonition to trust YHWH in the midst of affliction, the portrayal of YHWH as the faithful God who gives justice to the oppressed and that — to those who trust him — God helps according to the covenantal belief of Israel.

The life-setting of this psalm would be a didactic setting. In this kind of didactic setting, the instructional exhortations of the psalm would be effectively transmitted. The sage or teacher represents himself as an old, experienced man who aims to offer instructions based on his own experience for the purpose of comfort. In this connection, a public speech situation in a circle of YHWH-followers who understand themselves as righteous, afflicted or humble in a religious respect and as pious, can be assumed as a social setting of the psalm (or rhetorical situation) (see Irsigler, 1998:588).

In addition to this didactic setting, the liturgical setting is also quite obvious in the occasional wish forms (verse 15) and the threatening and comforting overtones. In this light, the life-setting of this psalm would be a didactic homiletic setting in which the wisdom teaching becomes a part of worship instruction. This worship instruction makes it possible for the religious community to bring their laments and complaints to God. Psalm 37 implies such a setting of petitions where the faithful could bring all their laments (*Klage*) or complaints (*Anklage*) before God for help, in

the hope and expectation that God will intervene in the situation to deliver them from trouble.

The date of the psalm is generally assumed as relatively late. The literary style — especially its acrostic pattern — and the social setting of the psalm are often taken to indicate a post-Exilic date (see Kraus, 1988:404; also Gerstenberger, 1988:159-160). However, its theme is recompense and retribution and that could have been typical at any stage in Israel's history. The doctrine of just rewards and punishments girds the Old Testament's legal, prophetic and historical teaching, as well as its wisdom teaching. It must have caused serious problems for the Israelite in every stage when the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer (see Rogerson & McKay, 1977:170; cf. Weiser, 1962:316). Thus the wisdom teaching in Psalm 37 has a timeless power.

6. Canonical Context of Psalm 37

Psalm 37 has לדוד (*of David*) as its superscription. This superscription can be regarded as an indication of the placement of the psalm, since the personal names mentioned in the superscriptions indicate the existence of a collection (McCann, 1996:657). In Book I of the Psalter, in which Psalm 37 is placed, the superscription of every psalm mentions David as their superscription; with the exception of Psalms 1, 2, 10 and 33. Because of the homogeneity of the superscriptions, this collection of psalms is usually designated as the Davidic collection. Yet, there is another Davidic collection in Book II of the Psalter, formed by Psalms 51–72. Of these two Davidic collections, the former is called the first Davidic collection, and the latter is known as the second Davidic collection. At the same time, Psalm 37 also stands in the last part of Book I (Psalms 1–41) of the Psalter, as the fifth last psalm. Since almost all the psalms in Book I belong to the first Davidic collection, the significance of the placement of Psalm 37 in the first Davidic collection and in the last part of Book I should be considered together.

The generic character of Book I of the Psalter has a traceable external and internal content-related order. Psalms 1 and 2 are the programmatic preface to the Psalter. With Psalm 3 begins the series of Davidic psalms (except for Psalms 10 and 33). The first Book of Psalms (Psalms 3–41) shows an internal arrangement including the following groups: Psalms 3–14; 15–24; 25–34; and 35–41 (see Jüngling, 1998:783-784). The two 'liturgies of entrance into the Temple' in Psalms 15 and 24 and the alphabetic Psalms 34 and 37 mark caesuras in the sequence of the psalms. Furthermore, Psalms 35 and 40 display parallels in the corresponding sections on the contempt and ridicule heaped by enemies on the one who prays (Psalm 35:25-26 // Psalm 40:14-16).

As far as the literary genres of the psalms in Book I are concerned, these are largely psalms of complaint or lament interspersed with praise and thanksgiving (e.g. Psalms 8, 19 and 32–34) and moments of wisdom instruction (Psalms 1, 19, 32, 34 and 37). A number of psalms that are not themselves psalms of complaint or petitions are related to these types (e.g. Psalms 14, 23, 25 and 27:1-6). Although it is not always certain whether a psalm was originally intended for use by an individual or a group, most of the psalms in Book I are couched as 'I' psalms of an individual (see Miller, 1989:216-217).

From these observations on the external and internal/content-related order of the psalms in Book I, it is quite obvious that Psalm 37 should also be read in this canonical context. It means that Psalm 37 should be firstly read with neighbouring psalms in the fourth subgroup of Book I of the Psalter. Then Psalm 37 must be considered together with other psalms of wisdom elements and themes in Book I of the Psalter. Among psalms of sharing wisdom elements and themes in Book I, Psalms 32 and 34 will be especially considered because they are closely placed with Psalm 37 in the canonical order, and the canonical significance of Psalms 1 and 19, other psalms of wisdom in Book I, have already been investigated in Chapter II.

Psalm 37 and the adjacent psalms in the fourth subgroup of Psalms 35–41 are interrelated through many common words, phrases and themes — especially the psalms immediately before and after Psalm 37. Psalms 35–36 and 38–39 share a rich,

common vocabulary.

Among the common vocabulary shared by Psalms 36 and 37 are the words do good (עשׂה טוב, 37:3, 27 // יטב 36:4; cf. 35:12; 34:15), good (טוב, 37: 3, 16, 27 // 36:5), bad/evil (רע, 37:27 // 36:5), especially the contrasting of the verbs do evil (רעע, 37:8; cf. verses 1, 9) and do good (יטב, 36:4), security/faithfulness (אמונה, 37:3 // 36:6), heart (לב, 37:4, 15, 31 // 36:2 // 35:25), way (דרך, 37:5, 7, 14, 23, 34 // 36:5), light (אור, 37:6 // 36:10), see (ראה, 37:25, 34, 35, 37 // 36:10 // 35:17, 21, 22), upright (ישׁר, 37:14, 37 // 36:11), know (ידע, 37:18 // 36:11), splendour/precious (יקר, 37:20 // 36:7), transgressors/transgression (פּשׁע, 37:38 // 36:2), take refuge (חסה, 37:40 // 36:8). In the same semantic field is delight // joy (ענג, 37:4, 11 // עדן, 36:8).

The vocabulary common to Psalms 37 and 35 includes peace (שׁלום, 37:11 // 35:20, 27), gnash teeth (חרק, 37:12 // 35:16), the Lord (אדני, 37:13 // 35:17, 22, 23), cast down/fall (נפל, 37:14, 24 // 35:8), poor and needy (עני ואביון, 37:14 // 35:10), be put to shame (בוּשׁ, 37:19 // 35:4, 26), begging/seeking (בקשׁ, 37:25, 32, 36 // 35:4), be judged/judge (שׁפט, 37:33 // 35:24). The noun the wicked appears 13 times in Psalm 37 (רשׁע, verses 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 28, 32, 34, 35, 38 and 40). It is used twice in Psalm 36 (רשׁע, verses 2, 12). The counter-term the righteous is used 9 times in Psalm 37 (צדיק, verses 12, 16, 17, 21, 25, 29, 30, 32 and 39); it appears also in Psalms 31:19; 32:11 and 34:16, 22 following a long absence (since Psalm 14:5).

Psalm 38 is also connected to Psalm 37 by certain words and phrases: wrath (חמה, 37:8 // 38:2), the bows (קשׁתם) of the wicked (37:14) corresponding to thy arrows (חציך) (38:3), the hand (יד) of the righteous (37:24) and thy hand (ידך) (38:3), pass by, go over (עבר, 37:36 // 38:5), heart (לב, 37:4, 15, 31 // 38:9), the Lord (אדני, 37:13 // 38:10, 16, 23), forsake (עזב, 37:8, 25, 28, 33 // 38:11, 22), light (אור, 37:6 // 38:11), seek (בקשׁ, 37:25, 32, 36 // 38:13), evil (רעה, 37:19 // 38:21), pay back (שׁלם, 37:21 // 38:21), good (טוב, 37:3, 16, 27 // 38:21), and salvation (תשׁועה, 37:39 // 38:23).

Psalm 39 also shares a common vocabulary with Psalm 37, as follows: way (דרך, 37:5, 7, 14, 23, 34 // 39:2), the wicked (רשע, verses 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 28, 32, 34, 35, 38, 40 // 39:2), mouth (פה, 37:30 // 39:2), tongue (לשון, 37:30 // 39:4), good (טוב, 37:3, 16, 27 // 39:3), heart (לב, 37:4, 15, 31 // 39:4), the Lord (אדני, 37:13 // 39:8), know (ידע, 37:18 // 39:5 x 2), and hand (יד, 37:24 // 39:11).

Psalm 37 is a sequel to Psalm 36. The truth previously set forth concerning God's ways with the righteous and the wicked are stated as exhortations to nurture perseverance and calm, even amidst humiliating circumstances (Schaefer, 2001:92). The theme of 'justice and righteousness' is actually first introduced in Psalm 33:5. Then Psalm 36:7 takes it up and develops it. Psalm 37 has much in common with the announcement of the theme of 'doing good' (Psalm 34:13-14) and its development in Psalms 35 and 36.

In addition, there is a connection to the content of the preceding psalm through a partial contrast: the righteous receive salvation or rescue from YHWH (37:39), and YHWH has helped them and will help them. Because the psalmist of Psalm 38 confesses his or her sin, and therefore is not righteous, the psalm ends with a plea for help, strengthened by the motif of confidence that the almighty Lord is the salvation of sinful human beings (38:23). Poor people and all who trust in YHWH enjoy the fullness of peace (37:11). The one who prays Psalm 38 laments the absence of peace (38:4). This person is not 'peaceable' (cf. 37:37). The 'non-existence' attributed to the wicked in Psalm 37 (verses 10 and 36) also marks the one who confesses his or her sins (38:4, 8, 11, 15).

Thereafter Psalm 38 is linked both thematically and in detail with Psalm 39. Both speak of the pain and distress (38:18 // 39:3) connected with the speaker's sin (38:5, 19 // 39:2, 12). Both psalms discuss God's corrections and punishments (38:2-3 // 39:11-12). In both psalms the speaker alludes to being silent (38:14-15 // 39:2-3, 10). The theme of silence connects these two psalms also to Psalm 37:7-8. Psalm 40 begins with words and phrases found in Psalm 39: 'I waited' (40:2 // 39:8), 'he heard or hear' (40:2 // 39:13), 'my cry' (40:2 // 39:13). However, Psalm 40:2-5 is a song of thanksgiving while Psalm 39:5-14 is a song of lament. The use of nouns

'praise' (40:4) and 'prayer' (39:13) focuses on those concepts. In this regard, Psalm 40 is closely connected not only to the other psalms in its immediate neighbourhood. There is an especially close relationship between Psalm 40:9-17 and Psalms 35–38.

In Psalms 40 and 35, verses 14 and 15 of Psalm 40 generally correspond to Psalm 35:26, 27. In addition, Psalm 40:15 is related to Psalm 35:25a. This forms an inclusion for the fourth subsection in the first Book of Psalms. Both psalms speak of the great congregation in which the speakers raise their voices to praise God (40: 10, 11 // 35:18). The close association of righteousness (40:10-11), fidelity (40:11), steadfast love and faithfulness (40:11-12) also find corresponding echoes in Psalms 36:5, 6, 10; Psalm 37:3, 6; and Psalm 33:4-5.

The theme with which Psalm 40 ended, the evaluation of oneself as poor (40:18), is taken up in the beatitude of Psalm 41:2 with a different word: thus making a different point. The verb 'deliver' and the participle 'deliverer' do not have the same root, but they correspond to each other (Psalms 41:2 and 40:18). The theme of sin in different words also plays an important part in Psalms 40 and 41 (41:5 // 40:13). Besides this relationship between Psalms 41 and 40, there are important links between Psalm 41 and preceding psalms in the fourth subgroup. Psalms 41, 35 and 38 talk about 'my enemies' and 'those who hate me' (Psalms 41:6, 8; 35:19 and 38:20). The expression 'the man of my peace' in Psalm 41:10 constitutes a link to Psalm 37:37 (*peaceable*). In addition, Psalms 38–41 are joined by the introduction to speech, 'I said' (Psalms 38:17; 39:2; 40:8 and 41:5).

It is therefore obvious that the psalms in the fourth subgroup of Book I have important philological and thematic links among the psalms. The most important theme of this group of psalms is, as manifested above, the theme of God's deliverance: *He alone is a source of refuge.* It is not an idealistic dogma of the people of God in these psalms. It is, and must be, a reality for them because affliction caused by their oppressors is imminent. Against this background, the psalms sharply contrast the ways of the wicked and the righteous as well as their respective fates. Among these psalms of laments and petitions, our wisdom Psalm 37 stands to provide proper admonition to the YHWH-followers. The psalmist of Psalm 37 urges

the listeners/readers not to fret themselves but to wait for YHWH patiently. Not only the listeners/readers but also YHWH knows what is going on. He knows the time when the wicked will be destroyed and the righteous saved. Therefore the listeners/readers only need to take their refuge in YHWH because he is always merciful to his people and, in his time, he will raise them up (Psalm 41:11). Therefore in the midst of complaints and laments, Psalm 37 admonishes the people of God to put their real hope in God, in our refuge.

In the last quarter of Book I of the Psalter, where the canonical placement of Psalm 37 is located, Psalms 32 and 34 share many similar wisdom elements and themes with Psalm 37. Both Psalm 32 and Psalm 34 are generally regarded by genre critics as thanksgiving psalms, especially psalms of individual song of thanksgiving (see Davidson, 1990:31). At the same time, many scholars could notice their shared wisdom elements and themes. So, while the subgenre of 'penitential psalm with wisdom element' is attached to Psalm 32, Psalm 34 has 'alphabetic acrostic psalm with wisdom elements' as its subgenre (see Anderson, 2000:220). In fact, many scholars classify these two psalms into the category of wisdom psalms. For example, Kuntz (1974:218-221) classifies Psalms 32 as an integrative wisdom psalm and Psalm 34 as an acrostic wisdom psalm. In Murphy's classification of wisdom psalms, these two psalms are also in the final candidates of wisdom psalms (Murphy, 1963:167). Therefore Psalms 32 and 34 have apparent wisdom elements and themes in their thanksgiving songs.

In Psalm 32, the psalmist thanks God in the temple for a particular deliverance and gives a testimony on his former trouble, his cry to God, and God's answering action. But the weight in Psalm 32 falls on the counsel that the psalmist gives on the basis of his own case. He declares that happy indeed is the one who, having turned to the Lord with frank confession of sin, has received forgiveness. He recounts his own exemplary case. Refusing to acknowledge his sin, he suffered continually: *For day and by night your hand was heavy upon me* (verse 4 – NKJV). But when he confessed to the Lord, he was forgiven and restored. He found a refuge in the Lord. Trusting in him, he was surrounded by his faithful love.

Psalm 34, which has characteristics of both a thanksgiving psalm and a wisdom psalm, illustrates the didactic element well. The psalmist praised God for delivering him from a difficult situation, and he took his experience as normative for others. He cried out to God from his distress and God heard and delivered him. That, then, became the pattern for others and the psalmist encouraged them to "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good" (verse 9 – NKJV), to experience the blessing that comes from trusting Him. The second half of Psalm 34 also mentions the power of words when it exhorts, "Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit" (verse 14 – NKJV). Another wisdom interest is comparing the wise person and the fool, alongside the righteous and the wicked.

In this regard, Psalm 32 can be regarded as a hortatory testimonial by a devout wise man, incorporating in verses 3-7 a psalm of individual thanksgiving. Similarly, Psalm 34 can be regarded as an acrostic poem in two sections, of which the first (verses 2-11) is a prayer of individual thanksgiving, partly in wisdom language, and the second (verses 12-23) is an instructional discourse.

In Psalm 32, the אשרי formula, so typical of wisdom literature, is used in the two opening verses to generalise from the psalmist's experience. Only as people experience the Lord's forgiveness, only as the Lord judges us 'not guilty', can we be 'blessed' or 'happy' (verses 1-2)? Davidson (1990:33-34) points out that here, in comparison with other אשרי sayings in the Old Testament, the focus is not on what we must do, but on what God can do and has done. In this regard, God is very much at the centre of this psalm. Consequently, wisdom and worship are more fully and effectively integrated in this psalm.

In Psalm 34, the psalmist encounters the existential problem of life. According to Psalm 34, life does not always go well for the righteous or badly for the wicked. The righteous, too, encounter crises and hardship (verses 7, 18-20), and are hated by the wicked (verse 22). But the Lord always helps. In verse 20 of this psalm, the crisis and the rescue by Yahweh are mentioned in the same verse: thus the crisis is immediately resolved by resorting to the retribution dogma.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous;
But the Lord delivers him out of them all. (NKJV)

Therefore, with the profound insight from wisdom teaching, Psalm 32 emphasizes God's protection and Psalm 34 again stresses God's care for the faithful.

Taking all these observations concerning wisdom elements and themes of Psalms 32 and 34 together with Psalm 37, it becomes quite clear that there are some contributions from wisdom psalms and psalmic wisdom for the theologizing of Book I of the Psalter. Since the most prominent literary genre in Book I is that of the individual lament, wisdom psalm and psalmic wisdoms instruct the sufferer to cope and — at the same time — encourage the YHWH-followers to use unexpected opportunities for growing in wisdom as well as in faith and hope. In this sense, it is all the more fitting that wisdom should pitch her tent in this part of the Psalter.

7. Wisdom Implications in Psalm 37

In the manner of wisdom literature, this psalm gives instruction as from an elderly and experienced sage (verse 25) who is intent on admonishing his listener/ reader in twenty-two proverbs, alphabetically arranged. The psalm contrasts the behaviours and fates of the righteous and of the wicked in a way that is not only descriptive but also persuasive. The way of righteousness is more desirable, despite what appearances might suggest. In this sense, this psalm can perhaps be called a pastoral psalm or a homily (Gerstenberger, 1988:158). It addresses a theological issue that is a perennial pastoral concern: "What will the members of the religious community take as the decisive clue to the way life should be lived? Will it be the power of the wicked or the providence of God?" (Mays, 1994b:158). For this pastoral concern, Psalm 37 proclaims the faith, instructs the faithful, and calls for a decision.

As can be seen from the content, this psalm addresses two very important wisdom issues: the ambiguity of human life and the limitation of the theory of

retribution. The righteous may fall and be in trouble and the wicked may prosper. In this regard, this psalm can be also labelled as a theodicy, which literally means 'justice of God', because it implies one of life's vexing questions: How can God be just while there is so much evil in the world? In this regard, Psalm 37 is a homiletical exploration of the issue of God's justice (see McCann, 1996:830).

To be sure, Psalm 37 does not satisfactorily answer all of life's vexing questions, but it does offer an answer: The Lord reigns! Salvation is only from the Lord, the Lord helps them and saves them (verses 39-40). Because of the reality of God's reigning the worldly values can be turned upside down. Psalm 37 invites us to trust and hope in God's will and ability to set things right. Because God rules the world/reigns in the world there is a source of security and peace. Therefore Psalm 37 urges the people of God to remain faithful regardless of their present situations, to trust in God's protection in time of hardship and to hope for eventual recompense. This promise of future blessing is a mark of the psalm's eschatological character. It holds out an assurance that the dilemmas encountered throughout life will eventually be resolved. This psalm acknowledges and deals with the ambiguity of life. Even so, its assurance of final vindication upholds the theory of retribution. It seems to say that compensation has not been denied; it has been delayed (see Bergant, 1997:57-58).

In this regard, there are points of contact between Psalms 37 and 73. In both, an experienced sage reflects how quickly the wicked disappear (verse 10; Psalm 73:18-20). 'Fretting' is employed for the possibility of defecting (verse 1; Psalm 73:3). The real difference between the righteous and the wicked is not measured in material prosperity but in the relationship with God (verses 16-18, 28, 33; Psalm 73:23-28). While in Psalm 37 this wisdom is quite automatic and, to some extent, the rewards are tangible, Psalm 73 makes a greater demand on faith in the experience of God (see Schaefer, 2001:94).

In this respect, Psalm 37 also has some of the seeds of the line of thought carried out in the book of Job. It is fair to say that the psalmist of Psalm 37 offers a mediating position somewhere between the standard wisdom line and the critique of

the book of Job (see Stuhlmueller, 1983a:202-203). Like the book of Job, the psalmist's words carry something of the conviction of the speaker Elihu in Job 32-37 who argues that God does indeed act in the world on behalf of those who are in need. Unlike the book of Job, the psalmist is not struggling for an answer and fighting the 'system' offered by other sages. The psalmist of Psalm 37 is at peace with what he knows. Psalm 37 therefore is poetry of silent contemplation, of peaceful reflection, of sustained prayer. It seeks nothing more than what the last line of the psalm declares, based on Israel's liturgical setting: *Take refuge in YHWH.*

CHAPTER IV

PSALM 49

and

WISDOM

Chapter IV
PSALM 49 AND WISDOM

1. Introduction

Our third promising candidate for the study of wisdom psalms is Psalm 49. This psalm is frequently classified as a meditative wisdom psalm, and it has some affinities with our second promising candidate, Psalm 37. This psalm, especially, deals with life's very problem, death, in a wisdom reflective setting. Thus as the introduction of the psalm claims, all the peoples, all inhabitants of the world, both low and high, both rich and poor together, should hear the message of this psalm. That is to say that, since death is a great equalizer, all the mortals in this world must incline their ears in order to obtain real wisdom about life's very problem. In order to hear the message of this psalm properly, this study will now analyse the poetic features of Psalm 49, and afterwards attempt to show how the poetic features of this psalm can help us to understand the content, the context and the message of the psalm.

This chapter will be organized basically in the same way as previous Chapters II–III. After presenting the Massoretic Text of Psalm 49, a translation will be proposed with discussions of translation problems in order to establish the best textual base for the study. This psalm, particularly, has many problems of translation matters. So the 'translation notes' of this psalm will be notably longer than other studies of the psalms in this study. Following this, the poetic structure and content will be analysed, based on the intra-textual reading of Psalm 49. Since this psalm has comparatively longer superscription, which takes a verse line in the Massoretic Text, the superscription will be studied together with the study of the content. Afterwards, the literary genre and setting will be taken into consideration, based on the poetic content and the extra-textual clues of the psalm. Thereafter the canonical context of

Psalm 49 will be discussed on the basis of inter-textual relationships of the psalm. Finally, all the preceding study outcomes will be synthesised in order to grasp the overall message of the psalm with special regard to the wisdom perspective of Psalm 49 and its implications.

2. Text and Translation of Psalm 49

Text

1	לַמְנַצֵּחַ לִבְנֵי־קֹרַח מִזְמוֹר׃
2	שִׁמְעוּ־זֹאת כָּל־הָעַמִּים הַאֲזִינוּ כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי חָלֶד׃
3	גַּם־בְּנֵי אָדָם גַּם־בְּנֵי־אִישׁ יַחַד עָשִׁיר וְאֶבְיוֹן׃
4	פִּי יְדַבֵּר חָכְמוֹת וְהָגוּת לִבִּי תְבוּנוֹת׃
5	אַטֶּה לְמָשָׁל אָזְנִי אֶפְתַּח בְּכִנּוֹר חִידָתִי׃
6	לָמָּה אִירָא בִּימֵי רָע עֲוֹן עֲקֵבַי יְסוֹבֵנִי׃
7	הַבֹּטְחִים עַל־חֵילָם וּבְרֹב עָשְׁרָם יִתְהַלָּלוּ׃
8	אָח לֹא־פָדֹה יִפְדֶּה אִישׁ לֹא־יִתֵּן לֵאלֹהִים כָּפְרוֹ׃
9	וְיֵקַר פִּדְיוֹן נַפְשָׁם וְחָדַל לְעוֹלָם׃
10	וְיִחִי־עוֹד לָנֶצַח לֹא יִרְאֶה הַשָּׁחַת׃
11	כִּי יִרְאֶה חֲכָמִים יָמוּתוּ יַחַד כְּסִיל וָבַעַר יֹאבֵדוּ
	וְעָזְבוּ לַאֲחֵרִים חֵילָם׃
12	קִרְבָּם בָּתֵּימוֹ לְעוֹלָם מִשְׁכְּנֹתָם לְדֹר וָדֹר
	קָרְאוּ בִשְׁמוֹתָם עֲלֵי אֲדָמוֹת׃
13	וְאָדָם בִּיקָר בַּל־יָלִין נִמְשַׁל כַּבְּהֵמוֹת נִדְמוּ׃
14	זֶה דַרְכָּם כֵּסֶל לָמוֹ וְאַחֲרֵיהֶם בְּפִיהֶם יִרְצוּ סֶלָה׃
15	כַּצֹּאן לִשְׁאוֹל שַׁתּוּ מָוֶת יִרְעֵם וַיִּרְדּוּ בָם יְשָׁרִים לַבֹּקֶר
	וְצִירָם לְבַלּוֹת שְׁאוֹל מִזְּבֻל לוֹ׃
16	אַךְ־אֱלֹהִים יִפְדֶּה נַפְשִׁי מִיַּד־שְׁאוֹל כִּי יִקָּחֵנִי סֶלָה׃

17	אַל־תִּירָא כִּי־יַעֲשַׁר אִישׁ כִּי־יִרְבֶּה כְּבוֹד בֵּיתוֹ׃
18	כִּי לֹא בְמוֹתוֹ יִקַּח הַכֹּל לֹא־יֵרֵד אַחֲרָיו כְּבוֹדוֹ׃
19	כִּי־נַפְשׁוֹ בְּחַיָּיו יְבָרֵךְ וְיוֹדֶךָּ כִּי־תֵיטִיב לָךְ׃
20	תָּבוֹא עַד־דּוֹר אֲבוֹתָיו עַד־נֶצַח לֹא יִרְאוּ־אוֹר׃
21	אָדָם בִּיקָר וְלֹא יָבִין נִמְשַׁל כַּבְּהֵמוֹת נִדְמוּ׃

Translation[11]

1[12] To the Chief Musician. Of the sons of Korah. A Psalm.

2 *a.* Hear this, all the peoples;

b. give ear, all inhabitants of the world,

3 *a.* both low and high,

b. rich and poor together.

4 *a.* My mouth will speak wisdom;

b. the meditation of my heart *will be of* insight.

5 *a.* I will incline my ear to a proverb;

b. I will open my riddle with a lyre.

6 *a.* Why should I fear in the days of evil,

b. *when* the iniquity of my persecutors surrounds me

7 *a.* those who trust in their wealth

b. and boast of the abundance of their riches?

8 *a.* No man can by any means redeem *his* brother,

b. nor give to God a ransom for him.

9 *a.* For the ransom of their life is costly,

b. and it will cease forever.

---

[11] This is my own translation. All quotations from Psalm 49 in this study are taken from this translation unless stated otherwise.

[12] In citing the Psalms and other passages of Scripture, the numbering and the versification of the BHS text are used throughout the present study rather than the numbering and the versification of

10 *a*. Let him continue to live eternally

b. and never see the pit!

11 *a*. But he will *surely* see the wise die;

b. the fool and the brute perish together,

c. and leave their wealth to others.

12 *a*. Their inner thought is, *that* their houses are forever,

b. their dwelling places to all generations,

c. they call their lands after their own names.

13 *a*. Nevertheless man in his pomp will not abide;

b. he is like the beasts *that* perish.

14 *a*. This is their way in their folly,

b. and of their followers who approve their sayings. Selah!

15 *a*. Like sheep they are appointed to Sheol;

b. Death will shepherd them on.

c. The upright will rule over them in the morning,

d. and their form will waste away in Sheol, from their dwelling.

16 *a*. But God will redeem my life from the power of Sheol,

b. for he will take me. Selah!

17 *a*. Do not fear when one becomes rich,

b. when the glory of his house is increased.

18 *a*. For in his dying he will take nothing away;

b. his glory will not descend after him.

19 *a*. Though in his living he blesses his life;

b. and though they praise you when you do well for yourself.

20 *a*. It will go to the generation of his fathers,

b. never again will they see light.

21 *a*. Man in his pomp, but will not understand;

b. he is like the beasts *that* perish.

LXX or most modern translations.

Translation Notes

Verse 3*a*. גַּם־בְּנֵי אָדָם גַּם־בְּנֵי־אִישׁ — both low and high

Literally, it is 'both the sons of man and the sons of man'. The two phrases in the Massoretic Text, however, employ a different word for man: אדם (*mankind*) and איש (*man*). Many translations assume a difference in status in these two terms: namely that אדם infers a lower rank than איש (cf. Rozenberg & Zlotowitz, 1999:298; Kraus, 1988:478; and Goulder, 1982:184). The use of גם ... גם and the contrast made in verse 3*b* further indicate that there is a contrast in verse 3*a*. Therefore the word איש may imply a man of wealth, whereas the word אדם may mean a general designation for man. The usage of איש in verses 8 and 17 reinforces the aptness of this translation (see Raabe, 1990:70; also VanGemeren, 1991:367-368).

Verse 6*b*. עֲוֹן עֲקֵבַי יְסוֹבֵבֵנִי — the iniquity of my persecutors surrounds me

LXX renders 'the iniquity of my heel (ἡ ἀνομία τῆς πτέρνης μου)' as from the Hebrew meaning of עקב as 'heel'. It refers to the iniquity of the psalmist as a confession of sin. This idea, however, is foreign to the context and thought here (see Briggs & Briggs, 1906:407). Furthermore, it would hardly make sense of the first colon (6*a*). The present translation therefore follows the Massoretic Text and reads עקב with another meaning: 'overreacher' or 'persecutor' (i.e. of those who would take some insidious advantage of me, see Brown *et al.*, 1979:784). The textual apparatus of BHS also proposes to emend עֲקֵבַי (*my heels*) to עֹקְבַי (*those who cheat me or my treacherous enemy*). Many commentators (Weiser, 1962: 384-385; Dahood, 1965:295-297; Anderson, 1972a:375; Craigie, 1983:356-357; Kraus, 1988:478-479; and Van Gemeren, 1991:368; cf. Terrien, 2003:386) and modern translations (NRSV; NJB; DBNV: *die onreg van bedrieërs*; and GNB: *mensen die mij onrecht doen*; see also CEV, GW, NCV, NIV, NLT and GNaB: *den Unheilstiftern, die sich an meine Fersen heften*; cf. CEV, NCV, TEV) are in agreement with this rendering.

Verse 8*a*. אָח לֹא־פָדֹה יִפְדֶּה אִישׁ — No man can by any means redeem *his* brother

The Massoretic Text is problematic in the usage of אָח (*brother*) and the *Qal* imperfect יִפְדֶּה (*will redeem*). Many commentators (Weiser, 1962:384-385; Dahood, 1965:295-298; Buttenwieser, 1969:647; Anderson, 1972a:376; Craigie, 1983:356-357; and Kraus, 1988:478-479) try to emend אָח (*brother*) to אַךְ (*surely or but*), based on the support of a few Hebrew manuscripts and to read the verb as a *Niph'al* imperfect יִפָּדֶה (*will redeem himself*): *Surely a man cannot redeem himself.* There is, however, no need to read a few Hebrew manuscripts and then to emend the *Qal* to a *Niph'al*, since the Massoretic Text makes good sense (see Kidner, 1973:183) as it stands with אִישׁ as the subject, יִפְדֶּה as a transitive *Qal* and אָח as the direct object (see Van der Ploeg, 1963:147-148; Raabe, 1990:71; Terrien, 2003:386; cf. Goulder, 1982:187-188). Furthermore, the sequence of אָח ... אִישׁ occurs quite often in the Old Testament (e.g. 2 Kings 7:6; Isaiah 3:6, 9:18, 19:2; Jeremiah 13:14, 23:35; and Ezekiel 24:23, 33:30; contra Briggs& Briggs, 1906:413).

Verse 10. וְיִחִי־עוֹד לָנֶצַח לֹא יִרְאֶה הַשָּׁחַת — Let him continue to live eternally and never see the pit!

The present translation takes the verbs as jussive forms. The first verb (וְיִחִי) can be a jussive form because a jussive can occur after a simple *waw* (ו) when purpose is not intended (see Williams, 1976:34). It then corresponds to the usage of וְיִחִי elsewhere in the Psalter (e.g. Psalm 69:33 and 72:15). In this respect, the second verb (יִרְאֶה) can also be read as a jussive form because there is no distinction between the jussives and the corresponding imperfect forms in the third person forms when it is used to express the speaker's wish to have a situation occur (see Seow, 1995: 208-209; cf. Raabe, 1990:72-73). The following verse then matches well with the jussive form of a mocking wish in verse 10: *Let him continue to live eternally and*

never see the pit (if he can)! But he will surely see the wise die; the fool and the brute perish together.

Verse 12*a*. קִרְבָּם בָּתֵּימוֹ לְעוֹלָם — Their inner thought is, *that* their houses are forever

קִרְבָּם (*their inner thought*) is suggested to be read as קִבְרָם (*their grave*) by the Syriac, Targum and LXX (οἱ τάφοι αὐτῶν). Many modern translations (CEV, GW, JB, NIV, NLT, NRSV, RSV, TCV, TEV and DBNV: *die graf*; cf. GNaB: *das enge Grab*) and scholars (Weiser, 1962:384-385; Buttenwieser, 1969:648; Anderson, 1972a:377; Craigie, 1983:356-357; Kraus, 1988:478-479; Raabe, 1990:73; and Terrien, 2003:386) follow the suggestion because they think the reading of the Massoretic Text does not make much sense in this context. There seems, however, little doubt that a scribe has transposed the two middle consonants (see Kidner, 1973:183). Furthermore, the emendation of 12a does not correspond with the thought of 12*b* and 12*c* while the Massoretic Text gives excellent sense (see Hulst, 1960:102; Eaton, 1967:135; also Goulder, 1982:189). In their pride, the fool and the brute that trust in their wealth and boast of the abundance of their riches think in their hearts that their houses, their dwelling places, and their lands are forever. This translation, as well as some modern translations (AB, NASB, NJB and NKJV), thus follow the way that the Massoretic Text reads.

Verse 14*b*. וְאַחֲרֵיהֶם בְּפִיהֶם יִרְצוּ — and of their followers who approve their sayings

The preposition plus suffix (אחריהם) would indicate place [i.e. those who walk behind them] or time [i.e. *their successors*] (see Brown *et al.*, 1979:29-30). It can be translated 'their followers' if we take both ways. בְּפִיהֶם (*with their mouth*) could mean 'their sayings'.

Verse 15*c*. וַיִּרְדּוּ בָם יְשָׁרִים לַבֹּקֶר — The upright will rule over them in the morning

The second half of verse 15 is textually the most difficult of the psalm. Many commentators feel forced to emend freely to make the sense their own. Even Kraus (1988:479-480) thinks that a logically based reconstruction of the second part of verse 15 is impossible, so he abandons translation (see also Kittel, 1914:195; and Weiser, 1962:384-385). However, the understanding that makes sense of the Massoretic Text is generally better than such guesswork or despair (cf. Goulder, 1982:190-191). This translation thus follows the Massoretic Text and translates: 'the upright will rule over them in the morning'. It then makes sense of the contrast with verse 13 and verse 20. Whereas the foolish rich and their followers will never again see light, the upright will rule over them in the morning.

Verse 15*d*. וְצִירָם לְבַלּוֹת שְׁאוֹל מִזְּבֻל לוֹ — and their form will waste away in Sheol, from their dwelling

In this part, וצירם is difficult. Whereas *Kethib* is וצירם (*and their form*), *Qere* reads וצורם (*and their rock*). The present translation follows the *Kethib* from the noun צִיר, 'and their form (or image)' (see Brown *et al.*, 1979:849), in the sense of a human body form. Most modern translations (AB, GW, NASB, NIV, NJB, NRSV, RSV and GNaB: *ihre Gestalt*; see also AB, KJV, NKJV – '[their] beauty'; CEV, NCV, NLT and TEV – 'their bodies') also follow the *Kethib* of the Massoretic Text.

Verse 20*a*. תָּבוֹא עַד־דּוֹר אֲבוֹתָיו — It will go to the generation of his fathers.

In the Massoretic Text, the verb may be either the third person feminine singular (*referring to his life*) or the second person masculine singular (see Dahood, 1965: 302-303). LXX suggests to read it as יבוא (εἰσελεύσεται, *he will go*). Many commentators (Kirkpatrick, 1921:275; Weiser, 1962:384-385; Buttenwieser, 1969: 649; Anderson, 1972a: 380; Craigie, 1983:356-357; and Kraus, 1988:478-480) and the modern translations (AB, GW, KJV, NASB, NCV, NIV, NKJV, RSV, TEV, DBNV, GNB and GNaB) follow the reading of LXX. This translation, however,

follows the reading of the Massoretic Text in the third person feminine singular form; 'it (*his life*) will go to the generation of his fathers', because it appears the most natural way to supply as the subject נַפְשׁוֹ to תָּבוֹא (see Delitzsch, 1975a:119-120; Raabe, 1990:78; and NJB; also JB).

3. Poetic Structure of Psalm 49

Some studies dissect Psalm 49 into editorial layers and hands. Notably, Casetti's study of the psalm led him to the conclusion that there are two distinct layers in the psalm, namely a basic pessimistic psalm and a final optimistic one. According to Cassetti (1982:24-29), there was originally a basic psalm (*Grundpsalm*, verses 11-15 and 21) to which a second author later added two further strophes (verses 6-10 and 16-20) with an introduction (verses 2-5). Hossfeld and Zenger (1993:299-308) agree with Cassetti's proposal by using his ideas in their commentary on the Psalms. Cassetti's idea, however, is criticized by many scholars. Loretz (1986:189-212) criticises Cassetti for neglecting the aspect of parallel lines (*parallelismus membrorum*) that play a dominant role in Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry. After a thorough analysis of the psalm, Raabe (1990:85-86) finds a relation between the so-called basic psalm (verses 11-15) and two further strophes (verses 6-10 and 16-20). Pleins (1996:19-27) disagrees with Cassetti's offering of an analysis of verses 6-20 as a chiasm. After a close reading of the structure, chiasms and line-forms of the psalm, Spangenberg (1997:340) concludes that "a serious analysis of the psalm offers no evidence to support Cassetti, Zenger and Hossfeld's claim that the psalm consists of two layers". The present study therefore treats the text of Psalm 49 as a unity without editorial emendations or expansions.

The poetic structure of Psalm 49 can be divided on the basis of the poetic devices, refrain and the themes. A number of scholars have considered verses 13 and 21 to be a refrain (Kittel, 1914:196-197; Duhm, 1899:202; Weiser, 1962:386; Anderson, 1972a:374; Craigie, 1983:358; Gerstenberger, 1988:203-204; Raabe,

1990: 83-84; Mays, 1994b: 191; Coetzee, 1995:12; Tate, 2001:102; Rodd, 2001:381; and Terrien, 2003:388; cf. Clifford, 2002:240). Some scholars, however, doubt this role for reasons of form and content (see Gunkel, 1926:212; also Pleins, 1996:19-27). It is argued that a refrain must have identical wording throughout and a devastating statement about humanity's fate could never be the climax of a sacred poem (see, Gerstenberger, 1988:203).

Some scholars therefore posit an originally identical refrain which, they think, has suffered in transmission and emend some verse or another accordingly, usually the final verse (see Perdue, 1974:538-540; Goulder, 1982:189-190; also Raabe, 1991:216). Among them, Perdue makes a strange suggestion about verses 13 and 21 after making a few textual emendations. According to him, verse 21 contains the riddle the psalmist actually refers to in verse 5, whilst verse 13 contains the solution to the riddle (see Perdue, 1974:538-539). Others delete the second (verse 21) completely (see Fohrer, 1993:205). Concerning the homogeneity of refrains, however, biblical poetry in general is not so rigidly fixed as to prohibit slight variations in refrains (see Watson, 1995:295-296), especially if a song is presented by a cantor as in the case of Psalm 49 (see Gerstenberger, 1988:203-204).

Furthermore, the relevant phrases in Psalm 49, בַּל־יָלִין in verse 13 and וְלֹא יָבִין in verse 21, actually are very similar in sound and writing, which makes the Hebrew expression a nicely balanced one. It is therefore more difficult to account for differences in wording, and we may take such differences as a poetic skill that could make the refrain a progressive one with a variant (cf. Terrien, 2003:388). Concerning the inappropriateness of content, such as the wisdom ending 'man without understanding', is certainly an appropriate one for a wisdom psalm such as this (see Johnston, 1997:78). The refrain found in verses 13 and 21 can therefore be viewed as a variant refrain and subsequently be a demarcating indicator of the psalm.

In this regard, the psalm can be demarcated into three main sections; an introduction (verses 2-5 with a superscription in verse 1) and two stanzas (verses 6-12 and 14-20) each concluding with the refrains (verses 13 and 21). A number of

scholars agree with this basic structure of the psalm (see Kittel, 1914:197; König, 1927:591-600; Kissane, 1953:213-214; Weiser, 1962:386; Tromp, 1968/9:240; Anderson, 1972a:374; De Meyer, 1979:158; Craigie, 1983:358; Gerstenberger, 1988:203; Raabe, 1990:84; Mays, 1994b:191; Davidson, 1998:159-162; Rodd, 2001:381; and Clifford, 2002: 240). For this basic structure, repetitions and word pairs serve to unify each stanza: the first stanza – חילם (in verses 7 and 11), the root פדה (in verses 8 and 9), לעולם and לנצח and לדר ודר (in verses 9, 10 and 12), יראה (in verses 10 and 11); the second stanza – שׁאול (in verses 15 and 16), the root מות (in verses 15 and 18), לקח (in verses 16 and 18), נפשׁ (in verses 16 and 19), כבוד (in verses 17 and 18).

In addition to this, each stanza can be subdivided into two strophes according to the repetition of specific words and themes. While verse 6 is introduced with a rhetorical question: *Why should I fear* (אירא)?, verse 17 begins with an exhortation: *Do not fear* (תירא). Both references to fear are related to the confrontation of the economic reality of rich people in verses 6-7 and verse 17 respectively. In addition, another economical or legal theme of ransom (or *redeem redemption*) is also repeated in verses 8 and 16. A further important word of the psalm, *life* (נפשׁ) is repeated in verse 9 (נפשׁם – *their life*) and verse 19 (נפשׁו – *his life*). The last part (verses 17-20) thus echoes verses 6-9 by repetition of words and themes. The theme of 'not taking any wealth with when death comes' in verse 11 and 18, and the theme of 'generations' in verses 12 and 20 are also repeated.

A further intra-textual relation can be found between verses 10-12 and verses 14-16. While verse 10 makes a mocking wish, 'let him continue to live eternally and never see the pit!' verses 14-15 respond to verse 10, 'this is their way ... Sheol and death'. In this relationship, verse 10 raises the question of 'pit' (שׁחת – *pit of Sheol*; see Brown *et al.*, 1979:1001) and the content of verse 15 focuses the references to Sheol. In this regard, verses 11 and 14 are also related to mark out a dramatic reversal of wealth and wisdom at death. Here the psalmist contrasts what will endure

with what will not ever endure: wealth is what perishes (verse 11); yet their way in their folly ironically remains (verse 14). In verses 11 and 14, the theme of the foolish (*the fool and their folly respectively*) is also repeated.

When all these poetic structural markers of the psalm — refrains and repetition of words and themes — are taken together, the structure of Psalm 49 can be schematised as follows:

Superscription (verse 1)
  Strophe *A* (verses 2-5): Wisdom teacher's introduction
Stanza I (verses 6-12): Wisdom concerning the limitations of wealth
  Strophe *B* (verses 6-9): *Why should I fear?*
  Strophe *C* (verses 10-12): *But he will surely see ...*
    Refrain (verse 13): *... will not abide;*
Stanza II (verses 14-21): Wisdom concerning two destinies
  Strophe *D* (verses 14-16): *This is their way ...*
  Strophe *E* (verses 17-20): *Do not fear!*
    Refrain (verse 21): *... but will not understand;*

4. Poetic Content of Psalm 49

Superscription (verse 1): To the Chief Musician. Of the Sons of Korah. A Psalm.

לַמְנַצֵּחַ (*to the Chief Musician*) is found in fifty-five psalms, of which only two (Psalms 66 and 67) are anonymous, and most bear the name of David. Fifty-two of these are in Books I–III, and three in Book V. Outside the Psalter, it is found also in the subscription to Habakkuk's prayer (Habakkuk 3:19). Many scholars think the main word is a *Pi'el* participle form of the root נצח. It is used in the sense of a person acting as overseer, superintendent or director, especially in the Chronicles and Psalm titles (see Brown *et al.*, 1979:663; also Anderson, 1972a:48). Most modern

translations render it by 'the chief musician' (KJV, NKJV, AB and NJB) or 'the director of music' (NIV) or 'the choir director' (NASB), while Targum renders it 'to praise' (see Kirkpatrick, 1921:xxi).

It seems more probable that the preposition (ל) is prefixed to indicate that the psalm may belong to an older collection, known as *the Precentor's Collection*, in the same way that the titles 'of David', 'of Asaph' and 'of the sons of Korah' indicate the collections from which the Psalms bearing them were taken (see Kirkpatrick, 1921:xxi; see also Briggs & Briggs, 1906: lxxii-lxxiv; also VanGemeren: 1991:34). The LXX translation of this term, εἰς τὸ τέλος (*for the end*), remains conspicuous. This translation is probably the result of an eschatological interpretation of the word נצח, meaning *forever* (Jonker, 2004:73). This term therefore probably serves as a musical addition, marking the psalm to be a part of temple worship or to be recited by the master of the choir (see VanGemeren: 1991:34; also Jonker, 2004:78).

לִבְנֵי־קֹרַח (*Of the sons of Korah*): The Korahites were descents of Korah, son of Levi, who were involved in the music of the temple (see Exodus 6:21-24; Numbers 16:31-35; 26:28; I Chronicles 6:22; and II Chronicles 20:19). From them we have the collection of the so-called Korahite Psalms (Psalms 42/43; 44-49; 84-85; and 87-88), which formed the repertoire of this family of Temple singers and functionaries (cf. Mowinckel, 1962:97). The Korahites were probably active in both pre-Exilic and post-Exilic times (Tate, 2001:103). It is possible that this psalm originated in their circles (see Anderson, 1972a:45).

מִזְמוֹר (a psalm) is a frequently found term in the superscriptions of the Psalter: as many as fifty-seven times. The root meaning of this term (זמר) is to make music by singing to (ל) God (YHWH) or by playing a musical instrument (see Brown *et al.*, 1979:274). It is a striking fact that זמר, used with ל, always refers to YHWH to whom the song (מזמור) is addressed (see Kraus, 1988:22). In this regard, psalms with this term would be made, as the name implies, for public worship in song (cf. Briggs & Briggs, 1906:lxviii). In comparison with the term שִׁיר (*a song*), which is a

common term for lyric song or religious song in worship (see Brown *et al.*, 1979:1010), the reference of מזמור is primarily to the singing that is accompanied by musical instruments (cf. Psalms 33:2; 71:22; 98:5; 147:7; and 149:3). A more general meaning of 'praise' also occurs (cf. Psalms 30:13; 47:7-8; and 68:5,33), but the praises may have been accompanied by musical instruments (see VanGemeren, 1991:37).

Strophe *A* (verses 2-5): Wisdom Teacher's Introduction

This introductory strophe has four bicola, which can be further divided into two parts, namely verses 2-3 and verses 4-5 (see Spangenberg, 1997:331). The first bicolon (verse 2), and the second bicolon (verse 3) are also closely related to each other because verse 3 expands the ideas of verse 2. Moreover, the verbs of the first bicolon (שמעו and האזינו) serve as verbs for the second bicolon. In the first bicolon (verse 2) two imperatives and two vocatives are parallel to each other. In the second bicolon (verse 3) בני אדם parallels ואביון, and בני איש parallels עשיר to form an inner chiasm.

By beginning with the 'hear' and 'give ear' language in verse 2 the psalmist focuses wisdom's proper mode of reception, seeing that it is a common opening for wisdom speeches (cf. Proverbs 4:1,10). This opening can be likened to a teacher or sage beginning a class session; Psalm 78 beginning in a similar way: *Give ear, O my people, to my law; Incline your ears to the words of my mouth* (NKJV). Typically, wisdom teaching is directed towards the young and naïve or those suffering misfortune for no apparent reason (Bergant, 1997:58). Significantly, the counsel given here is addressed to all people regardless of social or economic class. With this hyperbolic style the psalmist of this psalm therefore intends to offer a message of universal significance. In this regard, this solemn introduction is reminiscent of Proverbs 1-2 and 8, and the Elihu speech in Job 32-37.

The address in the introduction is critical in character because it seems that the issue at hand afflicts primarily those who are poor and of low estate. Indeed, it is

probable that the persons who are directly addressed by the psalmist are the poor and afflicted, but by addressing them in the broad terms of verses 2-3, their problem is set immediately within its wider context. In this regard, this psalm is unlike most other psalms on the same subject, since this one is not simply a word of encouragement and as a word of hope to the poor, but also a warning to the rich (see Rogerson & McCay, 1977:231; also Broyles, 1999:221).

The third bicolon (verse 4) and the fourth bicolon (verse 5) are also related to each other. This relation is established by four typical wisdom terms (חכמות – *wisdom*, תבונות – *insight*, משל – *proverb* and חידה – *riddle*) and four nouns with the suffix of the first person singular (פי – *my mouth*, לבי – *my heart*, אזני – *my ear* and חידתי – *my riddle*). Here the psalmist speaks with mouth, meditates with the heart, inclines the ear, and solves the riddle to the music with a lyre. It is not entirely clear how the four typical wisdom terms differ from one another. It is, however, quite clear that the first two terms in verse 3 are related to each other, because פי parallels לבי and חכמות parallels תבונות with the last two forming final rhyme. חכמות and תבונות are pluralized forms and may be used to intensify the meaning: 'great or deep wisdom' and 'profound insight' (Davidson, 1998:159; cf. Perowne, 1976a:397). The plural in these and similar words is very common in the Proverbs (e.g. Proverbs 1:20; 9:1; 14:1; and 24:7). Likewise, two other wisdom terms (משל and חידה)[13] in verse 5 are a word pair in which both cola exhibit initial alliteration and final rhyme. This word pair may express the means by which wisdom is to be communicated: by proverb and more particularly by a reflection on the riddle (see VanGemeren, 1991:367).

In this regard, the psalmist's intent to 'speak wisdom' in verse 4 indicates an educational purpose and verse 5 more specifically indicates the psalmist's educational approach or lesson plan. It is especially remarkable that the Hebrew root of the noun, 'proverb (משל)', occurs in the refrain as verbs (verses 13 and 21, נמשל:

[13] More detailed discussion for these wisdom terms, see Kim, 1999:26-28.

he is like). It means that the lesson will involve a comparison that takes the form of a riddle. Therefore the last term, חידה (*riddle*), is the most important term, which requires resolution. In other words it is a riddle that the psalmist sets and then finally solves to his satisfaction.

The introductory address therefore has a remarkably international character, which denotes that the main theme of the psalm is of sufficient importance to deserve an international hearing. This universal appeal of the topic to be discussed will be made clear in the following two main stanzas.

Stanza I (verses 6-12): Wisdom concerning the Limitations of Wealth

Strophe *B* (verses 6-9) has four bicola, which can be grouped in two pairs, as is the case with the introductory strophe, Strophe *A* (verses 2-5). The first bicolon (verse 6) is joined by syntax with the main clause in the first colon (6*a*), and a temporal clause in the second colon (6*b*). רע (*evil*) and עון (*iniquity*) form a word pair. In the second bicolon (verse 7), הבטחים (*those who trust*) parallels יתהללו (those who boast), and חילם (*wealth*) parallels עשרם (*riches*) forming a chiastic arrangement. In the third bicolon (verse 8), the subject (איש) is gapped in the second colon (8*b*). The suffix on כפרו (*a ransom for him*) in the second colon (8*b*) has the first colon (8*a*) as its antecedent. The object–verb//verb–object sequence forms a chiasm. The forth bicolon (verse 9) is joined by syntax with the first colon (9*a*) as a concessive clause and the second colon (9*b*) as the main clause (see Raabe, 1990:80; cf. Spangenberg, 1997:331-332).

The first bicolon and second bicolon are linguistically united by their reference to fear and wealth. In verse 6, the psalmist's fear is directed at 'the days of evil' and 'the iniquity of the persecutors' that surround the psalmist. Then verse 7 bids the listener/reader to connect the fear to those who trust in their wealth and boast of the abundance of their riches.

The verb 'I fear (אִירָא)' is common in the psalms (e.g. Psalms 3:6; 23:4; 27:1;

56:3, 11; and 118:6), occasionally occurring in statements of not fearing enemies (Clifford, 2002:241). 'Why should I fear?' is a rhetorical question that serves to capture the attention of the wide audience after the introduction, due to the fact that rhetorical questioning is used for dramatic effect: it involves the audience directly if they are addressed, or it creates tension, which then requires resolution (see Watson, 1995:341). Here the rhetorical question addresses an issue that all face, namely fear, and especially the fear of the wealthy. The opposite group to the psalmist is introduced as 'those who trust in their wealth' (verse 7). The feature that especially characterizes this group is that they boast of their riches. The Hebrew root meaning of 'boast (הלל)' is noteworthy. When this verb is used as a *Pi'el* form in the Psalter (meaning *praise*), these are the verbs that have God as their object. In this light, this group of people is one whose ultimate security and values lie in their possessions: wealth is their God (see Broyles, 1999:221).

As in Proverbs, there is a contrast between the wicked (always plural) and the righteous (always singular). 'Surrounds' in verse 6*b* would mean to stand in opposition to the psalmist, thereby presenting two types of people like the contrasted types in Proverbs, the wise and the foolish *or* the righteous and the wicked. In spite of presenting the fear caused by wealthy persecutors of the psalmist, the actual meaning of the opening rhetorical question in verse 6 expresses confidence, 'I will never fear' (Rogerson & McKay, 1977:231). This is quite obvious in the following arguments negative and positive.

The first argument is presented negatively in the third bicolon (verse 8) and fourth bicolon (verses 9). The tone suddenly becomes serious and even bitter, for the topic is momentous. Here legal terms and economic terms are used. Verse 8-9 may allude to the provisions made in some legal cases involving death: that is, that the death of the victim might be redeemed by the payment of an appropriate ransom (see Exodus 21:28-30). The cost of a legal ransom would probably be set according to the gravity of the crime and the offender's means, but it would be useless to contemplate offering God a ransom because no payment will suffice to compensate God. Then

the focal point of the first negative argumentation is quite clear: human wealth is powerless to prolong life and to ransom people from the pit. The rhetorical question and main theme of Strophe *B* is further developed and answered in Strophe *E* (verses 17-20) as these two strophes are chiastically related to each other.

Strophe *C* (verses 10-12) consists of a bicolon (verse 10) and two tricola (verses 11 and 12). In verse 10, the first colon (10*a*) and the second colon (10*b*) are semantically antithetical parallel: 'continue to live eternally' is the positive way of saying to 'never see the pit'. In verse 11, the third person plural imperfect (יֹאבֵדוּ... יָמוּתוּ), located in final position in the first colon (11*a*) and the second colon (11*b*) form a word pair (*die ... perish*). The subject of עזבו in the third colon (11*c*) is כסיל ובער (*the fool and the brute*) in the second colon (11*b*). In verse 12, בתימו (*their houses*) is parallel to משכנתם (*their dwelling places*), and לעולם (*forever*) is parallel to לדר ודר (*to all generations*). The third person plural suffix on בשמותם (*after their own names*) in the third colon (12*c*) matches the suffixes on בתימו (*their houses*) in the first colon (12*a*) and on משכנתם (*their dwelling places*) in the second colon (12*b*).

After the negative argument of human wealth, this strophe forms a transition to the next stage of argument: *Let him continue to live eternally and never see the pit!* (*if he can*). The following verses then confirm the certainty of death to everybody: *But he will surely see the wise die.* If even the wise die, certainly the arrogant rich will perish even though they think their houses are forever: their dwelling places are to all generations in their inner thought. In other words even the wise die, and so for the fools to live as if they were immortal is a very clear example of their folly. So the psalmist argues that the arrogant rich who think their wealth is forever are as foolish as the fool and the brute. They will all perish together and simply leave their wealth to others. Unlike their inner thought, they will not call their lands after their own names.

The two types of people are again presented — these two types being frequently contrasted in wisdom literature: the wise and the foolish; the righteous and the

wicked. In spite of presenting two types of people, here the psalmist argues that in one point these two types of people are equal. It is at least in death that all human beings are equal. That equality is well expressed in verse 11: the wise, the fool and the brute all perish together. In this regard, the main theme of this strophe is that death is the great leveller (Rogerson & McKay, 1977:232; VanGemeren, 1991:369) or the great equalizer (Weiser, 1962:388). All people die, whether they are wise or foolish, good or bad. They must leave their possessions behind, as must the psalmist. Like the chiastic relationship of Strophe *B* and Strophe *E*, the main theme of this strophe references to the grave and death, and will be further developed in Strophe *C*.

It is against this background that **the first refrain (verse 13)** is stated: *Nevertheless man in his pomp will not abide; he is like the beasts that perish.* This refrain is a bicolon. אדם (*man*) is the subject of בל־ילין (*will not abide*) in the first colon (13*a*) and נמשל (*he is like*) in the second colon (13*b*). In this refrain, the inevitable conclusion is presented in the form of a 'proverb'. Man (or mankind: אדם), whoever he/she is (*rich or poor*), cannot use wealth to his advantage in death. One end overtakes all mankind and human alike, which is death. Like the sages of wisdom literature, the psalmist observes 'the created-order of this world'; that is to say death is a part of earthly existence. Therefore those persons who would trust or boast in their own resources are not finally to be feared. In this sense, the refrain answers the question of verses 6-7. The psalmist's first and primary counter against such fear is stated in this refrain.

Therefore in Stanza I the same argument is repeated: the arrogant rich who put their trust in their wealth need not be feared because: (1) human wealth is powerless to prolong life and to ransom people from the pit; (2) whether they are wise or foolish (poor or wealthy), one day they will die and leave their wealth to others. The psalmist uses the principle of equality that is attached to the general law that all mankind must die. The purpose of this argument is not only to state a fact, but also to introduce the notion of equality in order to cancel out the disparity between

powerfulness and powerlessness in an unjust society.

Stanza II (verses 14-20): Wisdom concerning Two Destinies

Strophe *D* (verses 14-16) consists of four bicola (see Spangenberg, 1997: 332-342). In the first bicolon (verse 14), זה דרכם (*this is their way*) in the first colon (14*a*) is gapped in the second colon (14*b*). The suffixes in the second colon have the same antecedent as the suffixes in the first colon. In the second bicolon (verse 15*a-b*), the noun צאן (*sheep*) in the first colon (15*a*) and the verb ירעם (*will shepherd on them*) in the second colon (15*b*) are semantically paired. שאול in the first colon and מות in the second colon form a word pair. In the third bicolon (verse 15*cd*), the first colon (15*c*) and the second colon (15*d*) are semantically sequential: *The upright will rule over them ... and their form will waste away in Sheol.* The antecedent of the suffix on צירם (*their form*) in the second colon is the same as that of בם (*over them*) in the first colon. In the fourth bicolon (verse 16), אלהים (*God*) in the first colon (16*a*) is the subject of יפדה (*he will redeem*) in the first colon and יקחני (*he will take me*) in the second colon. The two verbs, יפדה and יקחני, also form a word pair. In this bicolon, מיד־שאול (*from the power of Sheol*) is used as an enjambment in which a sentence does not end when the colon ends but runs over into the next colon (see Watson, 1995:333).

Thus in this bicolon 'from the power of Sheol' is pointed out, because the effect of enjambment is to bring verse closer to everyday speech in order to enhance or enrich the verse movement (see Watson, 1995:332-335; cf. Raabe, 1990:81). In this strophe the first bicolon (verse 14) and the fourth bicolon (verse 16) are antithetical parallel lines that envelop the parallel lines of the second and third bicola (verse 15).

Verses 14-15 continue the theme of Strophe *C* as they are related to each other with a mirror image of chiastic structure. While verse 11 asserts that wealth is perishable, verse 14 affirms that only the folly of the rich remains. Verses 14-15 powerfully depict the helplessness of the rich by an image of sheep appointed to

death, which will then 'shepherd them'. The argument of the psalmist is to take comfort in the fact that while wealth may not follow the rich to the grave; their reputation endures forever as a witness to their folly.

In verse 15, in order to emphasize the fatal fate of the foolish rich, a simile and a personification are used. The foolish rich are likened to sheep and death is personified as a shepherd who leads the rich as sheep to the slaughter. Here the personification of death and its characterization as a shepherd present a striking contrast with the picture of YHWH in Psalm 23. Those who have cared only for themselves in life will waste away in death. A terrible lot befalls the foolish rich, whereas the righteous will be victorious. When the night of darkness is over, there will be morning when the lot of the foolish rich changed. The righteous will triumph over the wicked!

To this point the psalmist's wisdom could derive from observational wisdom, but verse 16 clearly comes from the other side, namely from critique to triumphant assertion: *But God will redeem my life from the power of Sheol, for he will take me.* While verses 8-15 disclose the fate of death (especially of the foolish rich), verse 16 declares the rescue from the fate of death (see Kraus, 1988:483-484). In verse 16 the function of the particle כִּי is emphatic, which often causes the postposition of the verb (see Dahood, 1965:301). This emphatic כִּי plays a vital role in the psalmist's argument because, in this case, כִּי can also relate units larger than sentences in a causal function (see Meyer, 1999:110-122). The use of verb לקח with God as subject is used similarly in Genesis 5:24; 2 Kings 2:3, cf. 5, 9; and Psalm 73:24. The first two usages refer to 'taking' before death. The word לקח does not specify the manner of God's taking the psalmist but it does occur after death: *and afterwards you will take me to glory* (Psalm 73:24).

Verse 16 also does not specify how God will take the psalmist. Some scholars interpret this 'taking' as immediate rescue from imminent death without reference to permanent fate. Barth (1947:158-161), for instance, argues that the psalmist generally rejoiced in immediate deliverance from the power of Sheol but did not

deny eventual consignment to the netherworld.

However, this fails to do justice to the psalm generally and to verse 16 specifically, because this 'taking' from Sheol does seem to occur after the psalmist's death. Here the problem is not so much temporary oppression as an unjust order, and the final phrase of verse 16 implies more than preservation in life. While the same verb occurs in Psalm 18:16 of immediate rescue, their physical rescue from immediate danger is explicit in the parallel lines. The context of verse 16 in Psalm 49 is quite different. In verse 11*a* the psalmist would have included himself with a wise man, who dies, since he identifies himself as wise in verse 4a (*my mouth will speak wisdom*). Also, a close relationship between Psalms 49 and 73 in other respects indicates that Psalm 49:16 should be read in the light of Psalm 73:24 (see Raabe, 1990:77-78; Johnston, 2002:202-204; also Terrien, 2003:391; cf. Pleins 1996: 23-24; also Craigie, 1983:360).

Therefore in the light of Psalm 49:16 the contrast between the pious poor and the wicked rich is not that the former do not die but that the latter do. Rather, the contrast consists in this: the former die but are taken back from the power of Sheol; whereas the latter have death as their shepherd and their form will waste away in Sheol. In this regard, this verse offers the key to the entire psalm, which began as a sapiential instruction but reaches discreetly the status of a sacred song in this verse. No ransom is possible from man to man, even from man to his brother, but in a single sentence, the psalmist solves the riddle of the human situation, swiftly and unobtrusively (see Terrien, 2003:390).

What matters in life according to the wisdom of Strophe *D*, therefore is what God can do for the righteous at the moment that death rears its ugly head. While no amount of wealth of the wicked can ransom one's life, only God can take the righteous from the power of Sheol.

Strophe *E* (verses 17-20) consists of four bicola, which can be grouped in two pairs like Strophe *B* (verses 6-10). The second bicolon (verse 18) is linked to the first

bicolon (verse 17) by means of the causal כִּי. In the first bicolon, the כִּי clauses in the first colon (17*a*) and the second colon (17*b*) form object clauses after the initial vetitive, which forbids an action by using the 'softer' Hebrew negative אַל followed by the prohibition (Deist, 1990:273): אַל־תִּירָא (*Do not fear!*). The antecedent of the suffix on בֵּיתוֹ in the second colon is אִישׁ in the first colon. In the second bicolon (verse 18) the negative לֹא is repeated in the first colon (18*a*) and the second colon (18*b*). The third person singular suffixes on אַחֲרָיו כְּבוֹדוֹ (*after him ... his glory*) in the second colon (18*b*) parallel the suffix on בְּמוֹתוֹ (*in his dying*) in the first colon (18*a*). The third bicolon (verse 19) also commences with כִּי, but here the particle carries a concessive meaning which introduces a 'circumstantial' clause (see Williams, 1976:73; also Van der Merwe *et al.*, 1999:300-301).

The second colon (19*b*), initiated with a *waw* (וְ), is a direct discourse expressing how the rich man blesses himself on his attainment while others may praise him. Here the *Pi'el* of בָּרַךְ is never constructed with נֶפֶשׁ elsewhere, since the normal construction for reflexives is with the *Hithpa'el* (Raabe, 1990:78; also Holladay, 1988:49-50). The *Pi'el* is thus employed here to form a contrast with the usual idiom 'to bless God'. Instead of blessing God in his lifetime, the wicked rich person blesses himself (see Casetti, 1982:244-245). The final word in the first colon (20*a*), אֲבוֹתָיו (*his fathers*) is the subject of לֹא יִרְאוּ (*they will not see*) in the second colon (20*b*). עַד is repeated in the first colon and the second colon to form a parallel.

Now, in Strophe *E*, the psalmist turns with comfort and relief to all who groan under the power of the wicked rich. In this strophe, the communication is clothed in the form of an exhortation and repetitions (Kraus, 1988:484). As mentioned already, Strophe *E* can be read as a complementary strophe to Strophe *B* (verses 6-9) because these two strophes are related to each other by means of the chiastic mirror image. These two strophes are also linguistically united by their references to fear and wealth. While verse 6 begins with a rhetorical question: *Why should I fear?*; verse 17 answers and confirms the question with a self-exhortation: *Do not fear!* In the light of the previous argument, there is no reason to fear that the rich might become richer

or more powerful because all their wealth and pomp are, at the most, a momentary advantage. In this regard, verse 18 expresses the tragedy of the wicked rich, as depicted in verse 7, for they will surely lose the very thing that is of the utmost importance to them.

'Though in his living' in verse 19 is antithesis to 'for in his dying' in verse 18. A person 'blessed in his living' may easily become falsely confident about death, for human praise in times of prosperity feeds such confidence (Craigie, 1983:360). Yet, the basic reality, to which the psalmist returns, is that life ends in Sheol, in the netherworld of the ancestors (fathers), where there is no light (verse 20) seeing that Sheol is described as the land of continual darkness (cf. Job 17:13; Psalm 88:13).

So again, **the second refrain (verse 21)** is expressed, but this time with a slight variation: *Man in his pomp, but does not understand; he is like the beasts that perish.* The 'not abide' becomes 'not understand' by the change from יָלִין to יָבִין. In this regard, the second refrain highlights the difference between the first stanza (verses 6-12) and the second stanza (verses 14-20). The answer to the riddle in verse 5 has been given a sapiential twist at the end of the psalm (Murphy, 2000:96-97). To be like beasts finally means to fail to understand.

Likewise, the real folly of the wealthy and powerful is their failure to 'understand': in failing to understand fully the dimensions of death. It is also evitable that they fail to understand fully the dimensions of life. Furthermore, the theme that the human is no better than a beast in the variant refrain (verses 13 and 21), fascinates the psalmist. The psalmist begins, *I will incline my ear to a proverb* (לְמָשָׁל) (verse 4); the refrain echoes this with a cognate: *he is like* (נִמְשַׁל) *the beasts that perish* (verses 13 and 21). Thus cognates of משל appear in the beginning, middle and end, and weave together the composition of the psalm. This is as if to pose a riddle, that the rich who will not understand, are like the beasts that perish.

One can see a movement and a progression from Stanza I to Stanza II, since the second stanza expands on the themes presented in the first stanza (see Raabe, 1990:89). Firstly, it broadens the two groups, namely the wicked rich and the

righteous. Whereas the first stanza speaks only of the rich themselves, the second stanza includes their followers (verse 14) and fathers (verse 20). Secondly, the fates of the wicked rich are heightened and expanded in the second stanza. While the first stanza informs that the wicked rich perish, the second stanza intensifies the evil fate that awaits them: *Death will shepherd them ... and their form will waste away in Sheol* (verse 15), and *they will never see the light* (verse 20).

One also can learn more of the fate of the righteous in the second stanza. Whereas the psalmist says: *Why should I fear*? in Stanza I, Stanza II expands and clarifies the fate of the righteous. In contrast to the wicked rich who will never see the light (verse 20), God will redeem and take the psalmist from Sheol (verse 16). The listeners/readers by implication will receive the same fate if they are on the psalmist's side, i.e. on the same side of the righteous. Thus they need not fear.

Therefore the psalmist, who first addressed the fear of wealthy persons and their apparent advantage in the face of death in the first stanza, now turns his attention in the second stanza to the folly of their way of life as such; in exposing its folly, he attempts to remove the temptation to seek wealth merely as a safeguard against death. The wicked rich who trust only in their wealth and boast of the abundance of their riches are foolish (verse 14). They are like beasts when they die (verses 15 and 21) although they count themselves happy during their lifetime (verses 19). Clearly these negative descriptions have the function to create abhorrence in the minds of the listener/reader towards the unjust powerful in an unequal society. The argument regarding the wicked rich is, however, not complete unless it is read in relation to the final fate of the righteous. The assurance of being redeemed from Sheol and taken by God in verse 16 inspires the psalmist to explicitly call upon his fellow-believers not to fear in verse 17. The contrast between the fate of the righteous and that of the wicked therefore serves to induce a more positive attitude towards the present distress and to overcome fear.

From the overall intra-textual relationships of the psalm, viz. the structure and the content of the psalm, one realizes that the riddle, which the psalmist wants to set

and solve, is presented and then solved. The riddle (verse 5) is presented in verses 6-7; it is the age-old problem of an apparently pious person in trouble and suffering oppression. To this, two responses are given. The first is enunciated in verses 8-10: no human can pay a ransom to avoid death.

This first response is further developed in verses 11-15. Here the psalmist clearly concentrates on the ungodly, and specifies their destiny as Sheol. This calls the psalmist's second response to the riddle, presented succinctly in verse 16: God will ransom the psalmist from Sheol and will take him. That is to say, God will provide for the righteous an alternative destiny to the netherworld. The final section of the psalm (verses 17-21) returns to the theme that the rich cannot take their wealth with them at the time of death.

The eventual contrast of the psalm therefore is the omnipotence of God (verse 16) versus man's inability (verses 8-9) in combination with the contrast between the fate of the wicked (verses 14-15) and that of the righteous (verse 16). In this regard, this psalm also instructs the listener/reader a pure wisdom teaching of human mortality and death. On your own, life and destiny are darkness, but in the presence of God, life becomes bearable and destiny is freedom from Sheol. The Psalmist, together with those who follow his teaching, will be redeemed from the power of Sheol, and enjoy life, even after death: *But God will redeem my life from the power of Sheol, for He will take me.*

5. Literary Genre and Life-Setting of Psalm 49

Unlike most psalms, Psalm 49 explicitly labels its genre as a wisdom psalm by presenting typical lexical features of Biblical wisdom literature, namely wisdom (חכמות), insight (תבונות), proverb (משל) and riddle (חידה) with a lyre. Other wisdom lexical terms that are attested to Psalm 49 are understand (בין), way (דרך), heart (לב), the upright (ישרים) and folly (כסל) (see Scott, 1971: 121-122; Kuntz, 1974:201-204; Perdue, 1974:538; also Bullock, 2001:204-206).

This psalm also exhibits wisdom literary features of a teacher's admonitory

address in the introduction (verse 2), a rhetorical question in verse 6, similes and illustrations from nature in the variant refrain (verses 13 and 21) and in verse 15, and an exhortation in verse 17 (see Kuntz, 1974:191-199; Murphy, 1963:159-161; also Bullock, 2001:205- 206).

As far as the thematic criteria of wisdom psalms are concerned, Psalm 49 lays out its thematic emphasis on wealth and poverty, with death as the equalizer (Bullock, 2001:208). In this regard, this psalm demonstrates the contrasting life styles of the righteous and the wicked, and the reality and inevitability of retribution as the thematic criteria (cf. Kuntz, 1974:211-215). The thought and feeling of the psalm is also one of the meditative reflections with wisdom exhortation, which is very characteristic of Biblical wisdom literature. Therefore this psalm's structure, its thematic ideas and feeling, and its forthright employment of typical wisdom terms and literary features jointly defend its merit as a wisdom psalm.

Besides the genre elements of wisdom literature, elements of different genres are also traceable in Psalm 49. In the introduction of the psalm (verses 2-5), the so-called 'didactic opening call' can be found (Kraus, 1988:480). This teaching is best assigned to the group of psalms dealing with problems and reflection, such as Psalms 73 and 139 (see Von Rad, 1972:47-49). Verses 6-7 resemble a lament because the description of distress is clearly manifested: *Why should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my persecutors surrounds me*? This distress by reason of threat of enemies and fear of death is one of the characteristics of the complaint form of individual laments (see Anderson, 2000:60-62). The sounds of a thanksgiving song and words of assurance also can be heard from verse 16 (cf. Raabe, 1990:87). Psalm 49 therefore intentionally mixes the literary genres of wisdom and thanksgiving, instruction and petition in order to bring together different concerns usually treated in different genres. As the psalmist opens his riddle with a lyre, he wants to teach the enigma and wisdom of our life to his listener/reader. In a song of prayer and thanksgiving to God, the psalmist concurrently reminds those who are listening/ reading that it is not from life as it presents itself that its enigma will be solved.

In this light, the primary life-setting of Psalm 49 is a didactic setting, due to the fact that this psalm is the result of a response of petition and thanksgiving as determined by wisdom teaching. The occurrence of distress and deliverance is disclosed instructively and in a universalising way. Strophe *A*, the introduction of the psalm, especially presents itself as a personal and possible satire of a sapiential didacticism (Terrien, 2003:388). This didactic setting bears some specific relations and addresses to 'rich and poor together' (verse 3). Indeed, it is probable that the people who are directly addressed by the psalmist are the poor and afflicted, but by addressing them in the broad terms of verses 2-3, their problem is set immediately in its wider context. The (wicked) rich are to be warned, the (righteous) poor to be comforted.

While there is little to determine the date of the psalm, Kirkpatrick (1921:268) suggested that the eighth century B.C. would provide a suitable setting for this psalm with the existence of great wealth and great poverty side by side in the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham. But most recent scholars would assign this psalm either to the early post-Exilic (e.g. Buttenwieser, 1969:644-649; also Casetti, 1982:283-285) or late post-Exilic (e.g. Treves, 1988:43; also Olofsson, 2000:76) period. Two main reasons why Psalm 49 is described as post-Exilic by many scholars are: (1) many scholars believe that wisdom is a fairly late development, and that it came to fruition in the post-Exilic era; (2) the theme of post-mortem survival in two wisdom psalms, 49 and 73, confirms for many their attribution to this period, since the theological shift towards the possibility of life after death is not traced to pre-Exilic writings (see Hattingh & Coetzee, 1999:477-490).

Johnston (1997:80-81), however, is opposed to these arguments because none is conclusive. His objections to the two problems are: (1) a growing number of scholars accept that the roots of Israel's wisdom are ancient, and independent of the posited wisdom schools; (2) while the concept of life after death is widely seen as an Exilic and post-Exilic development, it is already at least hinted at during the time of Hosea (see Hosea 6). With regard to the concept of life after death, especially, Dahood

(1970:xli-lii) has identified thirty-three passages in the Psalter where he sees the doctrine of the future life. For the technical meaning of 'take' in Psalm 49:16 and 73:24, Dahood (1965:301-302; 1968:195) reinforces the meaning by his observation that the parallel verb נחה (*guide*) in the first part of the Psalm 73:24 also bears a technical meaning, *to lead into Paradise*. Of course, we may exercise some caution in following all of Dahood's suggestions, because he brings too much of his knowledge of Ugaritic poetry and mythology to bear upon the psalms. Yet, Bullock (1979:61-62) rightly claims that "the very idea that Israel should have had no hope of an afterlife in a world where that hope loomed so large in neighboring cultures seems strange indeed".

For the linguistic features of Psalm 49 with regard to the date of the psalm, several features are regarded as indications of a late date by Schmitt (1973:249-252), such as the later usage of wisdom terms such as wisdom (חכמות) and insight (תבונות), and Aramaic influence on riddle (חידה) and pomp (יקר). However, all his assumptions are rejected by the careful and holistic examinations of Johnston.[14] Of course, Johnston's argument cannot prove an early date for the psalm either, even though he sees the date of this psalm potentially pre-Exilic, and indicative of one strand of earlier piety (see Johnston, 1997:82-83). Therefore it is quite impossible to situate this wisdom psalm and its didactic setting to a certain time and place (Terrien, 2003:392). Rather, this psalm can be placed in the *milieu sapientiel* (Murphy, 1963:160), which had been spread out from the early period of the history of Israel to the late period (see Clements, 1992:13-39; Westermann, 1995:1-3; also Weeks, 1994:57-73).

Therefore it seems that the intention of the setting of Psalm 49 is to be used at any time and at any place since the contradiction between the (wicked) rich and the (righteous) poor, and the problem of human mortality are ever-present riddles along the history of the human being. In this regard, what the psalmist has to say is

[14] For the detailed discussion on the subject, see Johnson, 1997:81-82. The more extensive study of this subject lies beyond the scope of the present study.

generally valid as underlined by the call-to-attention speech formula (verse 2) as the opening of an instruction (Irsigler, 1998:598). At the root, the social setting of this psalm is, in a way, the ever-present social problem and question of how earthly possessions are to be valued from the moral and religious point of view, and what people's attitude to them should be in their everyday life.

It is also interesting that the (musical) term, סֶלָה, appears at the first bicolon (verse 14) and the fourth bicolon (verse 16) of Strophe *D*. This could probably be an indication of accentuation during liturgical use (Coetzee, 1995:12) seeing that this term probably means 'lift up the voice in praise' (see Briggs & Briggs, 1906:lxxxiv-lxxxviii; also Kirkpatrick, 1921:xxii). In verse 16, especially, סֶלָה appears after God's majestic intervention: כִּי יִקָּחֵנִי (*for he will take me*). The cantor(s) might have stressed their astonishment in the presence of such a momentous declaration (Terrien, 2003:391). In addition, the musical and liturgical terms found in the superscription (לַמְנַצֵּחַ לִבְנֵי־קֹרַח מִזְמוֹר) of this psalm also elucidate the liturgical setting of the psalm.

Furthermore, the wisdom utterance accompanied by a musical instrument in verse 5 indicates an unusual clue for the liturgical setting of the psalm, since there are no other Biblical references of such wisdom teaching being given with a musical accompaniment (see Davidson, 1998:159; also Murphy, 2000:97). This has been taken to mean that the psalm was actually sung by the psalmist. The clue raises an important question with regard to the *Sitz im Leben* of the psalm, suggesting that this psalm was intended for public performance rather than to be read or listened to privately (Whybray, 1996:65).

In this regard, Gerstenberger (1988:206) finds a community setting of Psalm 49 from the observations of the overall features of the psalm: the subject matter of the psalm (suffering under oppression, hope for the poor), its authoritative tone that suggests divine communication, the intention of giving comfort and the obvious concern with delivering the message.

The use of first person style by the psalmist is also not a way of reporting personal experience. The style rather is a convention of teaching in Israel to convey convictions to the community by the psalmist/cantor (see Mays, 1994b:191). All these things make it quite clear that Psalm 49 might be used in the worship setting of the Israelites. This wisdom song therefore might be presented to the congregation by the psalmist/cantor with an accompanied stringed instrument in order to instruct the listener/audience endurance and hope in a rather miserable social situation.

6. Canonical Context of Psalm 49

Psalm 49 stands as a last psalm of the first group of psalms from the 'sons of Korah' in Book II (Psalms 42–72) of the Psalter. The literary genre of the neighbouring psalms of Psalm 49 shows a remarkable variety. Psalm 47 is an enthronement hymn, Psalm 48 a song of Zion, Psalm 50 a covenant renewal liturgy, and Psalm 51 an individual lament or a penitential psalm (Anderson, 2000:220-221). Among this group of psalms, two psalms that precede Psalm 49 bear the same attributes as the 'sons of Korah'. The superscriptions in the two psalms that follow Psalm 49 bear names of Asaph and David, respectively. This seems, at first glance, a rather abrupt transition from the first Korahite collection to the second Davidic collection (Psalms 51–71) in which a single Asaphite psalm (Psalm 50) intervenes. It is argued by Wilson (1985:163-167), however, that the editors of the Psalter occasionally use the so-called genre designations in order to bind the collections together, to 'soften' transition between groups of psalms. In this instance, each of the five psalms in question yields a superscription containing מִזְמוֹר (*a psalm*), which is not used in the Korahite collection prior to Psalm 47 and is not used again after this group of psalms until Psalm 62. Therefore it is these five occurrences of the term in the consecutive psalms that seem to span the point of transition. In the centre of this corpus stands our wisdom psalm, Psalm 49.

Prior to Psalm 49, three psalms (Psalms 46–48) have two themes in common:

The Lord is Sovereign of the world, and Zion is the place for divine-human encounter. Since these three psalms form a coherent sequence (McCann, 1996:876), it is natural to ask whether Psalm 49 is a part of that sequence. Superficially, the theme of Psalm 49 seems to differ completely from the themes of the three prior psalms. It is, however, significant that Psalm 49 addresses a universal audience, namely 'all the peoples' and 'all inhabitants of the world', in the first opening bicolon of the psalm (verse 2), whereas Psalms 46–48 proclaim God's universal sovereignty.

Furthermore, Psalm 48 and Psalm 49 share common words of heart (לב, 48:14//49:4), generation (דור, 48:14//49:12,20) and death (מות, 48:15//49:11,15,18). Among the common words, especially the last word of Psalm 48, על־מות (until death), constitutes the subject matter of Psalm 49. Between Psalms 47 and 49, the same vocabulary, 'all the peoples (כל־העמים, 48:2//49:2)' is used in the introduction of both psalms in order to attain the same motif of universal attention. 'Sing a psalm of edification' (זמרו משכיל – i.e. a didactic poem; see Brown *et al.*, 1979:968) in verse 8 of Psalm 47, which is only one occurrence of this term in the body of the psalm among 14 occurrences in the Psalter, seems to be an indication of an inter-textual connection with Psalm 49 as a wisdom song, seeing that the thought of wisdom and teaching impresses itself on משכיל (Kraus, 1988:25). One of the main themes of Psalm 49, 'do not fear (אל־תירא)' is expressed as 'we will not fear (לא־ניראא)' in Psalm 46:3 for the reason that, like Psalm 49, God is our refuge and strength when the earth changes and mountains are moved in the heart (לב, 49:4?) of the sea (Psalm 46:2-3).

It is also interesting that prior to these three psalms of coherent sequence, there is Psalm 45, which is a royal marriage psalm and bears a number of similarities to the wisdom love poem of the Song of Songs. Because of the shared wisdom motifs with the Song of Songs, this psalm is occasionally considered a wisdom psalm (see Dillard & Longman, 1994:223-224). Furthermore, the psalmist of Psalm 49 (verses 4-5) breaks through with his personal 'I', as he says: *My mouth will speak wisdom;*

the meditation of my heart will be of insight. I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will open my riddle with a lyre. Similarly, Psalm 45 opens with the words: *My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skilful write* (NIV).

Thus the connection between wisdom and psalmists has rightly been pointed out in two psalms. If this observation is taken into consideration, the three psalms of coherent sequence (Psalms 46–48) are enveloped by a wisdom psalm (Psalm 49) and a psalm with wisdom motifs (Psalm 45). In other words by forming an inclusio with wisdom themes and motifs, Psalm 49 and the prior psalms (Psalms 46–48 and 45) show a strong inter-textual relation. Inviting all people to acquire wisdom about the universal problem of death, the lesson of this wisdom psalm accords well with the message projected by the poetry of Psalms 46–48 (and 45) to which it has been affixed. After psalms dealing with broader and spacious issues such as (royal) wedding (Psalm 45), war and peace (Psalm 46), God's rule over the earth (Psalm 47), and God's care for the city (Psalm 48), Psalm 49 develops their themes, but focuses more on the universal human problem of suffering and death. To put it more poetically, after psalms reporting mountains shaking, trumpets playing, ships being wrecked at sea, the mood of this psalm is calm, quiet and reflective. It invites us to sit back and think about how we are leading our lives. It is an invitation to reflect on wealth and poverty, life and death.

This invitation to the reflective mood is further expanded to the two subsequent psalms. While the psalmist of Psalm 49 calls all the peoples and all inhabitants of the world to hear (שִׁמְעוּ ... הָעַמִּים) his message, God *Himself* calls His people to hear His message (*Hear! my people* – שִׁמְעָה עַמִּי) in Psalm 50. That is the message of the almighty God — only He can take his people from the power of Sheol (Psalm 49:16). This God is *your God* (אֱלֹהֶיךָ), the God of Israel (Psalm 50:7). This God *only* can create a clean *heart* (לֵב, Psalm 51:12//Psalm 49:4) in His people and can teach a real *wisdom* (חָכְמָה, Psalm 51:8//Psalm 49:4) for His people. The continuous occurrence of the (musical) term, סֶלָה, in this group of psalms (except Psalm 51) also further illuminates probable (communal) liturgical setting of this group of psalms.

The canonical placement of Psalm 49 as the last psalm of the first group of the Korahite collection is also noticeable. There are eleven psalms in Books II and III that bear the 'sons of Korah' in their superscriptions. They are Psalms 42–49 (with the exception of Psalm 43, but this psalm is usually read together with Psalm 42 as two parts of a single poetic unit) and Psalms 84–88 (with the exception of Psalm 86). Book II of the Psalter opens with the first collection of the Korahite psalms and marks what scholars call the Elohistic Psalter (Psalms 42–83).

After the lone Asaphite psalm, which follows immediately after the first Korahite collection, the second Davidic collection is formed by Psalms 51-72.[15] Thereafter the Asaphite collection (Psalms 73–83) follows in Book III, which closes the Elohistic Psalter. Then the second Korahite collection, now using the personal divine name YHWH, follows as Psalms 84, 85 and 87, 88. Among these, Psalm 88 has a double attribution to the sons of Korah and to Heman the Ezrahite.

Thus the superscriptions of the psalms in Books II and III imply that three distinguishable sub-collections have been placed together in this section of the Psalter. The canonical placement of Psalm 49 in this macro canonical context can be more discernable from a nearly symmetrical ordering of these three sub-collections in Books II and III:

The first Korahite Collection: Psalms 42(/43), 44–49
An inserted Asaphite Psalm: Psalm 50
The second Davidic Collection: Psalms 51–72
The Asaphite Collection: Psalms 73–83
The second Korahite Collection: Psalms 84–85 + 87–88

As can be seen from this symmetrical ordering, Books II and III can be better understood as one larger subunit rather than as two separate entities within the Psalter. As a matter of fact, the psalms that have been grouped together into Books II and III do have a number of formal, linguistic and stylistic characteristics in common,

[15] While Psalms 66–67 and 71–72 do not mention David, the notice in 72:20 suggests the intention

and the features they share are often peculiarities that set them apart from the rest of the Psalter (see Farmer, 1998b:823-827). In addition, the Korahite psalms and the Asaphite psalms have long been recognized as constituting relatively homogeneous groups, due to the fact that they share similar characteristics and genres of communal lament, psalms of judgment and law (see Buss, 1963:382-392). This observation on the canonical placement of Psalm 49 implies that Psalm 49 could be more precisely understood in this canonical context, that is to say, Psalm 49 in the context of the Korahite collection, in the context of the so-called Elohistic Psalter, and in the context of Books II and III of the Psalter.

In view of this, the correlation of the literary genres of the psalms in Books II and III are worthy of notice. Book II of the Psalter consists mainly of individual and community laments. They occur also in Book III, although Book III is actually pervaded by communal laments (Psalms 74; 79; 80; 83; and 89:38-51). This mood of lamentation is started in Book I and is still present in Books II and III. The collection of laments in Book I, however, closes with a note of hope in Psalm 41:11-14:

> *But thou, O LORD, be gracious to me, and raise me up, that I may pay them back.*
> *By this I know that thou favourest me, because my enemy does not triumph over me.*
> *And as for me, thou upholdest me in my integrity, and settest me before thy face forever.*
> *Blessed be the LORD, the God of Yisra'el from everlasting, and to everlasting.*
> *Amen, and Amen.* (NJB)

This observation suggests that the laments in Books II and III may have been read in the same mood, namely the mood from lament to hope, even though the collection begins with an individual voice that expresses deep alienation from God and God's place (Psalms 42–43; 73). In this regard, the opening psalms of Books II and III not only have the mood of lament but also effectively instruct the faith community to have hope in God (Psalms 42:5,11; 43:5) and have assurance that *God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever* (Psalm 73:26 – NRSV). Thus the

---

of the editor(s) of the psalm collection.

arrangement of the first Korahite psalms, in which Psalms 42/43–44 (individual lament and community lament, respectively) introduce Psalms 45–49, also assists the faith community to face the disorienting of realty of human suffering (e.g. alienation, national disaster, poverty and death etc.) and to affirm that hope is still possible and present. In this instance, Psalm 49 should also be read as a wisdom song for hope, hope for the (righteous) poor against the suffering caused by the (wicked) rich, and (eventual) hope of life beyond death.

Then it seems to be natural to move to the similar observation on the literary genres of the so-called Elohistic Psalter. The Elohistic Psalter is 'a mysterious feature' (McCann, 1996:658) of a collection of psalms in which the divine name Elohim (אלהים) occurs far more frequently than it does in Psalms 1–41 or Psalms 84–150 (Elohim occurs 244 times in Psalms 42–83 as opposed to only 49 times in Psalms 1–41, and 70 times in Psalms 84–150). While the reason why these psalms are collected together is still questionable,[16] the psalms in the Elohistic Psalter can be grouped together by means of literary genre. Its beginning (Psalms 42–50) and end (Psalms 73–83), the Elohistic Psalter mainly contains community psalms, with psalms of the individual in the centre (Psalms 51–72). However, this central part ends with the royal psalm (Psalm 72), which evidently changes the individual character of the collection into a communal one. This is also suggested by the concluding doxology in Psalm 72:18-20 with the 'amen' as the community's answer

[16] For years, scholars have usually concluded that the Elohistic Psalter is the result of editor(s) who changed many of the occurrences of YHWH (יהוה) to Elohim (אלהים). However, this conclusion is speculative because it does not satisfactorily explain why 44 occurrences of YHWH remain in Psalms 42–83 or why the editor(s) would have stopped with Psalm 83 rather than continuing through Psalm 89, the end of Book III. Recent study on 'the magical or theurgic number theory – 42' by Joffe (2002:223-235) is even more speculative. Thus it appears likely that the occurrences of Elohim are original to the composition of Psalms 42–83 and that these psalms originated and existed independently (McCann, 1996:658). It also accords with the conclusion of Anderson (1994:225) that "the division into five books has not been imposed upon the Psalter, but is inherent to its formation" after having examined the final shape of the Psalter in comparison with the ancient translations and manuscripts, such as LXX, Targums, and Qumran Scrolls. It can be a hint of an earlier (e.g.

(see Rendtorff, 1986:248).

In this instance, Psalm 49 can be related to Psalm 73 because of their shared character of ending, introducing the communal psalms respectively and their attributions to the homogeneous groups of the Korahite psalms and the Asaphite psalms. Of course, there is another lone Asaphite psalm, Psalm 50. However, Psalm 50 can be related to the second Davidic collection (Psalms 51–72) as an introduction because Psalm 50 is generally regarded as 'a prophetic liturgy of covenant renewal' (see, Anderson, 1972a:318; also Craigie, 1983:3363-364) and the main theme of the second Davidic collection is deeply related to the rejection and renewal of the Davidic covenant (see Wilson, 1985:213; also McCann, 1996:659-662). At the same time, Psalm 50 can be seen to perform a binding/locking function (Wilson, 1993b:76-77) between the first Korahite collection and the Asaphite collection because Psalm 50 forms an apt conclusion for the first Korahite collection, in which Psalm 49 is the last psalm, and conveys the moods and communal character of this collection to the Asaphite collection, which begins with Psalm 73.

Furthermore, the closely related content between Psalm 73 and Psalm 49 with shared wisdom motifs and themes offer a firm inter-textual connection of two psalms (cf. Luyten, 1990:61). In this regard, Psalm 49 and Psalm 73 exhibit remarkable lexical similarities: people (עם, 49:2//73:10), man (אדם, 49:3,13,21//73:5), heart (לב, 49:4//73:1,7,13,26x2), wealth (חיל, 49:7,11//73: 12), forever [always] (ל[עולם], 49:9,12//73:12,26), perish (אבד, 49:11//73:27), death (מות, 49:11,15,18//73:4), generation (דור, 49:12,20//73:15), beasts (בהמות, 49:12,20// 73:22), morning (בקר, 49:15//73:14), but [surely] (אך, 49:16//73:1,13,18), take (לקח, 49:16,18//73:24), glory (כבוד, 49:18//73:24), and understand (בין, 49:21//73:17). Among these common words, especially אך in Psalm 49:16 is one of the key words of Psalm 49, since this asseverate adverb introduces a very strong contrasting effect as a turning point of the psalm with regard to the inability of humankind versus the omnipotence

---

pre-Exilic) date of Psalm 49 (see Anderson 1994:219-241).

of God, who alone can redeem humankind from the power of Sheol, as studied earlier.

Similarly, in Psalm 73 אך conveys the significant thought progress in the psalm. This expletive adverb, אך (*but or surely*), announces the traditional doctrine, the start of the meditation, which may be no more than an aphorism: *Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart* (73:1 – NIV). Repetition calls attention to a paradox, for another אך introduces the antithesis, after considering the apparent prosperity of the wicked: *Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure* (73:13 – NIV). The third אך introduces a reappraisal, and confirms that the wicked will indeed slip, which affirms the initial thesis: *Surely you place them on slippery ground* (73:18 – NIV) (see Schaefer, 2001:177-181).

In this way, Psalm 73 can be called 'the journey of a soul' (Bergant, 1997:59) in which the psalmist admits having both envied the prosperous wicked and having questioned the value of righteous living (verses 2-12). Then because of some insight received in the sanctuary (verses 13-17), the psalmist realizes that God is neither unconcerned nor unable to mete out righteous recompense. Finally, 'the journey of a soul' reaches to the confidence of God's continuous presence and the psalmist feels remorseful of previous attitudes. Therefore, like Psalm 49, Psalm 73 describes affliction caused by the success and affluence of the wicked and expresses sure confidence in the presence of God. This is a profound psalm and, as Von Rad (1972:205-206) says, "in the description of the gravity of the attack and above all in the expression of absolute security in God, this poem far surpasses the point of view of Psalms 37 and 49". In spite of this superiority, the wisdom status of Psalm 73 is more tenuous than that of Psalm 49 because the form and style of a song of thanksgiving, especially in the opening (verse 1) and closing (verse 28) of Psalm 73 leads to its inference as a thanksgiving song (see Murphy, 1963:164; also Kraus, 1989:85). Even so, the lexical elements of Psalm 73 manifest sapiential nuances and the retribution motif is sustained (see Bullock, 2001:205-206).

While wisdom in Psalm 49 manifests some disdain for material goods and

therefore avoids the full impact of the question, wisdom in Psalm 73 faces the difficulty more openly then perceives, at least with flashing insight, that nothing in heaven or on earth can compare with God. Therefore the eternal fellowship with God is all that matters. The righteous have only to trust in YHWH, and trust all the ways of God. In this respect, God's taking in Psalm 73:24 reinforces more profound understanding of Psalm 49:16: *But God will redeem my life from the power of Sheol, for he will take me.* While the sanctuary experience of Psalm 73:17 is widely acknowledged as the psalm's turning point, the ringing affirmation of verse 24 is the psalm's culmination: *You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me with honour* (NRSV). Whereas the second half of this climactic line is a little ambiguous, it is claimed by Johnston (2002:205-206), that "the stronger the Israelite writer's sense of divine presence in this life, the more likely the development of a concept of hope that transcends death" in Psalm 73.

The canonical position of Psalm 73 as 'a canonical marker' (see Brueggemann & Miller, 1996:45-56) in the midpoint of the Psalter also supports this case because the editor(s) of the Psalter probably chose this psalm for their midpoint as the supreme example of hope pointing beyond death. Having carefully examined the afterlife in the psalms, Alexander (1987:16) also convincingly concludes that in "at least two psalms, 49 and 73, the concept of the afterlife figures prominently". Therefore Psalms 49 and 73 are profound wisdom teaching, basically on a single theme: hope in the midst of suffering — hope even beyond human mortality and death.

These shared words, wisdom motifs, and themes between Psalm 49 and Psalm 73 have indicated that there is also a relationship between these two psalms with regard to their life-setting and canonical shape. The life-setting of psalm 73 is quite obvious, since this psalm explicitly mentions the entering of the sanctuary of God (verse 17) and promising of proclaiming all the deeds of God in public (verse 28). Like 'I' in Psalm 49, 'I' in Psalm 73 is to be understood in the light of a communal setting. 'I' of Psalm 73 becomes an example to the suffering community of how to

respond to the problem of the apparent prosperity of the wicked rich (cf. McCann, 1993b:100). Thus the *Sitz im Leben* of this psalm, like that of Psalm 49, could be a liturgical setting and it could have been recited before the worshipping community (Anderson, 1972b:529).

The canonical placement of Psalm 73 as the first psalm of Book III, which begins the second half of the Psalter after the second Davidic collection, is also extraordinary. Psalm 73 is a sort of summary of what the reader of the Psalter would have learned after beginning with Psalms 1–2 and moving through the songs and prayers of Psalms 3–72 (McCann, 1996:968). That is to say, happiness has to do not with material prosperity and success, but with the assurance of God's presence in the midst of threat and suffering. As Brueggemann (1991:80-88) suggests, Psalm 73 plays a crucial role in the movement from Psalm 1 to Psalm 150, meaning, from obedience to praise. Psalm 73 invites the listener/reader to move not only backward in terms of what is articulated in the previous psalms but also forward to the subsequent psalms as they reflect on the weal and woe of human existence and celebrating God's assuring presence (see Kuntz, 2000:157-158).

In this sense, Psalm 73 can be viewed as a turning point from the previous psalms of lamentations. As already mentioned, the dominant mood of most psalms in the second Davidic collection (Psalms 51–72) is lament. This collection is ended with Psalm 72, a royal psalm ascribed to Solomon. This psalm is constructed to place together royal attentiveness to 'justice and righteous' (verse 1) and 'glory and abundance' (verses 16-19). Solomon's capacity for 'justice and righteousness' did not stay well connected to 'glory and abundance' (see 1 Kings 3-11). The breaking of this connection invites and requires a serious rethinking and redefinition of royal ideology (see Brueggemann & Miller, 1996:50-51). Then Psalm 73 is placed as the first psalm of Book III after the anticipations of Psalm 72. Hence Psalm 73, with even its own movement from lament to hope, turns the mood of frustration to hope, and sets the tone for the whole of Book III (and even the second half of the whole Psalter).

In this regard, Wilson's (1993b:74-75) suggestion about the framework of Books I-III of the Psalter seems to be appropriate when he says: "The framework focuses by the apparent failure of the Davidic covenant and kingdom, and it articulates their continuing appeal to God for redress and restoration". In view of this, Psalm 49 and Psalm 73 can be called two-edged expressions of hope because these two psalms envelop the second Davidic collection that manifests the apparent failure of the Davidic covenant caused by unfaithful Davidic kings, and give new meaning to hope.

The failure of the Davidic covenant by Davidic kings implies not only their political and military failure but also their failure of maintaining social justice because their task is to make the reign of God a reality in human society (see Anderson, 1999:211-214): *In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more* (Psalm 72:7 – NRSV). God, the Creator, intended that the social order might be related harmoniously to the created order through the Davidic kings. But it ended in failure. This failure of social justice is clearly manifested in Psalms 49 and 73. The psalmists and faithful community had undergone the harsh time of affliction caused by the arrogant and wicked rich. In the midst of this failure of social justice and frustration, nevertheless, the psalmists give new hope associated with the wisdom counsel not to rely on a human king or dynasty but to trust YHWH alone. The Covenant of YHWH never fails! So, the psalmist of Psalm 73:24-25 sings:

Whom have I in heaven but you?
and there is nothing on earth that I desire other than you.
My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (NRSV)

Accordingly, the psalmist of Psalm 49:16-17 exhorts:

But God will redeem my life from the power of Sheol, for he will take me. Selah
Do not fear when one becomes rich.

This canonical juxtaposition of frustration and hope, which begins with the

correlation between Book I and the first Korahite collection, runs through the end of Book III, and even sets a framework for Book IV of the Psalter. As seen from the symmetrical ordering of the three collections of the psalms in Books II and III, it is quite clear that the two separated collections of Korahite psalms provide a frame for Books II and III that both introduce and conclude them. In the second Korahite collection (Psalms 84–85 and 87–88) followed by the Elohistic Psalter, the Davidic Psalm 86 constitutes an additional tether binding this collection to the whole (Wilson, 1993b:76-77).

In this respect, Psalm 89 is also linked to the final Korahite Psalm 88 because Psalm 88 bears a dual superscription: *A song, A psalm of the sons of Korah, To the chief musician, according to Mahalath Leannoth, A Maskil of Heman, the Ezrahite* (שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר לִבְנֵי קֹרַח לַמְנַצֵּחַ עַל־מָחֲלַת לְעַנּוֹת מַשְׂכִּיל לְהֵימָן הָאֶזְרָחִי).

The superscription of Psalm 89 is related to this last element, since it too is: A Maskil of Ethan, the Ezrahite (מַשְׂכִּיל לְאֵיתָן הָאֶזְרָחִי). The result is that Psalm 89 is also linked to the overall context of Books II and III. After rehearsing every element of the Davidic/Zion theology in verses 1-38 of Psalm 89, the psalm makes an abrupt shift at verse 39: *But thou hast cast off and rejected, thou hast been angry with thy anointed* (NJB). Therefore Psalm 89 also clearly suggests the need for reorientation that moves beyond the failure of the Davidic covenant towards the hope of the 'steadfast love/loving kindness (חסד)' of God (verse 50).

Although the canonical shape of Book III points towards the rejection, it does not mean an abandonment of hope. Midway to the end of Book III, Psalm 78, which is also introduced by wisdom language and themes like Psalm 49, rehearses the Davidic/Zion theology that God had performed mighty deeds in the past despite Israel's faithlessness. Among the second Korahite collection, there are also two songs of Zion in Psalms 84 and 87. On the one hand, these psalms together serve to remind the community of God's past deeds on behalf of the people. On the other hand, the juxtaposition of the Davidic/Zion theology with laments of the community makes the traditional hope ring hollow at best (McCann, 1993b:98).

In this setting of maintaining hope, a continuous hope comes from Book IV. The plaintive question 'How long?' bridges Books III and IV (Psalm 89:47 and Psalm 90:13). Psalm 90, the first psalm of Book IV, which Wilson (1985:215) calls the 'editorial centre' of the final form of the Psalter, occupies a crucial position in the Psalter. After Books I–III have charted the failure of the Davidic covenant, Book IV opens with an emphasis on God's sovereignty, with the resounding acclamation that the Lord reigns. In this light, Psalm 90 contrasts the sovereignty of God with the transience of humanity. However, the real emphasis of the psalm is placed on God as Israel's place of security 'in all generations' (verse 1). This psalm then invites us to return to God, our dwelling place, which is our real hope (verse 3). It is very remarkable that this emphasis on the anticipation of real hope is given as a form of wisdom counsel in this psalm. Verses 11-12 of Psalm 90 clearly demonstrate a form of wisdom teaching: *Who knows the power of thy anger? Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may get 'a heart of wisdom* (לבב חכמה)' (NJB). That is to say, recognition of human frailty is the beginning of wisdom. Thus one needs divine wisdom to achieve the necessary new perspective (see Wilson, 1985:215).

From all the observations on the canonical shape of Psalm 49 in Books II and III of the Psalter, one can realize that wisdom psalm (Psalm 49) and psalmic wisdom (Psalm 73 and Psalm 78, and even Psalm 90 in Book IV) play an important role to formulate a framework for the Books. The most important feature of wisdom counsels in these Books is the maintenance of real hope in the midst of apparent failure of Davidic covenant. Wisdom counsels encourage the faithful community to anchor their hope not on human kings and dynasty but on God, the Creator (Psalm 90), the Redeemer (Psalm 49), the Savoir (Psalm 78), and the Sustainer (Psalm 73). Hence while royal psalms (Psalms 72 and 89) provide an interpretive context for Books II and III as the 'seams' of the combined collection (see Wilson, 1993b:77-81), psalmic wisdom in Psalms 49 and 73 (and 78, 90) constitutes a final wisdom frame of Books II and III (and IV), namely a wisdom frame of hope.

7. Wisdom Implications in Psalm 49

Psalm 49 reflects themes of a more theoretical nature that explore the difficult intellectual and theological issues raised in moral wisdom (see Craigie, 1983:358). In this regard, Psalm 49 has some similarity with the so-called critical wisdom: the kind of wisdom literature best presented by themes from the books of Job and Ecclesiastes (see Olofsson, 2000:75-76). Notably, this psalm bears similarities to that portion of the book of Job in which Job raises the empirical problem of the apparent success and prosperity of the wicked and rich (Job 21:7-15). However, Psalm 49 differs from the book of Job in form and function. Whereas the book of Job deals with the issues in a context that is primarily literary and theological, Psalm 49 has a more didactic function (cf. Craigie, 1983:358).

Wisdom reflections of Psalm 49 come from listening to and meditating on a proverb as a way to solve a riddle of life. In this regard, wisdom (חכמה) in Psalm 49 is presented under the inspiration of proverb (משל) and in response to a riddle (חידה), and by the theme of the transitory nature of human life (see Whybray, 1974:95). Since the instruction here is something of a riddle, the psalmist may have felt the need to gather all his credentials as a sage — one who knows 'great or deep wisdom', has 'profound insight', 'comprehends proverbs', and can solve 'riddles' — in order to ensure the instruction of a hearing.

In this manner, the psalm makes us hear an instruction of a sage to the congregation in their identity as general humanity (see Mays, 1994b:191). The problem the sage addresses is set by wealth and the way people orient their lives to the acquisition and possession thereof. The error is not wealth in itself but how people let it disorient their relationship with God. The sage meditates on this problem not to denounce the wicked rich, but to instruct and comfort the faithful. In this sense, the purpose of the psalm is very pastoral. Psalms 37 and 73 also deal with the problem of the prosperous powerful wicked, but in those psalms sages assure the

faithful that the wicked will be undone in the midst of life, while the righteous will be vindicated. Here the resolution is quite different. It is universal death.

In this regard, verse 11 expresses the critique succinctly: *But he will surely see the wise die; the fool and the brute perish together, and leave their wealth to others.* To die suddenly and leave your possessions to others was a type of punishment that was only the lot of fools and wicked people (Job 27:16-18; Proverbs 13:22). In this fashion, the doctrine of retribution, which is the central tenet of wisdom literature, is severely undermined with the statement in Psalm 49 that the wise will experience the same fate as the fool and the brute (see Casetti, 1982:61). In this regard, Burger (1989:90-91) places this psalm within 'the crisis phase and the wisdom psalms' where wisdom psalms express the crisis into which wisdom was precipitated by the black-and-white interpretation of the retribution dogma.

However, verse 11 should be read and studied in relation to verse 16, as already observed. The psalmist used a critical wisdom saying (verse 11) to emphasize the inevitability of death, but he eventually gives the assurance that what wisdom cannot do (to preserve one's life), God is able to do. God can even take one from the power of Sheol (verse 16) (see Spangenberg, 1997:336-337). Therefore Kuntz (1977:232) puts Psalm 49 (together with Psalm 73) into the category of the so-called 'futuristic' understanding of the problem of retribution, which dares to hope in the prospects of immortality (cf. Burger, 1989:90-92).

Finding expression in the wisdom of Psalm 49 and in verses 23-26 of Psalm 73, the psalms claim that the righteous and the wicked might not receive their just deserts until they have been taken by death. So the sage has another surprising word for the congregation (verse 16). It is given in the confessional first person style of thanksgiving psalm, but it is offered to the audience as a salvation word. But in the context of this psalm, with its emphasis on the eventual death of all, such a salvation word should be understood as a word of hope beyond death: *God will take me from the power of Sheol.* Hope in immortality becomes a cardinal component in the affirmed retribution theology (Kuntz, 1977:231). Given this conviction in the central position, this psalm guides the congregation through a process by which they put

their hope for life in God, not in wealth. So, it is clear that this psalm has moved from concern about reward and punishment to an attempt to compensate for the importance of trusting in God whose providence is beyond both retribution and death itself.

In this point, the so-called 'death-life' theology by means of which the problem of the fear of the righteous poor against the wicked rich is explained (Coetzee, 1995:20). It declares that the reward due to the righteous may not be realized until after a present troubled existence has run its full span. The contrast between the destination of the wicked powerful (verse 15) and the righteous powerless (verse 16) is a matter of death against life because death will bring the final change. In Sheol the wicked powerful will become the have-nots, but the righteous powerless will be redeemed from the power of Sheol, and will become the possessions of God.

In this respect, fear for the oppression of the wicked rich is changed into a belief that death changes everything. The theological window opening focuses on the moment of death, assuring the listener/reader that at that moment nothing matters, but God (Gunn, 1956:158; see also Whybray, 2002:151-153). It brings totally new meaning into present life for the righteous wise. It is a real wisdom from God! Given this new perspective, God empowers the righteous poor and wise powerless to face the wicked rich, to live with the burden, to see life in a new perspective, and to be empowered by faith during the entire lifetime.

If we read this new perspective together with the most fundamental principle of wisdom literature, that is to say, 'the fear of YHWH is the beginning of wisdom' (Proverbs 1:7), we can find a profound meaning of fear. In this psalm, wisdom is a very important motif to eliminate human fear. It implies that wisdom can be found in the fear, or reverence, of the Lord. The wisdom provides the meaning and the purpose of living. The wisdom also provides the meaning of death. If one perceives death correctly from the perspective of wisdom, one may live life correctly in the fear of YHWH. It is therefore life after death which adds the dimension of eschatology to the wisdom of the psalm. This eschatological hope is ground for greater consolation than rationalizing the wealth of the wicked. This psalm is about

the fullness of life: the life of fullness of hope, which God longs to give to his children, and about that fullness of life belonging to eternity.

CHAPTER V

PSALM 112

and

WISDOM

Chapter V
PSALM 112 AND WISDOM

1. Introduction

Our final promising candidate for the study of wisdom psalms is Psalm 112. Whereas Psalm 1, our first promising candidate for the study of wisdom psalms, opens the Psalter by introducing 'blessed is the man ...', Psalm 112 focuses almost in its entirety on a description of the 'blessed man'. In this sense, it is all the more fitting that the main body of the present study concludes with 'who the blessed man is' in a manner of responding to the opening call of the main body of the present study. In this respect, the main body of the present study (Chapter II–Chapter V) itself forms, to a certain degree, an inclusio, which is one of typical poetic devices of the Biblical poetry. As a poem is framed between the repeated themes and elements in inclusio, Psalm 112 draws upon the typical wisdom elements and themes found in Psalm 1. At the same time, however, Psalm 112 is a much more detailed and straightforward description of the desirable God-centred life. Thus we need to listen to and meditate on the wise instruction of Psalm 112. Then we need to follow the way that Psalm 112 directs us.

In order to follow the desirable way of Psalm 112, the present study will now proceed to analyse the poetic features of the psalm, and subsequently attempt to show how the poetic features of this psalm can help us to understand the content, the context and the message of the psalm.

This chapter will be organized in the same way as preceding Chapters. After presenting the Massoretic Text of Psalm 112, a translation will be proposed with some discussions of translation problems in order to establish the best textual base for the study. Then the poetic structure and content will be analysed, based on the intra-textual reading of the psalm. Thereafter the literary genre and life-setting will

be taken into consideration, based on the preceding study of poetic content and its extra-textual clue from the content. When the literary genre is taken into consideration, the short superscription of this psalm, הללו יה (*Hallelujah!*) that is not included in the alphabetic scheme of the psalm, will also be taken into consideration as an ancient genre indication. From then on, the canonical context of the psalm will be discussed on the basis of the inter-textual relationships of the psalm. The significance of the superscription, הללו יה (*Hallelujah!*), in the canonical composition will also be considered in combination. Then finally, all the preceding study outcomes will be synthesised in order to grasp the overall message of the psalm with special regard to the wisdom perspective of the psalm and its implications.

2. Text and Translation of Psalm 112

Text

הַלְלוּ יָהּ	1	
אַשְׁרֵי־אִישׁ יָרֵא אֶת־יְהוָה		(א)
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו חָפֵץ מְאֹד׃		(ב)
גִּבּוֹר בָּאָרֶץ יִהְיֶה זַרְעוֹ	2	(ג)
דּוֹר יְשָׁרִים יְבֹרָךְ׃		(ד)
הוֹן־וָעֹשֶׁר בְּבֵיתוֹ	3	(ה)
וְצִדְקָתוֹ עֹמֶדֶת לָעַד׃		(ו)
זָרַח בַּחֹשֶׁךְ אוֹר לַיְשָׁרִים	4	(ז)
חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם וְצַדִּיק׃		(ח)
טוֹב־אִישׁ חוֹנֵן וּמַלְוֶה	5	(ט)
יְכַלְכֵּל דְּבָרָיו בְּמִשְׁפָּט׃		(י)
כִּי־לְעוֹלָם לֹא־יִמּוֹט	6	(כ)

(ל)		לְזֵכֶר עוֹלָם יִהְיֶה צַדִּיק:
(מ)	7	מִשְּׁמוּעָה רָעָה לֹא יִירָא
(נ)		נָכוֹן לִבּוֹ בָּטֵחַ בַּיהוָה:
(ס)	8	סָמוּךְ לִבּוֹ לֹא יִירָא
(ע)		עַד אֲשֶׁר־יִרְאֶה בְצָרָיו:
(פ)	9	פִּזַּר נָתַן לָאֶבְיוֹנִים
(צ)		צִדְקָתוֹ עֹמֶדֶת לָעַד
(ק)		קַרְנוֹ תָּרוּם בְּכָבוֹד:
(ר)	10	רָשָׁע יִרְאֶה וְכָעָס
(ש)		שִׁנָּיו יַחֲרֹק וְנָמָס
(ת)		תַּאֲוַת רְשָׁעִים תֹּאבֵד:

Translation[17]

1[18] Hallelujah!

1 *a.* Blessed is the man

b. who fears YHWH,

c. who delights greatly in His commandments.

2 *a.* His seed will be mighty in the land;

b. the generation of the upright will be blessed.

3 *a.* Wealth and riches are in his house,

b. and his righteousness endures forever.

4 *a.* Light rises in the darkness for the upright;

b. *He is* gracious, compassionate and righteous.

---

[17] This is my own translation. All quotations from Psalm 112 in this study are taken from this translation unless stated otherwise.

[18] In citing the Psalms and other passages of Scripture, the numbering and the versification of the BHS text is used throughout the present study rather than the numbering and the versification of

5 *a.* Good is it with the man
b. who deals graciously and lends,
c. who conducts his affairs with justice.
6 *a.* Indeed, he will not be moved forever;
b. the righteous will be in everlasting remembrance.
7 *a.* He will not fear evil tidings;
b. his heart is firm, trusting in YHWH.
8 *a.* His heart is steady, he will not be afraid;
b. until he gazes upon his enemies.
9 *a.* He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor;
b. his righteousness endures forever;
c. his horn will be exalted in honour.
10 *a.* The wicked man will see it and be angry;
b. he will gnash his teeth and melt away;
c. the desire of the wicked will perish.

Translation Notes

Verse 1*a*. אַשְׁרֵי־אִישׁ — Blessed is the man

In Origen's Hebrew text (*textus hebraicus secundum Origenem*), אִישׁ is read with the definite article: הָאִישׁ (*the man*). Then it is well accorded with Psalm 1:1. Thus the translation of the present study follows this rendering. Most modern translations (AB, GW, JB, KJV, NASB, NCV, NIV, NJB, NKJV, RSV, TEV and GNB: *Gelukkig de mens*) and many commentators (Weiser, 1962:702; Dahood, 1970:126; Anderson, 1972b:776; Perowne, 1976b:319; Allen, 1983:93; Kraus, 1989: 361; and Terrien, 2003:759) also follow this rendering.

Verse 2*a*. גִּבּוֹר — mighty

LXX, Vulg., or most modern translations.

It has been proposed to change גִּבּוֹר (mighty) into גְּבִיר (lord) by BHK and BHS because גִּבּוֹר seems to be unusual (see Kraus, 1989:361-362). Oesterley (1955: 467-468) also thinks the word, גִּבּוֹר (mighty), is not altogether appropriate in this respect, for it is used mostly warlike sense. However, the word 'mighty' probably denotes 'a man of substance' (cf. Psalm 37:11) rather than 'a man valiant in war' (Anderson, 1972b:776-777). It may also be understood as 'wealthy' or 'influential' (VanGemeren, 1991:708): 'a man of power, position and influence' (Briggs & Briggs, 1907:385). Furthermore, in the context of verse 2-3, the association is that of 'wealth'. Dahood (1970:126-127) argues that 'mighty' here means 'numerous': *Numerous in the land shall be his seed.* Therefore it is not necessary to change גִּבּוֹר (mighty) into גְּבִיר (lord).

3. Poetic Structure of Psalm 112

The most obvious poetic feature of Psalm 112 is its acrostic scheme in which the lines begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In the versification of the Massoretic Text, this psalm has ten verses, the first eight of which are couplets and the last two are triplets, similar to the preceding psalm, Psalm 111. Psalms 112 and 111 share rhythm, vocabulary and larger ideas in many ways. Consequently, a number of commentators suggest that Psalms 112 and 111 are twin psalms (*Zwillingspsalmen* – Zimmerli, 1972:107-109). That is to say, both psalms are the work of one and the same author, or that they belong to the same school of thought (e.g. Stuhlmueller, 1983b:132).

In this respect, Psalm 112 could be regarded as the counterpart of Psalm 111. At the same time, nevertheless, Psalm 112 should be studied as a psalm with its own coherent unit, because it has its own heading, indicating that it is a separate psalm from adjacent psalms. Moreover, Psalm 112 is an acrostic psalm in which all twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet are used. This use of all twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet denotes a sense of completion. Literary genre critics also

classify these two psalms differently: Psalm 112 as a wisdom psalm and Psalm 111 as a hymn (e.g. Anderson, 1972a:776). Therefore Psalm 112 must be studied as a coherent unit.

The demarcation of verse lines is certain because of the acrostic scheme of the psalm. Some scholars think there is no strictly logical cognitive sequence evident in its development of thought in the psalm owing to the exigencies of the acrostic scheme (see Oesterley, 1955:468; Anderson, 1972b:773; also Thomas, 1986:22). However, if the intra-textual evidence is taken seriously, one can find a pattern of movement and progression of thought as well as actions and their consequences in the psalm.

In Psalm 112, the most obvious poetic devices that can be used to divide the psalm into relevant sections are synonymous parallelism and repetition of key words. Verses 3*b* and 9*c* are identical: *his righteousness endures forever*, and verse 6*b* is very similar to this: *the righteous will be in everlasting remembrance.* צדיק (*righteous*), one of the key words of the psalm, is repeated in verses 3*b*, 6*b* and 9*b*. Another key word, לעד (*forever*), is repeated in verses 3*b* and 9*b*. In verse 6*b*, instead of לעד, a paired word, עולם (*everlasting*) is used. Therefore it is quite clear that verses 3*b*, 6*b* and 9*b* form a larger synonymous parallelism. Since this synonymous parallelism is so evident, Perdue (1977:292-294) even regards these three lines (3*b*, 6*b* and 9*b*) as the refrains of the psalm, and verse 10 as an antithesis to the refrains. Based on this synonymous parallelism and repetition of key words, it is quite logical to divide this psalm into three sections of three verses each, with verse 10 serving as a concluding antithesis. Auffret (1980:264-270) and McCann (1996:1136-1137) similarly divide this psalm into three sections (cf. Seybold, 1996: 443-444).

In the morphological level, it is striking that *third person masculine singular* forms abound in the psalm, both in the verbs and in the suffixes. The subjects of the *third person masculine singular* forms are the righteous (verses 1-9) and the wicked (verse 10). In verses 2 and 4, ישר (*the upright*), a word pair of the righteous, is

represented as plural (ישרים). In verse 10, the plural form of רשע (*the wicked*) is also used: רשעים. The divine name, YHWH, is mentioned two times: one as an object of God-fearing man with direct object marker (את) in the relative clause (verse 1*b*); the other with the preposition ב (verse 7*b*) as the object of mental act: *trust in YHWH* (see Gesenius & Kautzsch, 1910:380). From this it becomes clear that the following actors play a role in the psalm: YHWH, the righteous and his company, the wicked and his company.

The syntactic structure of the psalm is also fairly simple because all the cola are statements. The first section (verses 1-3) comprises of a nominal statement (1*a*), subsequently followed by two relative clauses (1*bc*), and three statements (2*ab*, 3*a*), which describe the blessings of the righteous, and another refrain-like statement (3*b*) in the end: *his righteousness endures forever*. All the statements in the first section are written in a very positive mood.

On the contrary, in the second section (verses 4-6), an allusion of affliction is hinted at in the first statement (4*a*: ... *in the darkness*). This shifting of mood from brightness to darkness can be considered a demarcating marker between the first section and the second section. However, the mood of the four following statements (4*b*, 5*abc*) changes to the brightness again seeing that the lines illustrate the right attitude of the righteous in spite of adversity. This change is even hinted at in verse 4*a* because an allusion of the rising of YHWH's light in the darkness is already mentioned. Then another hint at adversity is presented in the sixth statement (6*a*), but this time the negative mood is eventually turned over to the affirmative statement with emphatic כי: *Indeed, he will never be moved*. In this regard, this line forms a thematic inclusio with the first line by way of negative expression, and consequently, this inclusio generates a unity of this section. This section is also ended with a refrain-like statement: *the righteous will be in everlasting remembrance*.

In the third section (verses 7-9), the first four statements (7*ab*, 8*ab*) repeat the theme of the right attitude of the righteous in adversity. The next three statements (9*abc*) also repeat the theme of the blessing of the righteous, but this time the final triumph of the righteous over evil is firmly stated: *his horn will be exalted in honour*

(9*c*). This final triumphal mood is even reinforced with a refrain-like statement in the preceding line: *his righteousness endures forever* (9*b*).

In this section, especially, the motif of יראה (*fear*), which is introduced as a characteristic of the righteous in verse 1*b* (*who fears YHWH*), is repeated with the negative particle: לא יירא (*he will not fear*). In both verses, YHWH is referred to: Those who fear YHWH (verse 1) will not fear evil tidings because his heart is firm, trusting in YHWH (verse 7). Fearing God is inverted to not fearing evil tidings. From this, a chiastic relationship emerges between the first section and the third section.

From these morphological, syntactic and semantic observations, one can notice a pattern of movement in the psalm. In the first section the dominant mood is bright: everything goes well with the righteous. Then a dark mood comes in the second section, but the right attitude of the righteous is never changed. Finally the righteous will be exalted in honour because of God's presence and help in adversity. So the permanent bright mood is affirmed. At the same time, the evil life of the wicked will perish in the darkness (verse 10).

In addition to this, and especially when the semantic distribution of words is taken into consideration, a thematic relationship of the attitude and conduct of the righteous man and of the wicked man, and their consequences are also traceable as is illustrated in the following schema (cf. Schaefer, 2001:278):

Attitude and Conduct	Consequences
The righteous man fears YHWH and delights in the Torah (v 1)	His seed will be mighty, blessed, wealthy; his righteousness endures forever (vv 2-3)
As light rises for the upright; he conducts his affairs justly (vv 4-5)	He will never be moved; he will be in everlasting remembrance (v 6)
He will not be afraid of evil tidings;	His goodness is permanent and he triumphs;

his heart trusts in YHWH (vv 7-8)	his righteousness endures forever (v 9)
The wicked will see and be angry; gnashes his teeth, melt away (v 10*ab*)	The desire of the wicked will perish (v 10c)

When all these morphological, syntactic, semantic and poetic observations are taken into consideration together, Psalm 112 can be divided into the following segments:

Strophe *A* (verses 1-3): Blessing of those who fear YHWH
Strophe *B* (verses 4-6): Blessing on the righteous even in adversity
Strophe *C* (verses 7-10): Final contrast between the righteous and the wicked

4. Poetic Content of Psalm 112

Strophe *A* (verses 1-3): Blessing of those who Fear YHWH

Strophe *A* (verses 1-3) consists of a tricolon (verse 1) and two bicola (verses 2-3). As observed already, the tricolon (verse 1) consists of a nominal clause (1*a*) and two relative clauses (1*bc*). The two relative clauses are semantically synonymous parallel. In the second colon (1*b*) and the third colon (1*c*), two participles are used to indicate the relationship between the first colon (1*a*) and the following two cola, since a participle is occasionally used as equivalent to a relative clause (see Williams, 1976:39-40). The second colon (1*b*) and the third colon (1*c*) are semantically synonymous parallel. In the second colon (1*b*), the divine name YHWH appears. In the third colon (1*c*), במצותיו (*in his commandments*) is in the emphatic position in the Hebrew sentence.

In the first bicolon (verse 2), the first colon (2*a*) and the second colon (2*b*) are in synonymous parallelism. In this bicolon, זרע (*seed*) and דור (*generation*) are a word pair. The verb-subject // subject-verb sequence between the first colon (2*a*) and the second colon (2*b*) forms a chiastic pattern (see Prinsloo, 1991:58-59). The

antecedent of the suffix on זרעו (his seed) in the first colon (2*a*) is איש (the man) in verse 1*a*.

The second bicolon (verse 3) consists of two statements in which the first colon (3*a*) is a nominal statement. In the first colon (3*a*), הון (wealth) and עשר (rich) are a word pair. The antecedent of the suffixs on ביתו (his house) and צדקתו (his righteousness) in the second bicolon (verse 3) is איש (the man) in verse 1*a*.

In verse 1, the man 'blessed (אשרי)' by YHWH shows himself to be in active pursuit of godly wisdom. With this formula, the psalm is meant to offer not only an encouragement but also a testimony to the blessedness of the righteous person. The righteous begins with 'the fear of YHWH' and ends with finding great delight 'in his commandments'. In Biblical sense, 'fearing YHWH' is not trepidation or dreadful feeling; but it denotes awe and reverence of YHWH. It is a religious disposition as well, rooted in the acknowledgment of God's majesty and trustworthiness and in the human need to live faithful to God's will (see Bergant, 1997:62). In this regard, 'fearing YHWH' is essentially the recognition of God's sovereignty that leads to the entrusting of life and future to God (McCann, 1996:1136). This contemplation of God's work gives great delight.

Here it is especially remarkable that delight comes from the observance of God's commandments. The parallelism of 'YHWH' and 'his commandments' does not reduce the relationship with YHWH to legalism. 'His commandments' rather relate to all his instruction, not merely to formal commandments or laws. In this sense, 'commandment (מצוה)' is a synonym to 'Torah (תורה)'. In fact, most of the occurrences of 'commandment (מצוה)' in the Old Testament parallel the various meanings of 'Torah (תורה)' (see Enns, 1997:1070-1071).

Furthermore, there are numerous passages in which the two terms are at least juxtaposed, if not used interchangeably (e.g. Genesis 26:5; Exodus 16:28; 24:12; Leviticus 27:34; Numbers 36:13; Deuteronomy 30:10; etc.). In the psalms, especially 'commandment (מצוה)' is occasionally juxtaposed to the 'fear of YHWH', as expressed here in Psalm 112:1 (cf. Psalm 19:9-10). From this observation, it

becomes clearer: The one who truly fears YHWH is one who gladly follows his commandments. At this juncture, one of the characteristics of Biblical belief in God, namely the tension between fear and delight, is also resolved (see Weiser, 1962:703). This tension rather takes the faithful to trusting in God, who is awful and, at the same time, compassionate. Verse 1, as an expression of nomic wisdom, therefore the psalm, sets forth wisdom as a pattern of behaviour, based on 'fearing YHWH' and 'delighting in his commandments'.

Verses 2-3 illustrate an exuberant picture of God's blessing that flows from verse 1: from 'fearing YHWH' and 'delighting his commandments'. Here God's blessing includes every blessing in the life of the family and its descendents (*seed*), and in material prosperity as well as the blessing manifested in righteousness. In verse 2, the abiding destiny of good of the righteous is expressed through the thought of family solidarity (Eaton, 1967:264-265). Wealth (הון) and rich (עשר) in verse 3 are synonymous: the former may refer to 'sufficiency' and the latter 'abundance'. Especially, 'wealth (הון)' is a favourite term in the Book of Proverbs (cf. Proverbs 3:9; 10:15; 11:4; 13:7, 11; 18:11; 19:4; 28:8, 22; and 29:3). Here this prosperity is presented in the present form, used like a gnomic aorist (see Leupold, 1959:785-786). It denotes YHWH's constant royalty to his covenant relationships with the righteous.

In this regard, 'righteousness (צדקה)' also denotes the behaviour that is in keeping with the covenant relationships. Righteousness in Psalm 112 proves itself in the fear of YHWH and, at the same time, brings blessings and salvation in itself and with itself (Kraus, 1989:364). 'And his righteousness endures forever' is actually motivated by Psalm 111:3 that concludes the same way, but in reference to God. In a certain sense, the same dare be predicted of God's children. The righteousness of God in Psalm 111:3 is applied *verbatim* to the God-fearing man here. In this respect, 'righteousness' is not a moral quality, but a gift of God, the gift of blessing in the inner and in the outward aspects of life (see Weiser, 1962:703; also Leupold, 1959:786).

In Strophe *A*, the wisdom elements and themes therefore are already sufficiently

presented. After the introductory calling of 'Praise the Lord! (הללו יה– *Hallelujah!*)', the tone of the psalm immediately sets by the wisdom formula: *Blessed is the man who fears YHWH.* It begins where Psalm 111 ends with 'those who fear YHWH' (cf. Psalm 111:10) and with those 'who greatly delight in his commandments' (cf. Psalm 111:2). Then, in typical wisdom style, the fruits of such a God-centred life are spelled out in verse 2-3. In this respect, Van der Ploeg (1974:263) views verse 1 as the main motif of the psalm, and verses 2-3 deals with posterity and possession. Strophe *A* therefore is an exclamation of good wishes for the man who delights in the Lord's commandments. It is a word of encouragement: a dynamic formulation of good wishes for progress, safe journey towards the goal of well-being. The man's posterity is already included in this interjection.

Strophe *B* (verses 4-6) : Blessing on the Righteous even in Adversity

Strophe *B* (verses 4-6) has two bicola (verses 4, 6) and a tricolon (verse 5) in between two bicola. In the first bicolon (verse 4), the upright (ישרים) in verse 2*b* is repeated in the first colon (4*a*). The preposition ב, which is used in the preceding verses consecutively (במצותיו – *in his command* [verse 1]; בארץ – *in the land* [verse 2]; בביתו – *in his house* [verse 3]), is also used here: בחשך (*in the darkness*).

The tricolon (verse 5) comprises of a nominal statement (5*a*), subsequently followed by two relative clauses (5*bc*). Two relative clauses are semantically synonymous parallel. The nominal statement (5*a*) is related to the nominal statement in verse 1*a* by way of repetition of the term איש (*man*). In the second colon (5*b*), חונן (*deals graciously*) is used as a way of alliteration of חנון (*gracious*) in verse 4*b*: חנון // חונן. This kind of alliteration has an *enargaeic* function that serves to focus the reader's attention, vividly and suddenly (see Watson, 1995:228; also Van der Lugt, 1980:383). Following the preceding verses, the preposition ב is used once again in the third colon (5*c*): במשפט (*with justice*).

The second bicolon (verse 6) of Strophe *B* is introduced by the emphatic כי. עולם (*forever, everlasting*) occurs twice, once in the first colon (6*a*) and again in the

second colon (6*b*) to form a parallelism. At the same time, עולם (*forever, everlasting*) is placed in the emphatic position in both cola. צדיק (*righteous*), which firstly appeared in verse 4*b*, is now repeated here in the second colon (6*b*).

In verse 4, the realism of the psalm breaks through. Wisdom does not always seem to be positive. Adversity also comes on the path of the godly, due to the fact that 'darkness' is a metaphor for adversity.

In the first colon (4*a*) it is not clear whether the wise man or the Lord is the source of the light. Or is 'light' the subject of the verb? (see GNaB: *Sogar in dunklen Stunden strahlt ein Licht für alle, die dem Herrn gehorchen*). Because of this difficulty in interpretation, this line is often called a *crux interpretum* (Prinsloo, 1991:59). In favour of 'light' as subject, it can be referred to texts such as Psalm 97:11 that speak of light shining on the righteous: *Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart* (NRSV). But if the light is the subject, in what sense could it be called *gracious, compassionate and righteous*? (cf. Sherwood, 1989:51-52).

In this regard, the second colon (4*b*) is equally ambiguous because no subject is indicated in the Massoretic Text. Consequently, the three adjectives occasion some difficulty: *gracious, compassionate and righteous*. To solve this ambiguity, some scholars take the three adjectives as intended to describe the character of the upright in verse 2*b* (see Kittel, 1914:403; Perowne, 1976b:320; also Rodd, 1964:75). In this case, however, the upright in the preceding line is plural while the adjectives are in the singular number. The change from the plural to the singular is certainly unusually harsh.

Another solution is given by several Hebrew manuscripts to omit the conjunction ו between 'compassionate' and 'righteous'. Then a nominal clause can be obtained: 'the righteous one is gracious and compassionate'. Some scholars follow this rendering (Gunkel, 1926:490; Allen, 1983:94; cf. Kraus, 1989:361-362).

In contrast to this suggestion, another elucidation is proposed by some ancient manuscripts. Several manuscripts of LXX add ὁ κύριος (*the Lord*) and the Arabic

version Hebrew manuscript adds יהוה to clarify that the Lord (YHWH) is gracious, compassionate and righteous. This suggestion is reinforced by taking consideration of the usage of the first two adjectives: חנון and רחום. חנון (*gracious*) is only used as an attribute of God in the Biblical Hebrew (Brown *et al.*, 1979:337). Likewise, רחום (*compassionate*) is always an attribute of God in the Biblical Hebrew (Brown *et al.*, 1979:933). In this respect, it seems quite obvious that three adjectives are in mention of God according to His attribute: *YHWH is gracious, compassionate and righteous.* Then this rendering accords well with the parallel line in Psalm 111:4*b* — *YHWH is gracious and compassionate.* Several commentators are also in agreement with this elucidation (see Delitzsch, 1975b:199-200; Kissane, 1954:200-201; Hirsch, 1966: 292; and Rozenberg & Zlotowitz, 1999:720-722).

Therefore the first colon (4*a*) may well be read together with the second colon (4*b*), where YHWH is the subject of the three adjectives. In this manner, YHWH himself is (the source of) light (e.g. Isaiah 9:1; 10:17; Micah 7:8; Psalms 27:1; 36:10; Job 29:3). It means the suffering righteous person hinted at by the darkness is now promised that 'light shines' upon him/her from YHWH. In fact, light is a generic Biblical image for divine favour and human prosperity, and darkness is accordingly the absence of these (see Ryken *et al.*, 1998:191-193). Therefore, in the widest sense, the righteous is shined on by good fortune in life as by the sun. In all of this, the righteous receives YHWH's personal bestowal of salvation (Kraus, 1989:364). Thus here is an original statement concerning the character of YHWH: YHWH, who is gracious, compassionate and righteous, is the light in the darkness for the upright (Kissane, 1954:201).

In verse 5, the nature of God's grace, compassion and righteousness is further explicated in this verse. Because God is good, 'good' becomes the quality of the righteous. In this regard, 'good' functions as 'blessed' in verse 1, like a congratulatory word of greeting. That is to say, טוב־איש (*Good is it with the man*) is exactly equivalent to אשרי־איש (*Blessed is the man*) (Perowne, 1976b:320-321). Since the righteous person is blessed by the good God, he becomes in his turn a good

person who reflects the characteristics of YHWH.

The righteous person therefore is but a mirror of his God (see Anderson, 1972b:777-778). The god-like character of moral life is here clearly recognized and expressed. He is good in that he deals graciously and lends. The good man is concerned with those in need and generously lends out (cf. Psalm 37:21). He takes care of his business affairs with justice. He knows what is just because he finds delight in his commandments (verse 1).

Verse 6, introduced by the emphatic כִּי, interprets and develops the congratulatory word of greeting introduced with טוֹב in verse 5. The righteous person is promised not to be moved forever. Here the emphasis is on the dependable character of the righteous person. The righteous may experience all kinds of adversity in life, but he will persevere in doing good. The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance. זֵכֶר is the last remembrance of the name even beyond death (cf. Proverbs 10:7). Even after death, the memory of the righteous person will be kept alive by his own family and by those who he has helped. Just as the works of YHWH are remembered (see on Psalm 111:4), so also will the deeds of the righteous person be in everlasting remembrance.

In Strophe *B* the blessing of God on the righteous person and its consequences therefore are more concretely and practically expressed. First of all, God is the light for the upright in the time of darkness. Of course, the righteous person does go through life's harsh moments. Nevertheless, he will not be shaken because the light of God is always shining upon him. Thus the everlasting refuge is promised for those who fear YHWH, who trust YHWH, and whose lives are oriented by God's instruction (commandments). As a result of this steadfast love of God, the righteous person becomes like God — *good is it with the man.* His character embodies God's character including gracious provision for others. He deals graciously and lends; he conducts his affairs with justice because his God is gracious, compassionate and righteous. Therefore in this strophe 'fearing God' means entrusting life to God and embodying God's values and purposes, and it provides a stability that is both

effective in the present and enduring forever.

Strophe *C* (verses 7-10): Final Contrast between the Righteous and the Wicked

Strophe *C* (verses 7-10) consists of two bicola (verses 7-8) and two tricola (verse 9-10). In the first bicolon (verse 7), the first colon (7*a*) is related to verse 1*b*, by means of repeating the term '*fear* (ירא)'. But this time, the term comes with the negative particle לא: לא ירא – *he will not fear*. The righteous in verse 6*b* is the subject of לא ירא. In the second colon (7*b*), the antecedent of the suffix on לבו (*his heart*) is also צדיק (*the righteous*) in verse 6*b*. Here the divine name YHWH appears again after verse 1*b*. The preposition ב is used again after verse 5*b*: ביהוה (*in YHWH*).

In the first colon (8*a*) of the second bicolon (verse 8), לבו (*his heart*) is repeated with the same antecedent: צדיק (*the righteous*). Here לא ירא (*he will not fear*) in verse 7*a* is also repeated. In this regard, one can notice that לא ירא (*he will not fear*) forms an inclusio in which לבו (*his heart*) is repeated. Then three cola form a chiastic word pattern: A–B // B–A.

7*a* לא ירא (*he will not fear*)

7*b* לבו (*his heart*)

8*a* לבו (*his heart*)

8*a* לא ירא (*he will not fear*)

The second colon (8*b*) of the second bicolon (verse 8) is a temporal clause introduced by עד (*until*). Here צדיק (*the righteous*) in verse 6*b* once again is the subject of יראה (*he sees*). In the same way, the antecedent of the suffix on בצריו (*upon his enemies*) is צדיק (*the righteous*). The preposition ב is also used here.

In the first tricolon (verse 9), the first colon (9*a*) is thematically related to verses 4*b* and 5*a*. Here צדיק (*the righteous*) in verse 6*b* is again the subject of פזר (*he has*

distributed) and נתן (*he has given*). The second colon (9*b*) is the repetition of verse 3*b*. The antecedent of the suffix on צדקתו (*his righteousness*) is צדיק (*the righteous*) in verse 6*b*. In the third colon (9*c*), the antecedent of the suffix on קרנו (*his horn*) is again צדיק (*the righteous*) in verse 6*b*. Here the preposition ב is used once more: בכבוד (*in honour*).

The second tricolon (verse 10) is the final antithesis of the preceding verses of the psalm. Here the typical term of the representative of the evil person, רשע (*the wicked*), is used twice in the first colon (10*a*) as a singular form and in the third colon (10*c*) as a plural form. In this regard, this negative term forms an inner inclusio in the verse. In the first colon (10*a*), יראה (*he will see*), which firstly appeared in verse 8*b*, is repeated, but with a different subject (the righteous as the subject of verse 8*b* and the wicked as the subject here). In the second colon (10*b*), רשע (*the wicked*) in verse 10*a* is the subject of verbs, יחרק (*he will gnash*) and נמס (*he melts away*). The antecedent of the suffix on שניו (*his teeth*) is also רשע (*the wicked*). The third colon (10*c*) is especially semantically antithetical parallel to verse 9*c*: *while the horn of the righteous will be exalted in honour, the desire of the wicked will perish.* Here not only the first word, תאות (*desire*), is started with the final letter of the Hebrew alphabet ת, but also the last word, תאבד (*he will perish*), is started with ת to make a final sense of completion in the acrostic scheme.

In verses 7-8, the theme of 'fearing YHWH' in verse 1 is developed in a different context. The statement of verse 7*a* affords the reference to the reality of evil in the world. Verse 8*b* also denotes the existence of the enemies of the righteous. However, these references of evil are balanced by 'fearing YHWH' (verse 1*b*). As mentioned above, verses 7*a* and 8*a* clearly assert that 'the righteous will not fear' in the form of an inclusio. Those who fear YHWH will fear neither evil tidings, nor his enemies (Prinsloo, 1991:61) because his heart is firmly trusting in YHWH (7*b*, 8*a*).

Therefore the answer to the 'fearing' of the world is the God-ward stance of trust (Kidner, 1975:400). What is promised is not better news, but a steady heart; it is

a heart made firm. In this regard, another emphasis on the dependable character of the righteous is expressed here. In order to overcome evil tidings, a heart must be established (7*b*) and supported (8*a*) by YHWH. This dependable character is further reinforced by the subtle shifting of the participles from an active to a passive sense in verses 7*b* and 8*a*. While in verse 7b the *Niph'al* participle נכון (*is firm*) is used, in verse 8a the *Qal* passive participle סמוך (*is steady*) is called into play. Thus this shift clearly signals that the blessed man, being anchored firmly, is not moved from his position forever by 'that which he gazes upon his enemies' (see Thomas, 1986:24).

In verse 9, the final statement about the righteous and his God, the psalmist briefly reasserts what has been said before. The psalmist singles out generosity and compassion as the hallmark of the wise living. Wise living is characterized by lasting success, unlike many human endeavours that fail or are short-lived. Therefore the psalmist repeats 'his righteousness endures forever'. The righteous person is full of good works that will endure, as can be seen by the generous way he gives to the poor. Thus his horn will be exalted in honour. קרן (horn) is a symbol of God's rewarding the righteous with honour. The horn denotes peace, prosperity and God-granted success, instead of the competitive, greedy aspiration of the wicked. In this regard, horn represents power or status in a social context (see Ryken *et al.*, 1998:400). Lift up one's own horn usually means to be proud and boastful (see Psalm 75:5), but in this verse it is God who exalts the righteous person.

In verse 10, the psalmist returns to the thought he began with but in a contrastive way: 'the delight' of the blessed man and 'the desires' of the wicked. The wise man is blessed because his righteousness endures forever (verses 3*b* and 9*b*). On the contrary, the wicked, as he sees God's reward on the righteous, will melt away. Here the verb ראה (*sees*) is used in order to bring out the contrast with verse 8*b*. The righteous *sees* the frustration of the schemes of the wicked, while the wicked *sees* the triumph of the righteous. The wicked is filled with anger, bitterness and jealousy. 'He gnashes his teeth' is a word-picture of powerless rage (cf. Psalms 35:16 and 37:12). However, his anger will not last. Though, he is full of desires, he

will not succeed. All his schemes and plans 'will come to nothing' (cf. Psalm 1:6).

Strophe *C* therefore again makes it clear that the blessing of the righteous is no simplistic, carefree existence. The righteous is not exempted from adversity and opposition. Rather, because the righteous person fears YHWH, he/she needs not fear evil. The imagery of firm security, which is present in verse 6, continues in verses 7-8. Faith eventually triumphs over fear of evil tidings and enemies. Those who are generous will be exalted (verse 9). Especially in verse 9*c*, the public recognition of the exaltation of the individual is implied by mentioning the individual's horn, which is exalted. Such public recognition of the righteous causes shame in the wicked, for they see their own hopes proved as false and those of their enemies established (see Clifford, 2003:187). In this regard, as at the beginning of the psalm, the psalmist declared the YHWH-followers blessed. At the end, the wicked are forced to make the same declaration, albeit in a negative way: the wicked will come to nought.

From all the intra-textual analyses of the poetic content of Psalm 112, an astonishing list of claims for the well-being and well-doing of those who fear YHWH and delight in the commandments of YHWH has become evident to the listener/ reader of the psalm (Mays, 1994b:360). In this regard, the main concern of this psalm is quite different from other acrostic psalms and wisdom psalms. Of course, catalogues describing the righteous are fairly frequent in the Psalter (Gerstenberger, 2001:276). However, the characteristics of the righteous appear only sparsely in many psalms. For example, Psalm 1:1-3 pictures the righteous in what he avoids and what he does. Psalm 37 shows the righteous and the wicked in confrontation. Psalm 119 hardly raises the question of characterizing the two contrastive types. On the contrary, in Psalm 112, only one verse (verse 10) is given to the portrait of the wicked reporting just disgust and frustration of the wicked, while nine verses are used to describe the well-being and well-doing of the righteous (see Ravasi, 1998:849). This intentional imbalance implies that only the righteous is at the centre of interest in Psalm 112.

This intensive interest in the righteous is expressed in two ways in Psalm 112. Firstly, the righteous is described as the reflection of God's character. That is to say, the truly wise person, and consequently the righteous person, can only be defined in terms of God's characteristics and God's beneficial relationship with the righteous. Human blessing is to be found in a life 'fearing YHWH', and delighting and living according to His commandments (verse 1). Such lives will enjoy God's blessing in the fullest sense of life (verses 2-3). Through living in an evil world (verses 4, 7-8 and 10), God's people will be secure and steady because God is their light in the darkness and their hearts are with God (verses 4, 7-8). Having experienced God's characteristics by God's saving and blessing, they will share what God has given them with the poor (verse 4-6, 9).

Secondly, the righteous is described as the only recipient of hope. It is clearly manifested in the main theme of the psalm that the righteous person has a great future (Kraus, 1989:365). Even if this future is described in the psalm mainly in earthly terms and promises, it still reflects the generosity of God who pours blessings into physical life. Yet, one of the most important blessings in this psalm is the steadfastness of the heart.

In this regard, the perspective of this psalm is eschatological (see McCann, 1996:1136-1137). That is to say, the reign of God and the consequent security of the righteous are asserted in the midst of ongoing opposition. The reign of God is always both now and yet to come. The desire of the wicked will not endure; their desires will ultimately perish. Therefore those who know this and who delight in the commandments of YHWH and lives accordingly — in short, those who fear God — are truly wise and genuinely blessed.

5. Literary Genre and Life-Setting of Psalm 112

As far as the literary genre of Psalm 112 is concerned, this psalm has rich wisdom elements and themes. This psalm contains the following nine wisdom lexical terms: blessed is … (אשרי), fear (ירא), upright (ישר), heart (לב), righteous (צדיק),

righteousness (צדקה), angry (כעס), desire (תאוה) and wicked (רשע). (see Scott, 1971:121-122; Bullock, 2001:204-206; cf. Kuntz, 1974:209; also Allen, 1983:95).

Thematically, this psalm exhibits all four of the thematic criteria suggested by Kuntz (1974:211-215) for wisdom psalms: (1) The fear of Yahweh and veneration of the Torah (verse 1); (2) The contrasting life styles of the righteous and the wicked (verse 10); (3) The reality and inevitability of retribution (verses 4-10); and (4) Miscellaneous counsels pertaining to everyday conduct (verses 5, 9).

As far as stylistic wisdom features are concerned, Psalm 112 has the so-called אשרי formula of verse 1. In this verse, the אשרי formula is followed by the psalmist's delight of *YHWH's commandments*. In this respect, this psalm is related to Psalm 1 because Psalm 1 also commences with an אשרי formula and the psalmist's 'delight is in the Torah of YHWH' (verse 2). While Psalm 1 draws the contrast between the two ways more evenly, Psalm 112 fixes its sight on the blessings of the one who fears YHWH.

Psalm 112 also has an acrostic structure like Psalms 37. Here are links with Psalm 37 also, in the reference to the generosity of the good man. However, Psalms 37 and 112 do not embody the acrostic principle in identical way. As already stated briefly, Psalm 37 contains a lengthy series of maxims on the contrasting life styles and fates of the righteous and the wicked along with the admonitions to imitate the conduct of the righteous. In a different way, in Psalm 112, all but the last three cola depict the praiseworthy conduct of the righteous (see Kuntz, 1974:219).

Psalm 112 and Psalm 49 are in common in the mention of confidence that overcomes fear. Unlike Psalm 49, however, Psalm 112 capitalizes on the life of the righteous rather than the life of the fool. Verses 2-9 form that description, while the contrast is completed in the last verse: *The wicked man will see and be angry; he will gnash his teeth and melt away; the desires of the wicked will perish* (see Bullock, 2001:210).

All these wisdom features, elements and themes of the psalm taken together, it can be safe to say Psalm 112 is a wisdom psalm. In this respect, Allen (1983:95)

rightly states that "there is no doubt that Psalm 112 is a wisdom psalm".

Besides wisdom genre elements, the opening command in the superscription, הללו יה (*Hallelujah!*), might indicate the genre is that of a hymn. Like typical hymns, this psalm praises a wondrous work of God: a human being who fears the Lord (see Clifford, 2003:185). Then this 'Hallelujah' is immediately followed by wisdom beatitude, combining at its beginning genres of praise and instruction. If we look at this didactic psalm from this angle of hymn, it obviously demonstrates that hymns can be wonderful text for instruction because it sketches some central characteristics of YHWH and his venerated partner.

The date of this psalm is usually thought to be post-Exilic. Terrien (2003:761) considers the date of this psalm as post-Exilic when Jewish communities spread throughout the Persian Empire and wealth was both a cause and a result of social interdependence. But his assumption is not necessarily demanded. The psalm itself provides no indication of date (Kissane, 1954:199). In fact, the main themes of this psalm, namely the fear of YHWH and delighting in his commandments, are so basic for God's people as they can fit any time of the history of Israel. Therefore once again, we can say this psalm springs from the *milieu sapientiel* (Murphy, 1963:160), which had been spread out from the early period of the history of Israel to the late period (see Clements, 1992:13-39; Westermann, 1995:1-3; also Weeks, 1994:57-73).

As far as the life-setting of Psalm 112 is concerned, the main motivations of the psalm probably originated from didactic situations. In fact, the content of this psalm implies the need of catalogue qualities, actions and destinies of the opposing groups of people within the community of faith (see Gerstenberger, 2001:277). A didactic setting therefore is an appropriate setting for the instruction of such qualities. In this kind of didactic setting, the sage instructs the believing community with some basic insights of why they praise God and how they live wisely in accordance with the wondrous works of God. The acrostic alphabetic scheme of this psalm is also so suitable for instruction, since the acrostic scheme is a mnemonic and educational

device, which would fit well with wisdom background (see Craigie, 1983:128-131). Therefore this acrostic Psalm 112 is probably a material for instructing the faith community.

In addition to this didactic setting, the liturgical setting is also traceable in the psalm. The use of the so-called אשרי formula in the psalm indicates the liturgical setting of this psalm, since the connection between the אשרי formula and liturgical setting is hardly deniable in the frequent use of the Psalter. As Cazelles (1974:446) says, אשרי is a liturgical cry. Another hint of the liturgical setting of this psalm is its hymnic elements. From the hymnic elements of the psalm and the close relationship with Psalm 111, which is similar to a psalm of thanksgiving in form, Schmidt (1934:206) regards Psalm 112 as a priestly response at the thanksgiving liturgy. In this regard, the teaching declares in effect the way God works in human life, it can become testimony and praise of God's saving work (see Eaton, 1989:108-109). Psalm 112 shows something of this use in that it is prefaced with the call to praise: 'Halleluja!' Therefore this didactic psalm was probably used in the liturgical *Sitz im Leben* as a worship instruction or a homiletical instruction.

6. Canonical Context of Psalm 112

Psalm 112 is the middle psalm of a little group of three psalms that begin with הללו יה (*Hallelujah!*). Among these psalms, Psalms 111 and 112 are closely related to each other to form what Zimmerli (1972:107-109) has called 'twin psalms (*Zwillingspsalmen*)'. Psalm 113 is differently related to the group of Psalms 113–118, which is usually titled the 'Egyptian Hallel'.

Between Psalms 111 and 112, many terms or phrases are shared together, often with a different sense. Four relate to the righteous in both psalms: fear (ירא, verse 1; cf. 111:5, 10), delight (חפץ, verse 1; cf. 111:2), the upright (ישרים, verses 2, 4; cf. 111:1), good (טוב, verse 5; cf. 111:10). No less than seven transfer to the righteous terms related to YHWH or his Torah in Psalm 111 – Psalm 112:3*b*, 9*b* (cf. 111:3):

gracious and compassionate (חנון ורחום, verse 4; cf. 111:4), justice (משפט, verse 5; cf. 111:7), remembrance (זכר, verse 6; cf. 111:4), steady (סמוך, verse 8; cf. 111:8) and give (נתן, verse 9; cf. 111:5). The remaining one is forever (לעולם, verse 6; cf. 111:5, 8, 9) (cf. Allen, 1983:95). In addition to these lexical similarities, two psalms share their particular acrostic structures, which use a fresh letter for each colon (see Wilcock, 2001:171-175; also Deissler, 1964:447).

Thematically, the two psalms complement each other; the first praises the wonderful works of God, the second applauds the actions of the one who fears God. In Psalm 111, the most distinctive wisdom characteristic is the proverb in the last verse of the psalm: *The fear of YHWH is the beginning of wisdom* (cf. Job 28:28; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; 15:33). It suggests that Psalm 112 should be interpreted in light of this proverb, particularly from the perspective of the fear of YHWH. While Psalm 111 testifies to the prominence of such fear, Psalm 112 lists some of its fruits.

From the relationship of two psalms, it becomes clear that the delight in the YHWH's commandments is a dimension of delight in the works of YHWH. In this regard, the commandments are the medium of YHWH's relation to the righteous. Through them YHWH reveals and bestows the gift of the wisdom that makes for life. Hence this correlation between two psalms is the psalm's way of teaching that the works of YHWH can and should shape the life of the righteous (see Mays, 1994b:359-360). Whereas Psalm 111 teaches the listener/reader to remember the great works of the covenant of God, Psalm 112 inspires covenantal fidelity and righteousness with a didactic purpose. Therefore Psalm 112 has transformed the covenantal praise of YHWH in Psalm 111 into a wisdom psalm that depicts the 'God-fearers' as possessing God's attribute (see Whybray, 1996:69).

Psalms 111 and 112 are also joined by the introductory word of superscription, הללו יה (*Hallelujah!*). This word would have had the canonical function of introducing the so-called 'Egyptian Hallel' (Psalms 113–118). The Hallel psalms are found in three separate collections: the 'Egyptian Hallel' (Psalms 113–118); the 'Great Hallel' (Psalms 120–136); and the concluding Hallel psalms (Psalms

146–150). The Hallel psalms had a significant part in the praise (*hallel*) of the Lord. The 'Egyptian Hallel' and the 'Great Hallel' (most of which are pilgrimage songs: Psalms 120–134) were sung during the annual feasts (cf. Leviticus 23; Numbers 10:10) (see VanGemeren, 1991:713; also Stuhlmueller, 1983b:134-135). Thus, to a certain degree, Psalm 112 introduces these Hallel psalms with the wisdom instruction that the YHWH fearers, who attend the feasts, would hear wisdom teaching of 'fearing YHWH' and 'delighting in his commandments' in order to transfer their covenantal relationship (cf. Psalm 111) genuinely renewed.

Psalm 112 also belongs to the first subgroup of psalms (Psalms 107–118) in Book V of the Psalter: Psalms 107–150. This subgroup of psalms is marked by the literary connections between Psalms 107 and 118 (see McCann, 1996:663). As far as literary genres are concerned, Psalms 107–118 are primarily songs of praise. The exceptions are Psalm 109 and 110, an individual lament and a royal psalm respectively. The note of praise is so dominant in these psalms that even wisdom Psalm 112 is brought under its control with its opening, הללו יה (*Hallelujah!*), and its linguistic and literary affinities with Psalm 111 (see Miller, 1989:219).

In this regard, it is noticeable that a royal psalm is followed by psalmic wisdom and wisdom psalm. In the canonical context, Psalm 110 would have been understood as articulating hope for the future — as an affirmation of the trust that God continues to manifest God's reign in some concrete way among God's people. In this regard, Psalm 112 (with Psalm 111) answers this request very well. Psalm 112 emphasizes that the great blessing is a steadfast heart. To trust in God is the real virtue of a wise person. Psalm 112 also instructs the people of God to put their hope not on a human king or earthly kingdom but on God. Those who anchor their hope in God have a real future. Thus, after a royal psalm, Psalm 112 offers a canonical framework, seeing that the strategic placement of 'wisdom psalms' provides a structuring framework in the Psalter (cf. Wilson, 1992:134).

In this sense, the main theme of Psalm 112 in the canonical context is 'the Lord reigns!' Not a human king, but YHWH reigns the world! Not only in the great things,

but also in every moment of our life, only God is in control. This reign of God is clearly embodied in the following psalms of wisdom elements and themes in Book V of the Psalter.

Psalm 127, attributed to Solomon, represents an expression of faith that agrees with Solomon's great wisdom and his dependence on God found in 1 Kings 3 and 8. The use of proverbs in this psalm (verses 2, 3; see Proverbs 16:3, 9; 17:6) and the occurrence of wisdom admonitions (verses 1-2, 3-5) are the most that can be said in favour of its stylistic kinship to wisdom. The wisdom factor lies largely in the theme of the psalm: *human efforts are of little value unless the Lord has his hand on the project.* The psalm deals with three major institutions of Israel's life and declares all human activity useless unless the Lord is the Architect. That applies to the temple, the city and the home. By extension, unless God is the Designer/Architect of society, then all human effort is in vain.

Psalm 128 is a companion psalm to Psalm 127, reinforcing its theme of children as the Lord's special blessing on the human family. Stylistically, it features the blessings of those who fear the Lord, and it opens with the so-called אשרי (*blessed is* ...) formula (verse 1). Thematically, it continues the thought of Psalm 127 regarding children and the central place of the temple and the city (Zion) from which the Lord blesses Israel (verses 5-6). It gives a fuller picture of the blessing that accrues when the Lord is the Designer/Architect of the social order.

Psalm 133, while it does not begin with the 'blessed' formula, does nevertheless introduce an equivalent pronouncement in its phrase: *How good and pleasant!* (verse 1; see Proverbs 15:23). This psalm of David puts forward the theme of family unity. It recalls the worth of the precious oil poured generously on Aaron at his ordination to the priesthood (verse 2) and the pleasantness of the Mount Hermon dew should it fall on Jerusalem (verse 3). It is there on Mount Zion that the Lord bestows his blessing.

This wisdom theme of the reign of God is even continued to the end of the

Psalter. The final concluding *Hallel* psalms (Psalms 146–150) can be considered a conclusion to the whole Psalter. Then Psalm 145 proves to be transitional. Not only does it conclude Book V of the Psalter, but it also anticipates Psalms 146–150. This acrostic psalm extols the kingship of YHWH and God's love, and it concludes in Psalm 145:19-21 with the wisdom admonition:

> *He fulfills the desire of all who fear him; he also hears their cry, and saves them.*
> *The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.*
> *My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD;*
> *and all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever.* NRSV

Once again, 'a wisdom frame' in the canonical context of the Psalter is established. Hence it can be concluded: canonical wisdom Psalm 112 and other psalms of wisdom elements and themes in Book V of the Psalter together form a wisdom frame of the Psalter and offer wisdom counsel to trust YHWH alone and exalt the reign of God.

7. Wisdom Implications in Psalm 112

Whereas Psalm 111, the twin psalm of Psalm 112, meditates who God is, Psalm 112 meditates who the blessed man is. However, these two meditations do not exist separately. Real knowledge of God makes a real man; to know God is to know man. That is why we need to hear the message of Psalm 112 in the light of Psalm 111. While Psalm 111 focuses on *theology*, meaning, what can be known about God, Psalm 112 has its focus on *anthropology*, that is what can be said about human beings. Taken together, Psalms 111 and 112 provide the essence of the faith and the wisdom. This instruction is carried out in an atmosphere of worship and fear of the Lord.

For *theology*, Psalm 111 highlights that YHWH is loving and compassionate, as seen in the event of people's history, especially in the covenantal relationship

between God and human beings. YHWH is known through wonderful acts of redemption and through the immanent activities of blessing. Humans are to respond to YHWH's self-revelation by praise and by studying his commandments that teach a right attitude towards God. All over, the fear of YHWH is the beginning of wisdom. This statement becomes the foundation of true anthropology: human blessing is to be found in a life honouring (fearing) YHWH and living according to his commandments.

For *anthropology*, based on fearing YHWH, the virtues ascribed to the Lord in Psalm 111 are transferred to the godly person in Psalm 112. Like YHWH, the godly person is gracious and compassionate and his/her righteousness is of the same nature as God's. The godly person is giving to the poor, always ready to lend the needy, governed by absolute integrity, and with a life based on trust in God, in whose commandments he/she delights.

Therefore these two acrostic psalms instruct us about God with regard to the greatness of the works of God and human beings with regard to the blessing of those who honour (fear) God. In this regard, the psalmist firmly believes that the works of God take shape in the life of the godly. This firm belief therefore becomes his praise and his instruction.

Psalm 112 begins with beatitude and describes the blessed life of the righteous in a form of a catalogue. However, it does not mean the psalm asserts the godly lives a trouble-free life. In fact, there are indications of current disorder in this psalm and of a tension between what the world should and will be and what the world is now. In this respect, it is unfair to classify this psalm as one of the psalms of orientation (Brueggemann, 1984:45-47) or place this psalm in the category of the dogmatic phase wisdom psalm that is characterized by an easy orthodoxy (Burger, 1989:90).

Rather, this psalm is a realistic understanding of life's problem, as Kuntz (1977:230-231) rightly recognized. In this psalm, the didactic simplification that emerges from too stark a contrast between the well-being of the righteous and the

adversity of the wicked is overcome. Psalm 112 admits that the righteous person knows hardship. To be sure, the righteous is promised a rich future — his descendants will be amply blessed and will have dominion in the land. Nevertheless, Psalm 112 admits that darkness, an evil report and unprincipled adversaries may indeed threaten the present life of the God-fearing person. If the psalm's main function is that of promising that the righteous person has a great future, the present is in fact approached with unabashed realism. In this light, the permanence that this psalm celebrates is not rooted in the hope that God will never allow anything bad to happen but rather that God will never let anything break the permanent relationship between God and human beings. Touched, and filled with hope by God, the person is declared to be blessed, and an example to all of God's love and generosity.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Chapter VI
CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The journey is almost completed. Where has our study led us? Our study started off with clarification of the direction the study would follow, based on the problems of previous studies of wisdom psalms in the Old Testament. Next, the aim of the present study was established, which was to study the content and theological implications of wisdom psalms rather than artificially imposing (of course, not always!) form-critical studies. From this need, a methodological concern followed with regard to determining the appropriate methods for the study. Since the main concern of the present study is to study the content, context and theological implications of wisdom psalms more effectively, a three-dimensional reading, namely an intra-textual reading, an extra-textual reading and an inter-textual reading, was proposed as a reading strategy of wisdom psalms. For the object of this study, four of the so-called 'authentic wisdom psalms (Psalms 1, 37, 49 and 112)' were selected, based on the agreement of most scholars. Then the poetic, stylistic and rhetorical features of the selected wisdom psalms were read in accordance with the reading strategy. Furthermore it was pointed out how those features assist us in understanding the content, the context and the message of the selected wisdom psalms.

Subsequently conclusions will be drawn and theological implications presented from the preceding study. In this conclusion of the present study, a comparison regarding the similarities and differences of the content, context and theological emphasis within the four proposed wisdom psalms will be presented in order to synthesize the entire study outcomes and their overall theological implications. Following this, some remarks of the possible practical theological implications of wisdom psalms will be presented as an application of the present study for the contemporary readers. Thereafter some promising applications and suggestions for future research on the topic of wisdom psalms will be recommended as final

comments of the present study.

1. Contents and Implications

From the study of the contents of the four proposed wisdom psalms, one gathers that many of the formal characteristics of wisdom literature exist in the four proposed wisdom psalms.

As far as wisdom lexical terms are concerned, Psalm 1 contains the following nine wisdom terms: blessed is ... (אשרי), way (דרך), know (ידע), righteous (צדיק), delight (חפץ), sinner (חטא), counsel (עצה), scoffing (ליץ), angry (כעס), desire (תאוה) and wicked (רשע).

Psalm 37 contains the following twelve wisdom lexical terms: wisdom (חכמות), way (דרך), heart (לב), upright (ישר), righteous (צדיק), righteousness (צדק), know (ידע), evil device (מזמה), the blameless man (תם), the blameless (תמים), wicked (רשע) and wickedness (עולה). סור מרע (depart from evil) in verse 27 can also be regarded as indicative of the peculiar wisdom milieu.

Psalm 49 also presents typical lexical features of Biblical wisdom literature, namely wisdom (חכמות), insight (תבונות), proverb (משל) and riddle (חידה) with a lyre. Other wisdom lexical terms that are attested to Psalm 49 are understand (בין), way (דרך), heart (לב), the upright (ישרים) and folly (כסל).

Psalm 112 contains the following nine wisdom lexical terms: blessed is ... (אשרי), fear (ירא), upright (ישר), heart (לב), righteous (צדיק), righteousness (צדקה), angry (כעס), desire (תאוה) and wicked (רשע).

As shown from the research above of the wisdom lexical terms in the four proposed wisdom psalms, some wisdom lexical terms appear in more than one psalm while others appear in one particular psalm only, as listed below.

Psalm 1	Psalm 37	Psalm 49	Psalm 112
אשׁרי (blessed is)			אשׁרי (blessed is)
דרך (way)	דרך (way)	דרך (way)	
ידע (know)	ידע (know)		
צדיק (righteous)	צדיק (righteous) צדק (righteousness)		צדיק (righteous) צדקה (righteousness)
כעס (angry)			כעס (angry)
תאוה (desire)			תאוה (desire)
רשׁע (wicked)	רשׁע (wicked)		רשׁע (wicked)
	חכמות (wisdom)	חכמות (wisdom)	
	לב (heart)	לב (heart)	לב (heart)
	ישׁר (upright)	ישׁר (upright)	ישׁר (upright)
Wisdom lexical terms which appear in a particular psalm only:			
חפץ (delight)	מזמה (evil device)	תבונות (insight)	יראה (fear)
חטא (sinner)	עולה (wickedness)	משׁל (proverb)	
עצה (counsel)	תם (the blameless)	חידה (riddle)	
ליץ (scoffing)	סור מרע (depart from evil)	בין (understand)	
		כסל (folly)	

For stylistic wisdom features, Psalm 1 has the so-called אשׁרי formula of verse 1.

In verse 2, the אשרי formula is followed by the psalmist's delight of 'YHWH's Torah'. Psalm 112 also has the so-called אשרי formula of verse 1. In this verse, the אשרי formula is followed by the psalmist's delight of 'YHWH's commandments'. In this respect, these two psalms are closely related to one another because both psalms commence with the אשרי formula and the psalmist's delight is in the Word of YHWH. By way of using the so-called אשרי formula, Psalm 1 draws the contrast between the two ways more evenly while Psalm 112 fixes its sight on the blessings of the one who fears YHWH.

For the proverbial forms, Psalm 1 provides a summarising contrast between the two ways, namely that of the wicked and that of the righteous. Psalm 37 clearly gives the same mark of wisdom thought. The antithetical ways of life are presented in verses 7, 9, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15, 16-17, 18-20, 21, 22, 32-33, 34 and 37-38.

Similes in Psalm 1:3-4 are regarded as a wisdom feature, due to the fact that the Israelite sage usually used the carefully formulated illustration from nature for his pedagogical purpose. In this regard, Psalm 37 also shows wisdom features of similes and illustrations drawing upon nature (verses 2, 6, 20, 35). Psalm 49 exhibits similes and illustrations from nature in the variant refrain (verses 13 and 21) and in verse 15 as well.

The admonition with rhetorical power in Psalm 1 is also considered one of the wisdom rhetorical features. As far as wisdom admonitions are considered, Psalm 37 strongly tends to have wisdom admonitions in the first stanza, namely the exhortation part: verses 1, 3, 4, 5 and 8. Psalm 49 also exhibits wisdom literary features of a teacher's admonitory address in the introduction (verse 2), a rhetorical question in verse 6, and an exhortation in verse 17.

The alphabet acrostic style of Psalm 37 lends assistance to wisdom's thought. In the acrostic pattern, the different proverbial forms in the couplets of the psalm, namely the bipartite admonition/warning and the representing saying, would be at

home in the Book of Proverbs. Psalm 112 also has an acrostic structure like Psalms 37. Here are links with Psalm 37 also, in the reference to the generosity of the good man. However, Psalms 37 and 112 do not embody the acrostic principle in identical manner. While Psalm 37 contains a lengthy series of maxims on the contrasting life styles and fates of the righteous and the wicked along with the admonitions to imitate the conduct of the righteous, Psalm 112 depicts the praiseworthy conduct of the righteous all but in the last three cola.

In Psalm 37, 'autobiographical stylization' in verses 25 and 35 can be regarded as one of the typical forms of wisdom psalm or didactic poetry. The so-called טוֹב (*better*) saying in verse 16 is also more at home in the Biblical wisdom literature.

From the summary above pertaining to all the wisdom terms and forms of the four proposed wisdom psalms, one realizes that there are no common grounds for the wisdom terms and forms that can be used as the criteria for the identification of wisdom psalms even though each proposed wisdom psalm exhibits a rich treasure of wisdom lexical terms and intense forms of wisdom features and styles. We may therefore come to the conclusion that one can hardly classify wisdom psalms on the basis of a form-critical category alone. It means the preponderance of wisdom themes (motifs) seems to be a more important criterion for determining whether a psalm is a wisdom psalm. In other words, the identification of wisdom psalms cannot be settled purely on the form-critical level, but needs to be reformulated in terms of a shared approach to reality, the major concern of Old Testament wisdom literature. Yet, those shared approaches to reality are not the exclusive right of the wisdom movement. They are the common property of human beings, and any worldview would have them as a topic of discussion. Therefore it seems reasonable to conclude that one can classify a psalm as a wisdom psalm when it meets criteria, form and theme (or style and motif).

So the next logical step of the conclusion of the present study would be a comparison regarding the similarities and differences of the wisdom themes within

the four proposed wisdom psalms in order to obtain some helpful insights into the major wisdom themes of the proposed psalms. However, the wisdom themes based mainly on the intra-textual study of the four proposed wisdom psalms are also very important components that can formulate the overall theological messages and implications of the studied psalms. At the same time, we also need to hear some concluding messages from the extra-textual study and the inter-textual study in order to formulate the overall theological messages and implications. Thus, having heard the extra-textual and the inter-textual messages, a comparison and synthesis of the main wisdom themes (and motifs) of the proposed wisdom psalms will be presented as a final conclusion of the present study in order to obtain overall wisdom messages and theological implications of wisdom psalms.

2. Context and Implications

Life-Setting and Its Implications

From the preceding study of the extra-textual dimension of the four proposed wisdom psalms, a useful ground to refine the context of wisdom psalms has been provided. In addition, from the study of the literary context, that is literary genre, of the four proposed wisdom psalms, the didactic character of wisdom psalms and some refinement of the life-setting of wisdom psalms are also ascertained.

As the study has revealed, Psalm 1 can be called a 'didactic poem' because Psalm 1 serves the educational intentions of its author very well through the lucidity of its structure, by its simple language using familiar figures of speech and by the challenging character of its exhortation. This observation has illuminated the life-setting of this psalm as an educational setting. The liturgical setting of Psalm 1 has also been traceable from the so-called אשרי formula, since many evidences indicate a connection between אשרי and the liturgical use of this word in the Israelites' worship. Some scholars have also traced the liturgical setting of Psalm 1 from the allusion of the liturgical congregation in verse 5. In this regard, Psalm 1 could have been used in

the liturgical service for the educational purpose of the worshipping community.

The study of the literary context of Psalm 37 has presented that Psalm 37 could be located in complaints due to the descriptive elements of the psalm. Especially, the language of persecution has reminded one of the individual laments. With the elements of complaints, the explanation of how the wicked and the righteous behave and fare, have been an incentive for the congregation's endurance and obedience. When these didactic wisdom elements and the elements of laments are taken together, one realizes that Psalm 37 has appeared as a kind of *sermon text*: an instrument of instruction in the hands of a sage. In this sense, the life-setting of Psalm 37 would have been a didactic homiletic setting where the sage or teacher represents himself as an old, experienced man who aims to offer instructions based on his own experience for the purpose of comfort. The content of this psalm also has implied that the main motivations of the psalm have originated from didactic situations, since its acrostic alphabetic scheme has been regarded as a mnemonic and educational device. In addition to this didactic setting, the liturgical setting has also been traceable in the occasional wish forms (verse 15) and the threatening and comforting overtones. In this light, the wisdom teaching in Psalm 37 becomes a part of worship instruction. As far as the date of Psalm 37 is concerned, the main theme of recompense and retribution could have been located at any stage in Israel's history, since the doctrine of just rewards and punishments girds the Old Testament's legal, prophetic and historical teaching, as well as its wisdom teaching.

As the study of the literary context of Psalm 49 has shown, elements of different genres are also traceable in Psalm 49. In the introduction of the psalm (verses 2-5), the so-called 'didactic opening call' can be found. Verses 6-7 resemble a lament because the description of distress is clearly manifested, since this distress by reason of threat of enemies and fear of death is one of the characteristics of the complaint form of individual laments. The sounds of a thanksgiving song and words of assurance also can be heard from verse 16. Thus it seems reasonable to conclude that Psalm 49 intentionally mixes the literary genres of wisdom and thanksgiving,

instruction and petition in order to bring together different concerns usually treated in different genres. As the psalmist opens his riddle with a lyre, he intends to teach the enigma and wisdom of our life to his listener/reader. In a song of prayer and thanksgiving to God, the psalmist concurrently reminds those who are listening/ reading that it is not from life as it presents itself that its enigma will be solved. In this light, the primary life-setting of Psalm 49 would have been a didactic setting due to the fact that this psalm is the result of a response of petition and thanksgiving as determined by wisdom teaching. There is little to determine the date of Psalm 49 even though many scholars suggest various time-settings for the psalm as the preceding extra-textual study of this psalm has shown. Rather, this psalm would have been placed in the *milieu sapientiel*, which had been spread out from the early period of the history of Israel to the late period. The appearance of the (musical) term, סלה could probably have been an indication of accentuation during liturgical use. In addition, the musical and liturgical terms found in the superscription (למנצח לבני־קרח מזמור) of this psalm also have elucidated the liturgical setting of the psalm. Furthermore, the wisdom utterance accompanied by a musical instrument in verse 5 has indicated an unusual clue for the liturgical setting of the psalm, since there are no other Biblical references of such wisdom teaching being given with a musical accompaniment. This clue has suggested that the *Sitz im Leben* of this psalm would have been the community liturgical setting.

The study of the literary context of Psalm 112 has shown that the opening command in the superscription, הללו יה (*Hallelujah!*), can indicate the genre of Psalm 112 as a hymn. Then this 'Hallelujah' is immediately followed by wisdom beatitude, combining at its beginning genres of praise and instruction. As we have seen from the intra-textual and the extra-textual study of Psalm 112, the psalm itself provides no indication of date, since the main themes of this psalm, namely the fear of YHWH and delighting in his commandments, are so basic for God's people, because they can fit any time of the history of Israel. So we could have concluded that this psalm, once again, stems from the *milieu sapientiel*. The content of this

psalm also has elucidated that the main motivations of the psalm probably originated from didactic situations because of its acrostic alphabetic scheme which has been regarded as a mnemonic and educational device. In addition to this didactic setting, the liturgical setting has been traceable in the psalm as well. The use of the so-called אשרי formula in the psalm and its hymnic elements has indicated the liturgical setting of this psalm. From the hymnic elements of the psalm, Psalm 112 could have been regarded as a priestly response at the thanksgiving liturgy. So Psalm 112 was probably used in the liturgical *Sitz im Leben* as a worship instruction or a homiletical instruction.

From all the clues of the extra-textual study of the four proposed wisdom psalms, we cannot avoid the claim on the traditional view of the context of wisdom psalms. Wisdom psalms have traditionally been regarded as literary compositions from a late period and non-cultic by nature, and privately used for meditation. In contrast to this view, our extra-textual study of the context of wisdom psalms has revealed their communal liturgical setting and timeless character quite well. As the study outcomes have shown, all the liturgical clues from the four proposed wisdom psalms have elucidated the liturgical setting (and *Sitz im Leben*) of wisdom psalms. Eschatological tone and allusion of YHWH congregation in the psalms express their shared motif of liturgical setting as well. In this regard, as the preceding study already suggested, the main purpose of the use of these psalms in the worship service can be worship instruction. The worshiping community had been admonished and encouraged through such worship instructions. Occasionally these worship instructions promote the opportunities for the believers to meditate life's very problems. The mixed genres of wisdom psalms also illuminate the liturgical intention of the wisdom psalms to do more than only teach; they need to comfort, to protect, to assure, to affirm the presence of God's loving kindness, and in turn, they are all teachings of the various dimensions of life in a broad sense. Lament is replaced by teaching in wisdom psalms, since descriptive elements may function differently in different genres. Like typical hymns, wisdom psalms also praise the

wondrous work of God. In this regard, hymns can be wonderful text for instruction, since hymns could sketch some central characteristics of YHWH and His active involvement in the life story of human beings.

Summarising all the preceding reasoning and returning to the question posed in the preamble to the present study, it seems appropriate to state that those responsible for Israel's worship deliberately used wisdom material because they had a shared approach to reality with wisdom teachers and believed that such teaching contributed insights or raised crucial questions which ought to be central to Israel's experience of worship. Furthermore, they did this believing that such insights and questions could be seen in a new light when set in the context of worship: the didactic nature of the individual element is transformed through the cultic corporate medium.

With regard to time-framing wisdom psalms, little can be said definitely except that wisdom psalms stem from the so-called *milieu sapientiel.* No wisdom psalm offers any specific time frame. Universal problems of this world are expressed in wisdom psalms: adversity, frustration, the conflict between the wicked and the righteous, the problem of wealth, even the problem of death. It implies that wisdom psalms intentionally have such time frame. As the problems expressed in wisdom psalms are so general, wisdom psalms can always be relevant in our daily life. Thus wisdom psalms have powerful rhetoric for all the problems in our life, since they all have a timeless character.

It would mean the sages who composed wisdom psalms did not exist secluded from the community. They are not Kant-*like* philosophers. They share their own experience of hardship with the members of the community. They know how difficult life is. At the same time, they were preachers, since the practical character of wisdom psalms are very pastoral. Like real preachers in our time, they were incarnated intelligent people among society.

Canonical Setting and Its Implications

From the preceding study of the inter-textual dimension of the four proposed wisdom psalms, a useful understanding of wisdom psalms in a broader canonical context has been successfully achieved.

The study of the canonical setting of Psalm 1 has indicated that Psalm 1 was intentionally placed at the beginning of the Book of Psalms. It means Psalm 1 serves as an introduction to the Psalter, describing the joy of the righteous in the study of the Torah of YHWH by using the image of a tree planted by streams of water in order to illustrate the way in which a relationship with God can lead to spiritual nourishment for the whole Psalter. Given the importance of Torah, the way of the reign of the Lord is also instructed through the obedience of Torah in Psalm 1. In this respect, Psalm 1, as an intentional introduction to the Psalter, insists that obedience to the Torah of YHWH is indeed the premise and condition of praise; only the obedient of Torah can praise the Lord. After Psalm 1 orients the listener/reader to obey what follows as instruction, Psalm 2 introduces the essential content the Psalter intends to teach — the Lord reigns! In this way, Psalms 1 and 2 anticipate the content, theology and function of the entire Psalter. Given the importance of Torah psalms, the way of the reign of the Lord is instructed through the Torah of YHWH. The canonical framework of the Psalter manifested in the relation between Psalm 1 and Psalm 150 insists that obedience to the Torah of YHWH is indeed the premise and condition of praise; only those who obey the Torah can praise the Lord. In this sense, the canonical function of Psalm 1 is to instruct the faithful how to live in reliance on the reign of God and how to move from glad duty of Torah obedience to utter delight of unfettered praise.

The study of the canonical setting of Psalm 37 has proved that Psalm 37 provides proper admonition to the YHWH-followers. From the study of the canonical shape, it is obvious that the psalms in the fourth subgroup of Book I have important philological and thematic links among the psalms. The most important

theme of this group of psalms is the theme of God's deliverance: He alone is a source of refuge. Against this background, Psalm 37 sharply contrasts the ways of the wicked and the righteous as well as their respective fates among these psalms of laments and petitions. In this way, the psalmist of Psalm 37 urges the listeners/readers not to fret but to wait for YHWH patiently. The study of psalmic wisdom in the neighbouring psalms of Psalm 37 also has shown that there are some contributions from wisdom psalm and psalmic wisdom for the theologizing of Book I of the Psalter. Since the most prominent literary genre in Book I is that of the individual lament, wisdom psalm and psalmic wisdoms instruct the sufferer to cope and — at the same time — encourage the YHWH-followers to use unexpected opportunities to grow in wisdom as well as in faith and hope. In this sense, it is all the more fitting that wisdom should pitch her tent in this part of the Psalter.

All the observations on the canonical shape of Psalm 49 in Books II and III of the Psalter have revealed that Psalm 49 and other psalmic wisdom in Psalm 73 and Psalm 78 (and even Psalm 90 in Book IV) play an important role to formulate a framework to the Books. The most important feature of wisdom counsels in these Books is the maintenance of real hope in the midst of apparent failure of Davidic covenant. Wisdom counsels encourage the faithful community to anchor their hope not on human kings and dynasty but on God, the Creator (Psalm 90), the Redeemer (Psalm 49), the Saviour (Psalm 78) and the Sustainer (Psalm 73). Hence, while royal psalms (Psalms 72 and 89) provide an interpretive context for Books II and III as the 'seams' of the combined collection, psalmic wisdom in Psalms 49 and 73 (and 78, 90) constitutes a final wisdom frame of Books II and III (and IV), namely a wisdom frame of hope.

For the canonical setting of Psalm 112, it has been noticeable that a royal psalm is followed by psalmic wisdom and wisdom psalm. In the canonical context, Psalm 110 would have been understood as articulating hope for the future — as an affirmation of the trust that God continues to manifest God's reign in some concrete way among God's people. In this regard, Psalm 112 (with Psalm 111) answers this request very well. Psalm 112 emphasizes that the great blessing is a steadfast heart.

To trust in God is the real virtue of a wise person. Psalm 112 also instructs the people of God to put their hope not on a human king or earthly kingdom but on God. Those who anchor their hope in God have a real future. Thus, after a royal psalm, Psalm 112 offers a canonical framework, seeing that the strategic placement of wisdom psalms provides a structuring framework in the Psalter. In this sense, the main theme of Psalm 112 in the canonical context is 'the Lord reigns!' This reign of God is clearly embodied in the following psalms of wisdom elements and themes in Book V of the Psalter. In this regard, 'wisdom frame' in the canonical context of the Psalter is well established. Hence it can be concluded: canonical wisdom Psalm 112 and other psalms of wisdom elements and themes in Book V of the Psalter together form a wisdom frame of the Psalter and offer wisdom counsel to trust YHWH alone and exalt the reign of God.

In conclusion, it is worth reiterating that the canonical placement of the proposed wisdom psalms is significant. As observed, the proposed wisdom psalms and other canonically related psalms with wisdom themes form a wisdom frame in the Psalter. As a wisdom frame, wisdom psalms give the final shape of the Psalter new meaning and new hope. In this manner, wisdom psalms admonish to follow the way of Torah while keeping intimate fellowship with God. Wisdom psalms preach the listener/reader of the Psalter that *the Lord reigns*! From its beginning to the end only *the Lord reigns*! Wisdom psalms encourage the faithful in adversity to overcome their fear and bad response (like fretting). Wisdom psalms urge the faithful to put their hope not on earthly things but on God, our everlasting refuge. Wisdom psalms teach the value of YHWH-fearing. Eventually, wisdom psalms lead us to the Great *Hallel*, life's ultimate praise.

Therefore the canonical function of wisdom psalms makes a theological statement: we must place our trust in God and not in wealth or human kingdom. This theological statement conceals a hidden bias. Accompanying the Torah piety advanced throughout the psalms is the promise of happiness, success, prosperity. The theological intention from this canonical setting of the proposed wisdom psalms remains the same today. Those who place their trust and hope in God are wise.

3. Overall Wisdom Messages and Theological Implications

Preceding from what has been observed from the major themes of the four proposed wisdom psalms, it can be said that the wisdom psalms are an interesting microcosm of a number of wisdom themes.

The Two ways of Contrasting Life-Styles

First of all, the contrast between the righteous and the wicked figures predominantly in the Old Tetsament, but especially so in wisdom literature. All four proposed wisdom psalms also contrast features of these two life-styles, but to each its own voice.

Psalm 1 contains a theme of contrast between the righteous and the wicked in true wisdom style. It is to say, Psalm 1 uses a proverb style of contrast in order to generate a sharp contrast between the righteous and the wicked by means of two opposing ways of living: commending one and denouncing the other. From the intra-textual study, one realizes that a strong contrast exists between the first section (verses 1-3) and the second section (verses 4-5) of the psalm, seeing that the first section portrays the way (i.e., conduct and fate) of the righteous and the second section portrays the way (i.e., conduct and fate) of the wicked. While the first section and the second section of the psalm are antithetically related to one another, the final colon (verse 6), which introduces a new subject, is seen as the encompassing final statement. The third section of the psalm can thus be regarded as the final antithesis of the psalm, due to the fact that verse 6 strongly contrasts the final fate of the righteous and the final fate of the wicked.

Psalm 37 also contains a theme of contrast between the righteous and the wicked. It is, however, not a direct sharp contrast of the righteous and the wicked as Psalm 1, but the contrast between what is (*present*) and what shall be (*future*).

Against this background, the psalmist of Psalm 37 speaks urgently to 'fretful people', urging them not to be enraged at the successful-*like* lives of the wicked. In fact, the success of the wicked is only for a short time like green grass. Eventually, the righteous poor and those who hope in YHWH will possess the land. In this regard, the practical implication of Psalm 37 is that one should pursue YHWH's way because in the end the righteous will possess the land and the wicked will be cut off.

In Psalm 49, the two types of people are again presented: the wise and the foolish; the righteous and the wicked. In spite of presenting the contrast life-style of two types of people, the psalmist of psalm 49 argues that in one point these two types of people are equal. It is at least in death that all human beings are equal. That equality is well expressed in verse 11: *the wise, the fool and the brute all perish together.* All people die, whether they are wise or foolish, good or bad. They must leave their possessions behind, as must the psalmist. In this respect, Psalm 49:16 demonstrates the contrast between the pious poor and the wicked rich. It is not that the former do not die but that the latter do. Rather, the contrast consists in this: the former die but are taken back from the power of Sheol; whereas the latter have death as their shepherd and their form will waste away in Sheol. In contrast to the wicked rich who will never see the light (verse 20), God will redeem and take the psalmist from Sheol (verse 16). The listeners/readers by implication, therefore, will receive the same fate if they are on the psalmist's side, i.e. on the same side of the righteous. Thus they need not fear. The contrast between the fate of the righteous and that of the wicked therefore serves to induce a more positive attitude towards the present distress and to overcome fear. The eventual contrast of the psalm therefore is the omnipotence of God (verse 16) versus man's inability (verses 8-9) in combination with the contrast between the fate of the wicked (verses 14-15) and that of the righteous (verse 16). In this regard, this psalm also instructs the listener/reader a pure wisdom teaching of human mortality and death by way of contrasting the immortality of God. On your own, life and destiny are darkness, but in the presence of God, life becomes bearable and destiny is freedom from Sheol.

As far as the theme of contrast is concerned, Psalm 112 capitalizes on the life of the righteous rather than on the life of the fool. Verses 2-9 of Psalm 112 form that description, while the contrast is completed in the last verse. In this sense, this psalm is a realistic understanding of life's problem. In this psalm, the didactic simplification, which emerges from too stark a contrast between the well–being of the righteous and the adversity of the wicked, is overcome. Psalm 112 admits that the righteous person knows hardship. In this light, the permanence that this psalm celebrates is not rooted in the hope that God will never allow anything bad to happen but rather that God will never let anything break the permanent relationship between God and the righteous. Touched, and filled with hope by God, the righteous person is declared to be blessed, and an example to all of God's love and generosity while the desire of the wicked will perish. In this way, in verse 10, the psalmist of Psalm 112 returns to the thought he set out with, but in a contrastive way: 'the delight' of the blessed man and 'the desires' of the wicked. The wise man is blessed because his righteousness endures forever (verses 3*b* and 9*b*). On the contrary, the wicked, as he sees God's reward on the righteous, will melt away. Here the verb ראה (*sees*) is used in order to bring out the contrast with verse 8*b*. The righteous *sees* the frustration of the schemes of the wicked, while the wicked *sees* the triumph of the righteous.

Deeply related to the main theme of the contrast between two types of life-styles in the four proposed wisdom psalms is the description of 'way'. In the four proposed wisdom psalms, 'way' is understood in a metaphorical-figurative sense. The life of a person can be described as the 'way' on which one finds oneself. This terminology acquires special significance in wisdom literature and for the religious realm. It refers to the course of life that one chooses as well as the destiny that such a choice effects. The way of the righteous is rewarded with prosperity; the way of the wicked brings on punishment.

In this regard, the Torah piety in Psalm 1 answers to wisdom's question about how life is to be behaved. The Torah of YHWH replaces wisdom and its human teachers. For this psalmist, the Torah is the medium from which one can learn the way and the will of YHWH and it shapes the structure of wisdom. This psalm

therefore encourages meditating on the Torah day and night as the way of true wisdom.

In Psalm 37, the psalmist skilfully refers to time. Prosperity tempts the impatient person who wishes to see immediate results, but earthly prosperity is always temporary. Only the peaceable have a future (verse 37). In time, they will receive their just deserts, and the balance will be restored. The sage therefore aims to teach the righteous to wait patiently for YHWH's time. This time motif is expanded to the journey motif in the psalm. The 'steps' and the 'way' illustrate a picture of pilgrimage, and the destiny is the land. It creates images of God's people moving towards God. The righteous are to walk, supported by faith in God. They have the final hope of having a permanent dwelling in God.

In Psalm 49, the problem the sage addresses is set by wealth and the way people orient their lives to the acquisition and possession thereof. The sage meditates on this problem; not to denounce the wicked rich, but to instruct and comfort the faithful. In this sense, the purpose of the psalm is very pastoral. The purpose of the pastoral counsel is teaching the final destiny of the way of the righteous. Given this conviction in the central position, this psalm guides the congregation through a process by which they put their hope for life in God, not in wealth. So it is clear that this psalm has moved from concern about reward and punishment to an attempt to compensate for the importance of trusting in God and of walking along the righteous way till the final result comes.

In Psalm 112, the intensive interest of the righteous is expressed in two ways. The righteous is described as the reflection of God's character. That is to say, the truly wise person, and consequently the righteous person, can only be defined in terms of God's characteristics and God's beneficial relationship with the righteous. Though walking in an evil world, God's people will be secure and steady because God is their light in the dark way and their hearts are with God.

From the comparison above and synthesis of the predominant theme of the

contrast and the contrastive ways of two life-styles, it is apparent that there is no middle way, just the contrastive two ways in the journey of our life. YHWH rewards or punishes people according to the way (course) he/she chooses to take. This exclusive relationship between the two ways and the contrastive life-styles, thus, can be seen as one of the thematic criteria for the wisdom psalms.

The Fear of the Lord and Directing the Way of Torah

This causal relationship of two contrastive ways and life-styles has consequences for human choice. The effect of actions, according to wisdom literature of the Old Testament, could come from the very actions themselves as well as God who sees all. The deed creates its own effect, that consequences are latent in all significant good and evil actions. In this regard, all four proposed wisdom psalms have shown consequences to human choice in various ways.

In Psalm 1, Torah piety answers to wisdom's question about how life is to be acted. The Torah of YHWH replaces wisdom and its human teachers, since veneration of the Torah in Psalm 1:2 is a very important wisdom theme. The sage's fear of YHWH is frequently implied by expressions, which venerate the Torah as that which stands at the very centre of the wise man's pious reflections. For this psalmist, the Torah is the medium from which one can learn the way and the will of YHWH and it shapes the structure of wisdom. Psalm 1 therefore encourages meditating on the Torah day and night as the way of true wisdom, that is to say, the way of truly fearing YHWH.

Psalm 37 also deals with the powers in the existence of the righteous people who show the way and determine life. The intimate connection between thought and speech is especially evident in the proverbial component of verses 30-31. The heart (*mind*) directs the tongue and mouth in speech. Hence the heart instilled into the Torah of YHWH utters wisdom and justice. The vocabulary of verses 30-31 recalls Psalm 1:2: the word translated 'utter (הגה)' appears as 'meditate' in Psalm 1:2, which

also twice mentions 'the Torah of YHWH'. Here the righteous person meditates on or utters 'wisdom', but wisdom begins with fearing YHWH, which is so associated with *speaking justice*. The righteous are therefore those who do not pursue their own ways, but devote themselves to wisdom and the Torah of YHWH. Consequently, the Torah of YHWH is the solid foundation on which their just lives are built. In this sense, 'keep his way' in verse 34 can also be a command to observe the Torah of YHWH in the light of verse 31. From this one realizes that 'waiting' is not simply being passive: while we wait we need to keep his way (*His Torah*). In this respect, 'way' recalls the main wisdom theme of Psalm 1 where the way of the Torah is admonished. Followed by the exhortation, therfore the promise for the righteous who wait for YHWH and keep his way, the deed/consequence relatioship is again confirmed.

In Psalm 49, the so-called 'death–life' theology, the problem of the fear of the righteous poor against the wicked rich, is explained. It declares that the reward due to the righteous may not be realized until after a present troubled existence has run its full span. The contrast between the destination of the wicked powerful (verse 15) and the righteous powerless (verse 16) is a matter of death against life, because death will bring the final change. In this respect, fear for the oppression of the wicked rich is changed into a belief that death changes everything. The theological window opening focuses on the moment of death, assuring the listener/reader that at that moment nothing matters, but God. It brings totally new meaning into present life for the righteous wise: God empowers the righteous poor and wise powerless to face the wicked rich, to live with the burden, to see life in a new perspective, and to be empowered by faith during the entire lifetime. If we read this new perspective together with the most fundamental principle of wisdom literature (the fear of YHWH is the beginning of wisdom), we can find a profound meaning of fear. In Psalm 49, wisdom is a very important motif to eliminate human fear. It implies that wisdom can be found in the fear, or reverence, of the Lord. The wisdom provides the meaning of death as well as the meaning and the purpose of living. In Psalm 49, therefore, if one perceives death correctly from the perspective of wisdom, one may

live life correctly in the fear of YHWH.

In Psalm 112, an astonishing list of claims for the well–being and well–doing of those who fear YHWH and delight in the commandments of YHWH has become visible to the listener/reader of the psalm. In this regard, the main concern of Psalm 112 is quite different from other proposed wisdom psalms. In Psalm 112, only one verse (verse 10) is devoted to the portrait of the wicked reporting just disgust and frustration of the wicked, while nine verses are used to describe the well–being and well–doing of the righteous. This intensive interest of the righteous implies that the truly wise person, and consequently the righteous person, can only be defined in terms of God's characteristics and God's beneficial relationship with the righteous. Human blessing is to be found in a life 'fearing YHWH', and delighting and living according to His commandments (verse 1). Therefore those who know this and who delight in the commandments of YHWH and live accordingly — in short, those who fear God — are truly wise and genuinely blessed.

From the above comparison and synthesis, one can realize that in wisdom psalms the fear of YHWH and obedience to His Torah go together as though they were synonymous. The psalmist of wisdom psalms knew that the fear of YHWH was the beginning of wisdom, and that that fear was gained from the Torah obedience. Thus wisdom psalms instruct the fear of YHWH by way of exalting the study of the Torah where the true wise people could subordinate themselves to the divine will. So there is a logical relationship: in order to make a good choice, human beings have to fear YHWH, and the only way to express the fear of YHWH is to obey His Torah. In relation to this, one realizes that, as a major thematic criterion, wisdom psalms emphasize the fear of YHWH by obeying His Torah in various ways.

The Reality but Inevitability of Retribution

The problem all wisdom literature grapples with is that of injustice in this life. Some wisdom literature does not grapple with this, but states this idea as a basic

principle, such as most of Proverbs and perhaps Psalm 1 as well. A part of the wisdom literature teaches this principle, and another part struggles with it. How is it that the righteous one who lives in the fear of the Lord and in obedience of His Torah often suffers, while the wicked prospers? As researched in the main chapters of the present study, the proposed wisdom psalms solve this great tension of life with a renewed understanding of retribution. The causal relationship and its consequences in the wisdom psalms can explain the well-known wisdom motif of divine retribution.

The overall message of Psalm 1 refers to the course of life one chooses as well as the destiny such a choice effects. This causal relationship seems to be deeply related to the wisdom motif of divine retribution. The way of the righteous is rewarded with prosperity; the way of the wicked brings on punishment. This divine retribution motif in Psalm 1 may describe some situations in life, but it also functions as an incentive for acceptable behaviour. By the structure of Psalm 1, the retribution of the righteous and the wicked is contrasted in terms of both content and form. The righteous is like a tree planted by streams of water; in whatever he does, he will prosper. The wicked, on the other hand, are like chaff that the wind drives away — the way of the wicked will perish. Here we have a traditional clear black–and–white dogma of retribution that leaves no room for other possibilities. It means here is no struggling with the idea.

In Psalm 37, for the vivid impact of motivation, similes are used to describe the nature of the wicked. Grass and green grass (*or herb*) imagery refers to the transitory prosperity the wicked are to experience. Here retribution against the wicked is expressed in two metaphors of premature death. The psalmist also employs war images such as sword and bows that can provide the vivid impact on the aggressive character of the wicked. Here the imagery is used to enunciate the so-called 'boomerang principle' of evil. Sin ultimately recoils upon the wicked and destroys them. It thus gives an obvious picture of the retribution motif where the wicked are expected to perish by their own devices. In this regard, Psalm 37 is dominated by the

traditional retribution dogma: verses 2, 3-6, 9-11, 13, 15, 17-20, 22, 27-29, 33, 34, 36-38. In reality, however, life does not always go well for the righteous or badly for the wicked. The righteous may fall and be in trouble (verses 39 and 40) and the wicked may prosper (verse 35) — unthinkable situations in terms of the traditional retribution dogma. In this sense, Psalm 37 addresses two very important wisdom issues: the ambiguity of human life and the limitation of the theory of retribution. Once again, nonetheless, the problem is resolved by harking back to the rigid dogma. YHWH delivers the righteous (verses 34, 39 and 40) and the wicked perish (verse 36). In this regard, this psalm can also be labelled as a theodicy, which literally means 'justice of God', because it implies one of life's vexing questions: How can God be just while there is so much evil in the world? In this regard, Psalm 37 is a homiletical exploration of the issue of God's justice with regard to the very problem of retribution and theodicy.

Psalm 49 presents another example of the crisis in wisdom as resolved by the retribution dogma. According to verses 11 and 12, the fate of the wise and the foolish is the same: both die and the grave is their home. In this fashion, the doctrine of retribution is severely undermined. Despite the 'days of trouble' experienced by the psalmist (verse 6), there is no hope of improvement: like the wicked, the grave is his home forever. Here the crisis is so acute that there appears to be no prospect of retribution this side of the grave. However, verse 11 should be read and studied in relation to verse 16. The psalmist used a critical wisdom saying (verse 11) to emphasize the inevitability of death, but he eventually gives the assurance that what wisdom cannot do (to preserve one's life), God is able to do. God can even take one from the power of Sheol (verse 16). Instead of rejecting retribution, the psalmist once again falls back on the dogma. In this sense, Psalm 49 would be put into the category of the so-called 'futuristic' understanding of the problem of retribution, which designates those passages that are sensitive to hard facts of the present, yet concomitantly project a stubborn hope transcending mundane human existence.

In Psalm 112, the didactic simplification which emerges from too stark a contrast between the well–being of the righteous and the adversity of the wicked is

also prevailed over. The righteous is promised a rich future – his descendants will be amply blessed and will have dominion in the land (verse 2). Nonetheless, Ps 112 admits that the God-fearing person cannot expect unadulterated prosperity: he also experiences 'darkness' (verse 4) and 'evil tidings' (verse 7), he also has 'enemies' (verse 8). If the Psalm's main function is that of promising that the righteous person has a great future, the present is in fact approached with unabashed realism. But once again the retribution dogma is invoked: his 'righteousness endures forever' but 'the desire of the wicked will perish' (verses 9 and 10). In this regard, the main retribution motif of Psalm 112 can be put into the category of the so-called 'realistic' understanding of the problem of retribution that points to those texts manifesting a ready acceptance of the ambiguous nature of the world.

The four proposed wisdom psalms therefore have no single answer to offer to the ever–perplexing question about divine retribution and theodicy. Yet, with the multifarious character of the answer, it is clear that wisdom psalms at least have taken the issue with maximum seriousness.

When the proposed wisdom psalms offer their teachings concerning retribution, they yield new and interesting meaning. Wisdom psalms acknowledge that some godly people and wise persons do indeed suffer. Wisdom psalms do not try to solve this problem, but promise the more intimate relationship with God. In this regard, one can say wisdom psalms teach 'scepticism', which usually implies some denial of hope or possibility of knowledge. It is a word that is used most often in the discussion of Job and Qoheleth. However, it is important to recognize that what is called scepticism in these wisdom psalms, in fact, is not a negation of puzzling or a refusal of understanding as we have studied. Rather it is an inquiry into wisdom itself, a puzzling about this mode of thought. In this sense, wisdom psalms must be understood not as scepticism but as a critique of the abuse of wisdom, just as it is possible that the believers can abuse the Biblical principle of retribution by turning them into an instrument for controlling God. On the contrary, wisdom psalms affirm God's absolute sovereignty and humanity's utter dependence on Him. Therefore, the final message of wisdom psalms with regard to the theory of retribution is: *Fear the*

Lord! Obey & enjoy His Torah! and *Anchor your hope in God!*

The Centrality of God: the Lord Reigns!

From the study of the thematic contents and the main messages of the four proposed wisdom psalms, one also can find that God is very much at the centre. It is also a logically related conclusion from the above synthesis of the major themes of the proposed psalms.

Psalm 1 instructs us that blessedness involves not only enjoying oneself but delighting in the teaching (Torah) of God. The goal of life is to be found not in self–fulfilment but in praising God. Prosperity does not involve getting what one wants; rather, it comes from being connected to the source of life — God. The righteous in Psalm 1 are not primarily persons who make the proper choices or implement the proper policies, but those who know that their lives belong to God and that their futures are secured by God. Furthermore, judgment in Psalm 1 implies divine judgment in general: every act by which YHWH separates the righteous from the wicked and shows his reign in the world. This judgment can have an eschatological thrust looking beyond the cultic present to the ultimate judgment of God, and to a purified congregation of the righteous in which sinners will be unable to participate. In this regard, the final end of the wicked is no relationship with God; their way comes to nothing. God is absent from the life and destiny of the wicked. Therefore the psalmist of Psalm 1 invites the listener/reader who hears or opens the Psalter to choose the blessed end and the means to attain it: that is, the very (way of the) Word (*Torah*) of God.

Psalm 37 illuminates the centrality of God in a slightly different way. Firstly Psalm 37 addresses the ambiguity of human life and the limitation of the theory of retribution. To be sure, this psalm does not satisfactorily answer all life's vexing questions, but it does offer an answer: The Lord reigns! Salvation is only from the Lord, the Lord helps them and saves them (verses 39-40). Because of the reality of

God's reigning, the worldly values can be turned upside down. Psalm 37 invites us to trust and hope in God's will and ability to set things right. Because God rules the world/reigns in the world there is a source of security and peace. In this sense, the psalmist of Psalm 37 urges the people of God to remain faithful, regardless of their present situations, to trust in God's protection in time of hardship and to hope for eventual recompense. This promise of future blessing is a mark of the psalm's eschatological character. It holds out an assurance that the dilemmas encountered throughout life will eventually be resolved. This psalm acknowledges and deals with the ambiguity of life. Even so, its assurance of final vindication upholds the theodicy of God. It seems to say that compensation has not been denied; it has been delayed. Psalm 37 therefore invites us to trust and hope in God's will and ability to set things right. Because God rules the world/reigns in the world, there is a source of security and peace.

Psalm 49 emphasizes the centrality of God by way of using the riddle, which the psalmist wishes to set and solve. The riddle (verse 5) is presented in verses 6-7; it is the age-old problem of an apparently pious person in trouble and suffering oppression. To this, two responses are given. The first is enunciated in verses 8-10: no human can pay a ransom to avoid death. This first response is further developed in verses 11-15. Here the psalmist clearly concentrates on the ungodly, and specifies their destiny as Sheol. This calls the psalmist's second response to the riddle, presented succinctly in verse 16: God will ransom the psalmist from Sheol and will take him. That is to say, God will provide for the righteous an alternative destiny to the netherworld. The final section of the psalm (verses 17-21) returns to the theme that the rich cannot take their wealth with them at the time of death. The eventual emphasis on the centrality of God in this psalm therefore is the omnipotence of God (verse 16). On your own, life and destiny are darkness, but in the presence of God, life becomes bearable and destiny is freedom from Sheol. In this psalm, therefore, wisdom is a very important motif to eliminate human fear, and, on the contrary, to elucidate the fear of the Lord. It is life after death that adds the dimension of eschatology to the wisdom of this psalm. This eschatological hope is ground for

greater consolation than rationalizing the wealth of the wicked. This psalm is about the fullness of life: the life of fullness of hope, which God longs to give to his children, and about that fullness of life belonging to eternity. The psalmist of Psalm 49 therefore together with those who follow his teaching, will be redeemed from the power of Sheol and enjoy life, even after death: *But God will redeem my life from the power of Sheol, for He will take me.*

In Psalm 112, the centrality of God is emphasized by means of the very essential wisdom theme of 'the fear of the Lord'. The astonishing list of claims for the well–being and well–doing of those who fear YHWH and delight in the commandments of YHWH has become visible to the listener/reader of this psalm. In this regard, the main concern of this psalm is quite different from other wisdom psalms as already indicated above. In Psalm 112, only one verse (verse 10) is given to the portrait of the wicked reporting just disgust and frustration of the wicked, while nine verses are used to describe the well–being and well–doing of the righteous. This intentional imbalance implies that the reward to the righteous for fearing the Lord is at the centre of interest in Psalm 112. In this sense, the perspective of this psalm is eschatological. That is to say, the reign of God and the consequent security of the righteous are asserted in the midst of ongoing opposition. The reign of God is always both now and yet to come. The desire of the wicked will not endure; their desires will ultimately perish. Therefore those who know this and who delight in the commandments of YHWH and live accordingly — in short, those who fear God — are truly wise and genuinely blessed.

The centrality of God and the theme of the reign of the Lord therefore are very significant in the four proposed wisdom psalms. In this regard, as a proclamation of God's reign, wisdom psalms call people to a right decision that can be found in the reign of the Lord alone. This conclusion is at variance with the perception that Old Testament wisdom is about humanity, not about God. For many modern scholars, the human individual is put at the centre and is trusted in the wisdom of the Old Testament. On the contrary, the centrality of God in wisdom psalms calls renewed attention to the need of some further study on the divine centrality of wisdom

literature in the Old Testament.

4. Concluding Practical and Theological Remarks

To conclude a long journey of the present study, we can make the following five practical theological remarks as an application of the present study for the contemporary readers and seekers of the truth.

Firstly, the study of wisdom psalms maintains that the main practical function of wisdom psalms is instructional. Yet, the major function of the Psalms is the prayer of the believers, but wisdom psalms have become teaching. Wisdom psalms serve as a guide for meditation on life, promoting a practical way of living. In order to promote a practical way of living, wisdom psalms use many wisdom elements and themes as teaching material. In this regard, wisdom psalms offer disciples or other seekers counsel — teachings and exhortations that help towards an ever closer relationship with the Lord. The sages in the wisdom psalms would have us still trust in the Lord when times are evil: doing good, abiding in our given place, feeding on faithfulness, and so delighting in the Lord, who will not ignore the requests of our heart. Stillness towards the Lord and hope-filled patience are often recommended (Psalm 37). The teachings of God must be treasured in the heart day and night, all the ways of life's journey (Psalm 1). The fear of the Lord — awareness of His holy reality, practical acknowledgement of His Lordship — is recommended as the foundation and crown of wisdom. The psalmist-teacher would draw his entire circle into a life towards God, daily activity flowing from experience of the Lord (Psalm 112). On the long journey of life, the psalmist-teacher even finds glimpses of a hopeful view of life after death. The hope comes from the experience of the Lord and the knowledge of His ultimate love and care, which can have no end (Psalm 49). From this wisdom and insightful experience, all the travellers of the journey of life testify that their hope lies in the Lord alone.

Secondly, if one considers the theological assertions of wisdom psalms, one can

recognize that the theory of retribution and theodicy is minimised and the reign of the Lord is maximised in wisdom psalms. The reign of the Lord solves the problem of the conflict, fear and eventually death. Even in small family matters, the Lord must reign. In many ways, wisdom psalms are about the blessed life, and it will affirm throughout that this life derives fundamentally from the conviction that God rules the world. In this regard, one can find a logical relationship among all the major themes of the wisdom psalms. In order to choose a blessed life between the two ways of contrasting life-styles, human beings have to fear the Lord by obeying His Word (Torah) and commit their ways of life under the wings of the reign of God even though many inquisitive questions are in mind regarding the theory of retribution and theodicy. The Lord will then repay them for their good decision and conduct according to His trustworthy Word and Deed. The cohesive factor in this logical relationship is the created order in God's creation: the order in that natural universe created and maintained by God. This principle of the created order is the well-known foundation of Old Testament wisdom. By living wisely, human beings might find a way in this created order, thereby obtaining blessing in their own lives. In this respect, there is the resemblance of wisdom psalms to 'natural theology', which means truths about God can be learned from created things (nature, man and world) by reason alone. However, it would be a mistake to characterize wisdom psalms as a species of 'natural theology'. True, it deals with creation and with day–to–day living, but this is in a concrete supernatural situation to which God has called his people; God is available to them through this experience. The sages of wisdom psalms were nothing but the channel of God's revelation. What they learned about the Lord from creation and experience is associated with the one Lord who is communicated. In this sense, the psalmic sages of wisdom psalms are more counsellors whose advices are couched in maxims, which freely combine observations drawn from study of the created world with insights drawn from the will of God expressed in the covenantal Word (Torah) of God. Wisdom psalms in this way outlines a Biblical version of what can be described as an interpretation of experience exercised within a theological framework. It is the conscious and mature assumption of responsibility for the

consequences of human decisions, exercised by persons who also have the wisdom to know that God is in control to move in hidden ways to maintain the orders of the world and to implement His will for His children. In this way, wisdom psalms have the transforming power of life. Those who are fools, wisdom psalms make wise. Those who are frustrated, wisdom psalms encourage. To those who are in darkness, wisdom psalms offer permanent hope.

Thirdly, if one thinks about the relationship between wisdom psalms and wisdom literature in the Old Testament, one can realize that wisdom psalms span the whole range of wisdom thought from maxim–making to severe questioning of the principles of divine justice. The theme of punishment and reward by the Lord of the universe is revealed as a major focus of wisdom psalms and yet, many of the other wisdom themes found in the four proposed wisdom psalms are traditional ones, mainly paralleled in the wisdom literatures of the Old Testament. This relationship with mainstream wisdom themes is thus the primary criterion for determining whether a psalm is a wisdom psalm. As paralleled to mainstream wisdom themes of the Old Testament, the experience of wisdom psalms is to be described as a faith experience. The shaping of wisdom psalms' views of the world, and of the activity of God behind and in it, is done in an ambience of faith, and is characterized by trust and reliance upon God. God draws the people, through their daily experience of themselves and creation, into the mystery of God's dealings with each individual human being. The epigrammatic association of wisdom and fear of the Lord is an example of this profound and inextricable unity. In this respect, God is very much at the centre in the wisdom psalms, more overtly so than other wisdom literature. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom* invites the people of God to accept His reign, and live a profound life with God according to the teaching of wisdom psalms.

Fourthly, the understanding of righteousness and wickedness in wisdom psalms may well be alarming to those of us who live in a culture where perhaps the highest virtue is autonomy. In this 'century of the self', we are taught to be self–reliant, self–made, self–grounded and our goal is to be self–fulfilled,

self–actualized. While the perspective of wisdom psalms may be disturbing to us, it helps us to understand why one of the most highly developed, healthiest, wealthiest and most intellectually sophisticated societies in the history of the world consistently fails to produce people who are 'happy'. In this sense, the condition of the church and the culture in this time of the so-called post–modern world reinforces the need to recover wisdom psalms for what they can teach us. What wisdom psalms really want to recover for an authentic sense of piety is openness to God's instruction and a commitment to live under God's reign. Actually, it is what wisdom psalms mean by being 'happy (or rather blessed)' and 'righteous'.

Finally, an understanding of wisdom psalms as a worship instruction that was used in the liturgical *Sitz im Leben* has implications for the use of Psalms in general in the church. For instance, while Psalms should be prayed and sung, they should also be studied and taught and preached. When the Psalms are sung, the value should not be simply aesthetic. The singing of a psalm should communicate with clarity the content of the psalm. In this sense, wisdom psalms (and Psalms in general) are very pastoral and homiletical. They address theological issues that are perennial pastoral concern: 'What will the members of the church and the religious community take as the decisive clue to the way life should be lived?' For this pastoral concern, wisdom psalms (and the Psalter) proclaim the faith, instructs the faithful, and calls for a decision. Furthermore, in an environment where all of life was seen as an integrated whole, centred in man's obedience to God, it may very well be expected that religious, cultic and didactic materials would intermingle. The focus of life in the Old Testament was found in the will of God. For the priest it was centred in the cultic services, for the prophet it was centred in the Torah or teachings, and for the sage it was centred in the fear of YHWH. These three aspects were brought together in wisdom psalms, which identified the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom, upheld the Torah as being the delight of the wise people's heart, and did so didactically in a setting of worship and thanksgiving. In a nutshell, wisdom psalms are God's instruction, sacred scripture for each new generation of the faithful.

Having made these five points of practical and theological remarks as an application for the contemporary readers and seekers, it is at last time to bring the present study to a close and to end with the comment that wisdom psalms are always contemporary, and consequently relevant to us. Through listening to and reading wisdom counsels in wisdom psalms by means of songs, prayers and instructions, and by living accordingly, we can gain broader insight and a more concrete picture of *who God is* and *who we are and how we should live, then* as all true theology can finally inspire, enlighten and edify us. The central theological affirmation of wisdom psalms thus cries out to be proclaimed — ***the Lord reigns!*** That is our only comfort in life and death! The chief end of our life therefore is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever and ever! — ***Soli Deo Gloria!!***

5. Concluding Remarks for Further Study

All the study outcomes and results of the present study point to several promising applications and suggestions for future research on the topic of wisdom psalms as follows:

- At the level of selecting wisdom psalms, an avoidable guideline and a recommendable guideline for the selection of wisdom psalms are firstly found from the present study. That is, the grouping of wisdom psalms is not really a form-critical one because the relations are inclined to be more thematic than formal. Consequently, the relationship with mainstream wisdom themes seems to be the primary condition for determining whether a psalm is a wisdom psalm. Subsequently the criteria for the identification of wisdom psalms can be formulated from the present study: (1) A wisdom psalm must have sufficient thematic affinity to wisdom literature of the Old Testament. (2) A wisdom psalm must exhibit rich wisdom lexical terms and intense forms of wisdom features and styles. (3) A wisdom psalm must not simply contain wisdom–like material, but must engage poetically in wisdom themes and forms and develop them

through poetic artistry, such as the poetic, stylistic and rhetorical features because wisdom psalms are primarily psalms in the Book of the Psalter. (4) Finally, one can typify a psalm as a wisdom psalm when it satisfies all the above-mentioned criteria. It is to say that a wisdom psalm is any psalm that dynamically develops both rich wisdom forms (and styles) and wisdom themes (and motifs) richly throughout poetic artistry. According to these criteria, it must be admitted that the four proposed wisdom psalms are genuine *bona fide* wisdom psalms. Further research on the selection of wisdom psalms should also be directed according to the criteria found from the present study.

- At the methodological level, the preceding three-dimensional approach seems to be an appropriate reading strategy in order to read the intra-textual dimension of wisdom psalms more closely, the extra-textual dimension of wisdom psalms more profoundly and the inter-textual dimension of wisdom psalms more broadly. These methodological observations suggest that some more psalms with intense wisdom forms and themes should be read three-dimensionally so as to investigate their intra-textual, extra-textual and inter-textual relationships within the framework of wisdom psalms.

- At the level of the study of the contents of wisdom psalms, some more typical psalmic wisdom forms and themes should be found from the careful intra-textual reading of wisdom psalms and psalmic wisdom in order to specify more precise criteria for the identification of wisdom psalms.

- At the level of the study of the context of wisdom psalms, a range of problems remains to be tackled, based on more meticulous extra-textual study of wisdom psalms and psalmic wisdom in order to acquire more information regarding social settings of wisdom psalms.

- At the level of the study of the canonical setting of wisdom psalms, some more inter-textual studies are needed to elucidate the so-called wisdom frame in the

Psalter. In order to gain more insight into this topic, a cautious inter-textual reading of more wisdom psalms and psalmic wisdom in the Psalter should be reserved.

- To reach a fuller understanding of the theological assessment of wisdom psalms, an ongoing discussion between the overall theological messages of more wisdom psalms and psalmic wisdom and the present situation is crucial, since the research task in the Biblical studies is not complete until we have inquired into the theological implications for our generation, our setting–in–life: What do the wisdom psalms teach us now about God, ourselves, the world, the life of faith?

ABSTRACT

This thesis was an attempt to read the wisdom psalms in the Old Testament more effectively. In the introduction, the problems identified in the research on wisdom psalms were analyzed along the history of investigation into wisdom psalms. According to investigation, the main problems of the research of wisdom psalms can be summarized in three main aspects. The first research problem mainly lies in the negligence of the careful reading of the content of wisdom psalms. While most scholars are busy with the identification of wisdom psalms, the form-critical question concerning wisdom psalms, namely as to what the specific content and message of wisdom psalms are, is subsequently neglected. The second research problem is that pertaining to the context of wisdom psalms. Some narrow views of the *Sitz im Leben* of wisdom psalms demand broader socio-historical investigation of wisdom psalms. Furthermore, recent interest in the canonical shape of the psalms also calls for more attention to reading wisdom psalms in the broad canonical context of the entire Psalter. The third research problem is the theological implications of wisdom psalms. How wisdom psalms are theologically valued and what the theological implications of wisdom psalms are for the believing (and even unbelieving) community are considered necessary aspects of investigation in the present study.

For the methodological analysis of more effective reading of wisdom psalms, based on the three main aspects of research problems and tasks, a three-dimensional approach, namely an intra-textual reading, an extra-textual reading and an inter-textual reading, was proposed as a reading strategy concerning wisdom psalms. From the perspective of intra-textual reading, the poetic structure and poetic content of wisdom psalms were investigated. Following this, the extra-textual dimensions of wisdom psalms were discussed in order to scrutinize the socio-historical context of wisdom psalms. The aspect of the inter-textual canonical shape of wisdom psalms was also examined in order to understand wisdom psalms in the broader canonical context.

For the scope of research, four wisdom psalms or psalms with predominantly wisdom elements and themes were selected, namely Psalms 1, 37, 49 and 112. These psalms are generally regarded by most scholars as typical or *bona fide* wisdom psalms. Other psalms containing wisdom elements and themes (e.g. Psalms 19, 32, 34, 73, 111, 119, 127, 128 and 133) were also briefly discussed when the elements and themes are inter-textually related to the selected wisdom psalms.

In this manner, Psalms 1, 37, 49 and 112 were multidimensionally read in the main body of the thesis (Chapters II–V), based on suggested three-dimensional reading, namely the intra-textual reading, the extra-textual reading and the inter-textual reading — one chapter for each wisdom psalm. A brief introductory remark was made concerning the first part of the study of each wisdom psalm. The Massoretic Text and the author's own translation of each wisdom psalm then followed with discussions of some translation problems in order to establish the best textual base for the study. Subsequently an analysis of the poetic structure and poetic content of each wisdom psalm was done, based on the intra-textual reading of the psalm. Thereafter, both the literary genre and life-setting of each wisdom psalm were taken into consideration, based on the preceding study of poetic content and its extra-textual clue from the content. From then on, the canonical context of each wisdom psalm was discussed on the basis of inter-textual relationships of the psalm. Finally, all the preceding study outcomes were synthesised in order to grasp the overall message of each wisdom psalm with special attention to the wisdom perspective of the psalm and its implications.

In the conclusion of the thesis, a comparison regarding the similarities and differences of the content, context and theological emphasis within the four proposed wisdom psalms were presented with regard to synthesizing all the study outcomes and their overall theological implications. Thereafter, a number of remarks were presented on the possible practical theological implications and some promising applications and suggestions for future research as an example of the present study for contemporary readers.

For the contents and the implications thereof, all the wisdom lexical terms and intense forms of wisdom features and styles from the proposed wisdom psalms were synthesized and the overall implications from the contents presented.

Regarding the context of wisdom psalms and the theological implications thereof, it was proven that wisdom psalms might have had a communal liturgical setting with the primary aim of communal instruction. Mixed literary genres and forms as well as the socio-historical context of wisdom psalms support this contention. This inference differs considerably from the traditional hypothesis of non–cultic setting and the private use of wisdom psalms for meditation.

For the canonical shape of wisdom psalms and its implications, it seems that wisdom psalms formulated a wisdom frame in the Psalter with the purpose of giving proper wisdom counsel in order for the afflicted community to overcome their apparent problems, and to put their hope in eternal God.

For the wisdom themes and their theological implications, four main aspects crystallised from the study: (1) the two ways (contrasting life-styles); (2) the fear of the Lord and directing the way of Torah; (3) the reality but inevitability of retribution; and (4) the centrality of God: the Lord reigns! These four main themes have a logical relationship: in order to choose a blessed life between the two ways (contrasting life-styles), human beings have to fear the Lord by obeying His Word (Torah) and committing their ways of life under the wings of the reign of God even though many inquisitive questions are in mind regarding the theory of retribution and theodicy. The Lord will then repay them for their good decision and conduct according to His trustworthy Word and Deed. The cohesive factor in this logical relationship is the created order in God's creation: the order in that natural universe created and maintained by God.

For the practical theological implications, it was pointed out that the main practical function of wisdom psalms is instructional, and the goal of that instruction is about the reign of the Lord that solves the problem of all the conflict and fear, even the fear of death, in the journey of life. In this way, wisdom psalms have a transforming power of life: those who are fools, wisdom psalms make wise; those

who are frustrated, wisdom psalms encourage; and to those who are in darkness, wisdom psalms offer permanent hope. Thus the condition of the church and the culture in this time of the so-called post-modern world reinforces the need to recover wisdom psalms for what they can teach us.

A suggestion for the identification of wisdom psalms was presented for further research on the topic: a wisdom psalm is any psalm that dynamically develops both wisdom forms (and styles) and wisdom themes (and motifs) richly throughout poetic artistry. The three-dimensional reading strategy is also recommended in order to read the intra-textual dimension of wisdom psalms more closely, the extra-textual dimension of wisdom psalms more profoundly, and the inter-textual dimension of wisdom psalms more broadly.

As this thesis has proven, wisdom psalms are always contemporary, and consequently relevant to us. Through listening to and reading wisdom counsels in wisdom psalms by means of songs, prayers and instructions, and by living accordingly, we can gain broader insight and a more concrete picture of *who God is* and *who we are and how we should live, then* as all true theology can finally inspire, enlighten and edify us.

SAMEVATTING

Hierdie proefskrif was 'n poging om die wysheidspsalms in die Ou Testament doeltreffender te lees. In die inleiding is die probleme wat in die navorsing oor wysheidspsalms geïdentifiseer is, ontleed na aanleiding van die geskiedenis van die ondersoek van wysheidspsalms. Volgens die ondersoek kan die hoofprobleme rakende die navorsing oor wysheidspsalms in drie punte opgesom word. Die eerste navorsingsprobleem lê hoofsaaklik by die nalaat van die noulettende lees van die inhoud van wysheidspsalms. Terwyl die meeste kenners besig is met identifisering van wysheidspsalms, word die vorm-kritiese vraag rakende wysheidspsalms gevolglik altyd afgeskeep, naamlik wat die spesifieke inhoud en boodskap van wysheidspsalms is. Die tweede navorsingsprobleem is dié wat betrekking het op die konteks van wysheidspsalms. Enkele eng opvattings van die *Sitz im Leben* van wysheidspsalms vereis breër sosio-historiese ondersoek van wysheidspsalms. Verder roep onlangse belangstelling in die kanonieke vorm van die psalms ook om meer aandag aan die lees van wysheidspsalms in die breër kanonieke konteks van die hele Psalmboek. Die derde navorsingsprobleem is die teologiese implikasies van wysheidspsalms. Hoe wysheidspsalms teologies waardeer word en wat die teologiese implikasies van wysheidspsalms is vir die gelowige (en selfs nie-gelowige) gemeenskap, word in die huidige studie as noodsaaklike ondersoekaspekte beskou.

Vir die metodologiese ontleding van die doeltreffender lees van wysheidspsalms, wat op die drie hoofaspekte van navorsingsprobleme en –take gebaseer is, is 'n driedimensionele benadering, naamlik die intratekstuele lees, die ekstratekstuele lees en die intertekstuele lees as 'n leesstrategie met betrekking tot wysheidspsalms voorgestel. Vanuit die perspektief van intratekstuele lees is die poëtiese struktuur en poëtiese inhoud van wysheidspsalms ondersoek. Hierna is die ekstratekstuele dimensies van wysheidspsalms bespreek met die doel om die sosio-historiese konteks van wysheidspsalms van naderby te deurvors. Die aspek van die intertekstuele kanonieke vorm van wysheidspsalms is ook ondersoek om

wysheidspsalms in die breër kanonieke konteks te verstaan.

Vir die navorsingstrefwydte is vier wysheidspsalms of psalms met oorwegend wysheidselemente en temas gekies, naamlik Psalms 1, 37, 49 en 112. Hierdie psalms word normaalweg deur die meeste kenners as tipiese of *bona fide* wysheidspsalms beskou. Ander psalms wat wysheidselemente en –temas bevat (bv. Psalms 19, 32, 34, 73, 111, 119, 127, 128 en 133), is ook kortliks bespreek as die elemente en temas intertekstueel verwant is aan die gekose wysheidspsalms.

Op hierdie wyse is Psalms 1, 37, 49 en 112 multidimensioneel in die hoofliggaam van die proefskrif gelees (Hoofstukke II–V), gebaseer op die voorgestelde drie-dimensionele lees, naamlik die intratekstuele lees, die ekstratekstuele lees en die intertekstuele lees – een hoofstuk vir elke wysheidspsalm. 'n Kort inleidende opmerking is in die eerste deel van die studie van elke wysheidspsalm gemaak. Die Masoretiese Teks en die outeur se eie vertaling van elke wysheidspsalm het dan gevolg met besprekings van enkele vertalingsprobleme met die doel om die beste tekstuele basis vir die studie te bepaal. Vervolgens is 'n ontleding van die poëtiese struktuur en poëtiese inhoud van elke wysheidspsalm onderneem, gebaseer op die intratekstuele lees van die psalm. Daarna is beide die literêre genre en milieu van elke wysheidspsalm in aanmerking geneem, gebaseer op die voorafgaande studie van poëtiese inhoud en die ekstratekstuele leidraad daarvan uit die inhoud. Voorts is die kanonieke inhoud van elke wysheidspsalm bespreek aan die hand van die intertekstuele verhoudings van die psalm. Ten slotte is al die voorafgaande studie-uitkomste saamgevoeg met die oog daarop om die oorkoepelende boodskap van elke wysheidspsalm te begryp, met spesifieke aandag aan die wysheidsperspektief van die psalm en die implikasies daarvan.

In die slotsom van die proefskrif is 'n vergelyking ten opsigte van die ooreenkomste en verskille van die inhoud, konteks en teologiese klem binne die vier voorgestelde wysheidspsalms aangebied met betrekking tot die samevoeging van al die resultate en die oorkoepelende teologiese implikasies daarvan. Daarna is 'n aantal

opmerkings oor die moontlike praktiese teologiese implikasies en enkele belowende toepassings en voorstelle vir toekomstige navorsing as 'n voorbeeld van die huidige studie vir hedendaagse lesers aan die hand gedoen.

Vir die inhoud en die implikasies daarvan is al die wysheidsleksikale terme en intensiewe vorme van wysheidskenmerke en stylaspekte uit die voorgestelde wysheidspsalms saamgevoeg en die oorkoepelende implikasies van die inhoud aangedien.

Met betrekking tot die konteks van wysheidspsalms en die teologiese implikasies daarvan is bewys dat wysheidspsalms moontlik 'n gemeenskaplike liturgiese milieu gehad het met die primêre doel van kommunale dit wel sê gemeenskapsraadgewing. Gemengde literêre genres en vorme asook die sosio-historiese konteks van wysheidspsalms ondersteun hierdie standpunt. Hierdie gevolgtrekking verskil heelwat van die tradisionele hipotese van 'n nie-kultiese lewensfeer (milieu) en die private gebruik van wysheidspsalms vir oordenking.

Vir die kanonieke vorm van wysheidspsalms en die implikasies daarvan, wil dit voorkom of wysheidspsalms 'n wysheidsraamwerk in die Psalmboek geformuleer het met die doel om toepaslike wysheidsraad te gee sodat die beproefde gemeenskap hul oënskynlike probleme kon oorkom en hulle hoop in die ewige God stel.

Vir die wysheidstemas en die teologiese implikasies daarvan het vier hoofaspekte uit die studie gekristalliseer: (1) die twee weë (kontrasterende lewenstyle); (2) die vrese vir die Here en die aanwys van die weg van die Tora; (3) die werklikheid maar onafwendbaarheid van vergelding; en (4) die sentraliteit van God: die Here regeer! Hierdie vier hooftemas openbaar 'n logiese verwantskap: om 'n geseënde lewe te kies tussen die twee weë (kontrasterende lewenswyses), moet menslike wesens die Here vrees deur Sy Woord (die Tora) te gehoorsaam en hul lewens stel onder die vleuels van God se heerskappy, selfs al bestaan daar talle nuuskierige vrae by die mens rakende die teorie van vergelding en die Godsleer. Die Here sal hulle dan vergoed vir hul goeie besluite en gedrag ooreenkomstig Sy betroubare Woord en Daad. Die saambindende faktor in hierdie logiese verband is

die geskape orde in God se skepping: die orde in daardie natuurlike heelal wat deur God geskape is en onderhou word.

Met die oog op die praktiese teologiese implikasies is daarop gewys dat die hoof- praktiese funksie van wysheidspsalms onderrigtend is, en die doel van daardie onderrig handel oor die heerskappy van die Here wat die probleem van al die konflik en vrees op die lewensreis oplos, selfs die vrees vir die dood. Op hierdie wyse het wysheidspsalms 'n transformerende lewenskrag: wysheidspsalms maak diegene wat dwaas is, wys; wysheidspsalms moedig diegene aan wat gefrustreerd is; en wysheidspsalms bied permanente hoop aan diegene wat in duisternis verkeer. Die toestand van die kerk en die kultuur in hierdie tyd van die sogenaamde postmoderne wêreld versterk dus die noodsaaklikheid daarvan om wysheidspsalms in ere te herstel vir wat dit ons kan leer.

'n Voorstel vir die identifisering van wysheidspsalms is vir verdere navorsing oor die onderwerp aan die hand gedoen: 'n wysheidspsalm is enige psalm wat beide wysheidsvorme (en stylaspekte) en wysheidstemas (en motiewe) ryklik dinamies ontwikkel dwarsoor poëtiese kunstigheid heen. Die driedimensionele leesstrategie word ook aanbeveel om die intratekstuele dimensie van wysheidspsalms van naderby, die ekstratekstuele dimensie van wysheidspsalms grondiger en die intertekstuele dimensie van wysheidspsalms breër te lees.

Soos hierdie proefskrif bewys het, is wysheidspsalms altyd kontemporêr; dus op ons van toepassing. Deur na die wysheidsraad in wysheidspsalms te luister en dit te lees deur middel van liedere, gebede en onderrig, en dienooreenkomstig te lewe kan ons breër insig verkry en 'n meer konkrete beeld vorm van *wie God is* en *wie ons is en hoe ons dus moet lewe*, aangesien alle ware teologie ons uiteindelik kan inspireer, kennis bybring en geestelik kan opbou.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALDEN, R.L. 1974a. Psalms: songs of devotion. Chicago: Moody Press.

ALDEN, R.L. 1974b. Chiastic psalms: mechanics of semitic poetry in Psalms 1–50. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 17:11-28

ALEXANDER, A.A. 1987. The Psalms and the after life. *Irish Biblical Studies*, 9:2-17.

ALLEN, L.C. 1983. Psalms 101–150. Waco: Word Books. (Word Biblical Commentary.)

ALTER, R. 1985. The art of Biblical poetry. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.

ANDERSON, A.A. 1972a. The book of Psalms. Volume I, Psalms 1–72. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

ANDERSON, A.A. 1972b. The book of Psalms. Volume II, Psalms 73–150. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

ANDERSON, B.W. 1999. Contours of Old Testament theology. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

ANDERSON, B.W. 2000. Out of depths: the Psalms speak for us today. 3rd ed. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press.

ANDERSON, G.W. 1974. A note on Psalm I:1. *Vetus Testamentum*, 24:231-233.

ANDERSON, R.D. 1994. The division and order of the Psalms. *Westminster Theological Journal*, 56:219-241.

AUFFRET, P. 1980. Essai sur la structure littéraire des Psaumes CXI et CXII. *Vetus Testamentum*, 30(3):257-279.

BARDTKE, H. 1973. Erwaegungen zu Psalm 1 und Psalm 2. (*In* Beek, M.A. *et al.*, *eds*. Symbolae Biblicae et Mesopotamicae. Leiden: Brill. p.1-18.)

BARTH, C.F. 1947. Die Errettung vom Tode in den individuellen Klageund Dankliedern des Alten Testamentes. Zollikon: Evangelischer Verlag.

BAZAK, J. 1985. Structural geometric patterns in Biblical poetry. *Poetics Today*, 6(3):475- 502.

BEAUCAMP, É. 1969. Le sense de ki-im en Psaume 1, vv. 2 et 4. *Recherches de*

Science Religieuse, 57:435-437.

BENTZEN, A. 1948. Introduction to the Old Testament. Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad Publishers.

BERGANT, D. 1997. Israel's wisdom literature: a liberation-critical reading. Minneapolis: Fortress.

BOSMAN, H.L. 1986. The growth and the interpretation of the Old Testament. (*In* Deist, F.E. & Voster, W.S., *eds*. Words from afar. Cape Town: Tafelberg. p.1-16.)

BOTHA, P.J. 1991. The junction of the two ways: the structure and theology of Psalm 1. *Old Testament Essays*, 4(3):381-396.

BOTHA, P.J. 1999. Shame and the social setting of Psalm 119. *Old Testament Essays*, 12(3):389-400.

BOWLING, A. 1980. טוֹב (*tôb*). (*In* Harris, R.L., Archer, G.L. & Waltke, B.K., *eds*. Theological wordbook of the Old Testament. Vol. I. Chicago: Moody Press. p.347-348.)

BRIGGS, C.A. & BRIGGS, E.G. 1906. A critical and exegetical commentary on the Book of Psalms. Vol. I. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

BRIGGS, C.A. & BRIGGS, E.G. 1907. A critical and exegetical commentary on the Book of Psalms. Vol. II. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

BROWN, D.D., DRIVER, S.R. & BRIGGS, C.A. 1979. The new Brown – Driver – Briggs – Gesenius Hebrew and English lexicon. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.

BROWN, W.P. 2002. Seeing the Psalms: a theology of metaphor. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.

BROWNLEE, W.H. 1971. Psalms 1-2 as a coronation liturgy. *Biblica*, 52(3):321-336.

BROTZMAN, E.R. 1994. Old Testament textual criticism: a practical introduction. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

BROYLES, C.C. 1999. Psalms. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers. (New International Biblical Commentary. Old Testament series, 11.)

BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1984. The message of the Psalms: a theological commentary. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House.

BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1991. Bounded by obedience and praise: the Psalms as

canon. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 50:63-92.

BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1993. Psalm 37: conflict of interpretation. (*In* McKay, H.A. & Clines ,D.J.A., *eds*. Of prophet's visions and the wisdom of sages: essays in honour of R. Norman Whybray on his seventieth birthday. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press. p.229-256.)

BRUEGGEMANN, W. & Miller, P.D. 1996. Psalm 73 as a canonical marker. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 72:45-56.

BRYCE, G.E. 1972. 'Better' – Proverbs: an historical and structural study. *Book of Seminar Papers*, 108:343-354.

BRYCE, G.E. 1979. A legacy of wisdom: the Egyptian contribution to the wisdom of Israel. London: Associated University.

BULLOCK, C.H. 1979. An introduction to the Old Testament poetic books. Chicago: Moody Press.

BULLOCK, C.H. 2001. Encountering the book of Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

BURGER, J.A. 1989. The law of Yahweh, the fear of Yahweh, and retribution in the wisdom psalms. *Old Testament Essays*, 2(3):75-95.

BURGER, J.A. 1991. Wysheidskriteria vir die klassifikasie van psalms as wysheidspsalms. *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*, 47(1):213-230.

BUSS, M.J. 1963. The Psalms of Asaph and Korah. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 82:382-392.

BUTTENWIESER, M. 1969. The Psalms: chronologically treated with a new translation. New York: KTAV Publishing House.

CALÈS, J. 1936. Le livre des Psaumes. Paris: Beauchesne.

CALVIN, J. 1965. A commentary on the Psalms. Vol. I. London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd.

CASETTI, P. 1982. Gibt es ein Leben vor dem Tod? Eine Auslegung von Psalm 49. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

CAZELLES, H. 1974. אַשְׁרֵי 'ashré. (*In* Botterweck, G.J. & Ringgren, H., *eds*. Theological dictionary of the Old Testament. Vol. I. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p.445-448.)

CHILDS, B.S. 1976. Reflections on the modern study of the psalms. (*In* Cross, F.M., Lemke, W.E. & Miller, P.D., *eds*. Magnalia Dei, the mighty act of God. Garden City: Doubleday. p.377-388.)

CLEMENTS, R.E. 1976. A century of Old Testament study. Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press.

CLEMENTS, R.E. 1992. Wisdom in theology. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

CLIFFORD. R.J. 1998. The wisdom literature. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

CLIFFORD. R.J. 2002. Psalms 1–72 . Nashville: Abingdon Press. (Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries.)

CLIFFORD. R.J. 2003. Psalms 73–15. Nashville: Abingdon Press. (Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries.)

COETZEE, J. 1995. The powerful and powerless: a rhetorical appreciation of a riddle in Psalm 49. *Ekklesiastikos Pharos*, 77(1):10-21.

COHN-SHERBOK, D. 1996. The Hebrew Bible. London: Cassell.

COLE, R. 2002. An integrated reading of Psalms 1 and 2. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 98:75-88.

CRAIGIE, P.C. 1983. Psalms 1–50. Waco: Word Books. (Word Biblical Commentary.)

CRENSHAW, J.L. 1976. Studies in ancient Israelite wisdom. New York: KTAV Publishing House.

CRENSHAW, J.L. 1981. Old Testament wisdom: an introduction. Atlanta: John Knox Press.

CRENSHAW, J.L. 1995. Urgent advice and probing questions: collected writings on Old Testament wisdom. Macon: Mercer University Press.

CRENSHAW, J.L. 2000. Wisdom psalms? *Currents in Research*, 8:9-17.

CRENSHAW, J.L. 2001. The Psalms: an introduction. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

CRENSHAW, J.L. 2003. Gold dust or nuggets? – a brief response to J. Kenneth Kuntz. *Currents in Biblical Research*, 1(2):155-158.

DAHOOD, M. 1965. Psalms I (1–50): the Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday.

DAHOOD, M. 1968. Psalms II (51–100): the Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday.

DAHOOD, M. 1970. Psalms III (100–150): the Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday.

DAVIDSON, A.B. 1901. Davidson's introductory Hebrew grammar: syntax. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

DAVIDSON, R. 1990. Wisdom and worship. London: SCM Press.

DAVIDSON, R. 1998. The vitality of worship. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

DAY, J. 1992. Psalms. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

DE MEYER, F. 1979. The science of literature method of Prof. M. Weiss in confrontation with form criticism, exemplified on the basis of Psalm 49. *Bijdrangen: Tijdschrift voor Filosofie en Theologie*, 40:152-167.

DEISSLER, A. 1964. Die Psalmen. Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag.

DEIST, F.E. 1986. The writer, his text and his audience. (*In* Deist, F.E. & Voster, W.S., *eds*. Words from afar. Cape Town: Tafelberg. p.17-38.)

DEIST, F.E. 1990. A concise dictionary of theological and related terms with an English~Afrikaans and an Afrikaans~English list. Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik.

DELITZSCH, F. 1975a. Biblical commentary on the Psalms. Vol. II. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company

DELITZSCH, F. 1975b. Biblical commentary on the Psalms. Vol. III. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company

DELL, K.J. 2000a. Wisdom in Israel. (*In* Mayes, A.D.H., *ed.* Text in context. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.348-375.)

DELL, K.J. 2000b. Get wisdom, get insight: an introduction to Israel's wisdom literature. London: Darton, Longman and Tod.

DELL, K.J. 2004. "I will solve my riddle to the music of the lyre" (Psalm XLIX 4 [5]): a cultic setting for wisdom psalms? *Vetus Testamentum*, 54(4):445-458.

DILLARD, R.B. & LONGMAN, T. 1994. An introduction to the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

DORSEY, D.A. 1999. The literary structure of the Old Testament: a commentary on Genesis – Malachi. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

DUHM, B. 1899. Die Psalmen. Tübingen/Leipzig: Mohr. (Kürzer Handkommentar zum Alten Testament/XIV.)

EATON, J.H. 1967. Psalms: introduction and commentary. London: SCM Press.

EATON, J.H. 1989. The contemplative face of Old Testament wisdom in the context of world religions. London: SCM Press.

EISSFELDT, O. 1965. The Old Testament: an introduction. New York: Harper and Row.

ENGNELL, I. 1970. Critical essays on the Old Testament. London: S.P.C.K.

ENNS, P. 1997. מִצְוָה. (*In* VanGemeren, W.A., *ed.* Dictionary of Old Testament theology & exegesis. Vol. II. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. p.1070-1071)

FARMER, K.A. 1998a. The wisdom books: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes. (*In* McKenzie, S.L. & Graham, P., *eds.* The Hebrew Bible today: an introduction to critical issues. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press. p.129-151.)

FARMER, K.A. 1998b. Psalms 42–89. (*In* Farmer, W.R., *ed.* The international Bible Commentary. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press. p.823-840.)

FISHBANE, M. 1985. Biblical interpretation in Ancient Israel. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

FITZGERALD, A. 1978. The interchange of *L*, *N*, and *R* in biblical Hebrew. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 97(4):481-488.

FOHRER, G. 1993. Psalmen. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

FOKKELMAN, J.P. 2000. Major poems of the Hebrew Bible. Vol. II. Assen: Van Gorcum.

GERSTENBERGER, E.S. 1988. Psalms: part 1 with an introduction to cultic poetry. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

GERSTENBERGER, E.S. 2001. Psalms: part 2, and Lamentations. Grand Rapids : William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

GESENIUS, W. & KAUTZSCH, E. 1910. Gesenius' Hebrew grammar. Oxford:

Clarendon Press.

GITAY, Y. 1993. Rhetorical criticism. (*In* McKenzie, S.L. & Haynes, S.R., *eds.* To each its own meaning. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press. p.135-149.)

GITAY, Y. 1996. Psalm 1 and the rhetoric of religious argumentation. (*In* De Regt, L.J., De Waard, J. & Fokkelman, J.P., *eds.* Literary structure and rhetorical strategies in the Hebrew Bible. Assen: Van Gorcum. p.232-240.)

GORDON, R.P. 1995. A house divided: wisdom in Old Testament narrative traditions. (*In* Day, J., Gordon, R.P. & Williamson, H.G.M. *eds.* Wisdom in ancient Israel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.94-105.)

GOULDER, M.D. 1982. The psalms of the sons of Korah. Sheffield: JSOT Press.

GRÄBE, I. 1984. Kommunikasiemiddele in die poësie. (*In* SAVAL. Kongresreferate, IV. Johannesburg: Suid-Afrikaanse Vereninging vir Algemene Literatuur Wetenskap. p.137-171.)

GRÄBE, I. 1990. Theory of literature and Old Testament studies: narrative conventions as exegetic reading strategies. *Old Testament Essays*, 3(1):43-59.

GUNKEL, H. 1926. Die Psalmen. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

GUNKEL, H. & BEGRICH, J. 1933. Einleitung in die Psalmen: die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels. Güttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

GUNKEL, H. & BEGRICH, J. 1998. An introduction to the Psalms. Macon: Mercer University Press.

GUNN, G.S. 1956. God in the Psalms. Edinburgh: Saint Andrews Press.

HATTINGH, H.P. & COETZEE, J.H. 1999. 'n Datering van Psalms 49 en 73. *Old Testament Essays*, 12(3):477-490.

HIRSCH, S.R. 1960. The Psalms: translation and commentary by Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch. Vol. I. Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers.

HIRSCH, S.R. 1966. The Psalms: translation and commentary by Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch. Vol. II. Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers.

HOLLADAY, W.L. 1988. A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament based upon the lexical work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

HOSSFELD, F.L. & ZENGER, E. 1993. Die Psalmen I: Psalm 1–50. Würzburg:

Echter Verlag.

HOWARD, D.M. 1999. Recent trends in Psalms study. (*In* Baker, D.W. & Arnold, B.T., *eds*. The face of Old Testament studies. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. p.329-368.)

HULST, A.R. 1960. Old Testament translation problems. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

HUMAN, D.J. 1996. The tradition-historical setting of Psalm 25: how wisdom motives contribute to its understanding. *Skrif en Kerk*, 17(1):76-88.

HURVITZ, A. 1988. Wisdom vocabulary in the Hebrew Psalter: a contribution to the study of 'wisdom psalms'. *Vetus Testamentum*, 38(1):41-51.

HURVITZ, A. 1992. צדיק = 'wise' in Biblical Hebrew and the wisdom connections of Ps 37. (*In* Schunck, K.D. & Augustin, M. *eds*. Goldene Äpfel in silbernen Schalen. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. p.109-112.)

IRSIGLER, H. 1998. Quest for justice as reconciliation of the poor and the righteous in Psalms 37, 49 and 73. *Skrif en Kerk*, 19(3):584-604.

JANSEN, H.L. 1937. Die spätjüdische Psalmdichtung: ihr Entstehungskreis und ihr 'Sitz im Leben'. Oslo: Norske videnskaps-akademie.

JOFFE, L. 2002. The answer to the meaning of life, the universe and the Elohistic Psalter. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 27(2):223-235.

JOHNSTON, P.S. 1997. Psalm 49: a personal eschatology. (*In* Brower, K.E. & Elliot, M.W., *eds*. Eschatology in Bible & theology: evangelical essays at the dawn of a new millennium. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press. p.73-84.)

JOHNSTON, P.S. 2002. Shades of Sheol: death and afterlife in the Old Testament. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press.

JONKER, L.C. 1993. 'Text' in a multidimensional exegetical approach. *Scriptura*, 46:110-115.

JONKER, L.C. 1996. Plotting the exegetical-hermeneutical landscape. *Scriptura*, 59:397-411.

JONKER, L.C. 1998. Reading Jonah multidimensionally. *Scriptura*, 64:1-15.

JONKER, L.C. 2004. Another look at the psalm headings: observations on the musical terminology. *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*, 30(1):65-85.

JOÜON, P. & MURAOKA, T. 1993. A grammar of biblical Hebrew. Part 2,

Morphology. Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico.

JÜNGLING, H.W. 1998. Psalms 1–41. (*In* Farmer, W.R., *ed.* The International Bible Commentary. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press. p.779-822.)

KAISER, W.C. 1978. Toward an Old Testament theology. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.

KIDNER, D. 1973. Psalms 1–72: an introduction and commentary on Books I and II of the Psalms. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press.

KIDNER, D. 1975. Psalms 73–150: a commentary on Books III–V of the Psalms. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press.

KIM, Y. 1999. Reading Psalm 78 multidimensionally. Potchefstroom: Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education. (Dissertation - Th.M.).

KIM, Y. & Van Rooy, H.F. 2000. Reading Psalm 78 multidimensionally: the textual dimension. *Scriptura*, 74(3):285-298.

KIM, Y. & Van Rooy, H.F. 2003. Reading Psalm 78 multidimensionally: the authorial dimension. *Scriptura*, 84(3):468-484.

KIM, Y. & Van Rooy, H.F. 2005. Reading Psalm 78 multidimensionally: the dimension of the reader. *Scriptura*, 88(1):101-117.

KIRKPATRICK, A.F. 1921. The book of Psalms. Cambridge: University Press.

KISSANE, M.E.J. 1953. The book of Psalms: translated from a critical revised Hebrew text. Vol. I. Dublin: The Richview Press.

KISSANE, M.E.J. 1954. The book of Psalms: translated from a critical revised Hebrew text. Vol. II. Dublin: The Richview Press.

KITTEL, D.R. 1914. Die Psalmen. 2. Aufl. Leipzig: A. Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung.

KOEHLER, L. & BAUMGARTNER, W. 1994. The Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament. Subsequently revised by Walter Baumgartner and Johann Jakob Stamm. Vol. I. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

KOEHLER, L. & BAUMGARTNER, W. 1995. The Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament. Subsequently revised by Walter Baumgartner and Johann Jakob Stamm. Vol. II. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

KOEHLER, L. & BAUMGARTNER, W. 1996. The Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon

of the Old Testament. Subsequently revised by Walter Baumgartner and Johann Jakob Stamm. Vol. III. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

KÖNIG, E. 1927. Die Psalmen. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann.

KRAUS, H.J. 1986. Theology of the Psalms. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House.

KRAUS, H.J. 1988. Psalms 1–59: a commentary. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House.

KRAUS, H.J. 1989. Psalms 60–150: a commentary. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House.

KUNTZ, J.K. 1974. The canonical wisdom psalms of ancient Israel – their rhetorical , thematic, and formal dimensions. (*In* Jackson J.J. & Kessler, M., *eds*. Rhetorical criticism: essays in honor of James Muilenburg. Pittsburgh: Pickwick. p.186-222.)

KUNTZ, J.K. 1977. The retribution motif in psalmic wisdom. *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 89(2):223-233.

KUNTZ, J.K. 2000. Wisdom psalms and the shaping of the Hebrew Psalter. (*In* Argall, R.A. Bow, B.A. & Werline, R.A., *eds*. For a later generation: the transformation of tradition in Israel, early Judaism, and early Christianity. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International. p.144-160.)

KUNTZ, J.K. 2003. Reclaiming Biblical wisdom psalms. *Currents in Biblical Research*, 1(2):145-154.

LEEMAN, S. 1996. The ATBASH-acrostic. *Jewish Bible Quarterly*, 24(1):43-45.

LEUPOLD, H.C. 1959. Exposition of the Psalms. Welwyn: Evangelical Press.

LIEDKE, G. & PETERSEN, C. 1997. תּוֹרָה *tôrâ* instruction. (*In* Jenni, E. & Westermann, C., *eds*. Theological lexicon of the Old Testament. Vol. 3. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers. p.415-1422.)

LIMBURG. J. 2000. Psalms. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press. (Westminster Bible Companion)

LIPIŃSKI, E. 1968. Macarismes et Psaumes de congratulation. *Revue Biblique*, 75:321-367.

LONGMAN, T. 1985. Form criticism, recent developments in genre theory, and the evangelical. *Westminster Theological Journal*, 47(1):46-67.

LORETZ, O. 1986. Ugaritisches und Jüdisches Weisheit und Tod in Psalm 49: Stil contra Parallelismus Membrorum. *Ugarit-Forschungen*, 17:189-212.

LUCAS. E. 2003. Exploring the Old Testament. Vol. 3, the Psalms and wisdom literature. London: SPCK.

LUYTEN, J. 1979. Psalm 73 and wisdom. (*In* Gilbert, M. *ed.* La sagesse de l'Ancien Testament. Leuven: Leuven University Press. p.59-81.)

MACINTOSH, A.A. 1995. Hosea and the wisdom tradition: dependence and independence. (*In* Day, J., Gordon, R.P. & Williamson, H.G.M., *eds.* Wisdom in ancient Israel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.124-132.)

MALINA. B.J. 1981. The New Testament worlds: insight from cultural anthropology. Atlanta: John Knox Press.

MASTIN, B.A. 1995. Wisdom and Daniel. (*In* Day, J., Gordon, R.P. & Williamson, H.G.M., *eds.* Wisdom in ancient Israel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.161-169.)

MAYS. J.L. 1987. The place of the Torah–psalms in the Psalter. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 106:3-12.

MAYS. J.L. 1994a. The Lord reigns. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press.

MAYS. J.L. 1994b. Psalms. Louisville: John Knox Press. (Interpretation: a Bible commentary for teaching and preaching.)

MAYS. J.L. 1995. Past, present, and prospect in Psalm study. (*In* Mays, J.L., Petersen, D.L. & Richards, K.H., *eds.* Old Testament interpretation: past, present, and future. Edinburgh: T & T Clark. p.147-156.)

McCANN, J.C. 1992. The Psalms as instruction. *Interpretation*, 46(2):117-128.

McCANN, J.C. 1993a. A theological introduction to the book of Psalms: the Psalms as Torah. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

McCANN, J.C. 1993b. Books I–III and the editorial purpose of the Hebrew Psalter. (*In* McCann, J.C., *ed.* The shape and shaping of the Psalter. Sheffield: JSOT Press. p.93-107.)

McCANN, J.C. 1996. Psalms. Nashville: Abingdon Press. (The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 4.)

McCANN, J.C., *ed.* 1993. The shape and shaping of the Psalter. Sheffield: JSOT

Press.

McKANE, W. 1995. Jeremiah and the wise. (*In* Day, J., Gordon, R.P. & Williamson, H.G.M., *eds.* Wisdom in ancient Israel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.142-151.)

MERENDINO, R.P. 1979. Sprachkunst in Psalm 1. *Vetus Testamentum*, 29(1):45-60.

MEYER, E.E. 1999. Problematiese partikels: vertaal ons dit, of ignoreer ons dit? Die partikel 'ki' in Psalms 49 en 73. *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif*, 40(1/2):110-122.

MILLER, P.D. 1986. Interpreting the Psalms. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

MILLER, P.D. 1989. Psalms. (*In* Anderson B.W., *ed.* The Books of the Bible. Vol. 1, The Old Testament / The Hebrew Bible. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. p.203-221.)

MORGAN, D.F. 1981. Wisdom in the Old Testament traditions. Atlanta: John Knox Press.

MOWINCKEL, S. 1960. Psalms and wisdom. (*In* Society for Old Testament Study. Wisdom in Israel and in the ancient near east. Leiden: E.J. Brill. p.205-244. Vetus Testamentum Supplements, 3.)

MOWINCKEL, S. 1962. The Psalms in Israel's worship. Vol. II. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

MUILENBURG, J. 1969. Form criticism and beyond. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 88:1-18.

MUNCH, P.A. 1937. Die jüdischen ‚Weisheitspsalmen' und ihr Platz im Leben. *Acta Orientalia*, 15:112-140.

MURPHY, R.E. 1963. A consideration of the classification, 'wisdom psalms'. (*In* Congress Volume. Leiden: E.J. Brill. p.156-167. Vetus Testamentum Supplements, 9.)

MURPHY, R.E. 1969. Psalms. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice- Hall. (The Jerome Biblical Commentary.)

MURPHY, R.E. 2000. The gift of the Psalms. Peabody: Handrickson Publishers.

OESTERLEY, W.O.E. 1955. The Psalms: translated with text-critical and exegetical notes. London: S.P.C.K.

OLOFSSON, S. 2000. Death shall be their shepherd: an interpretation of Psalm 49:15 in the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint. (*In* Evans, C.A., *ed.* The interpretation of Scripture in early Judaism and Christianity. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press. p.75-105.)

PERDUE, L.G. 1974. The riddles of Psalm 49. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 93(4):533-542.

PERDUE, L.G. 1977. Wisdom and cult: a critical analysis of the views of cult in the wisdom literature of Israel and the Ancient Near East. Missoula: Scholars Press.

PEROWNE, J.J.S. 1976a. The book of Psalms: a new translation with introductions and notes. Vol. I. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.

PEROWNE, J.J.S. 1976b. The book of Psalms: a new translation with introductions and notes. Vol. II. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.

PLEINS, J.D. 1996. Death and endurance: reassessing the literary structure and theology of Psalm 49. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 69:19-27.

PRINSLOO, G.T.M. 1992. Analysing Old Testament poetry: An experiment in methodology with reference to Psalm 126. *Old Testament Essays*, 5(2):225-251.

PRINSLOO, W.S. 1984. Van kateder tot kansel. Pretoria: NG Kerkboekhandel Transvaal.

PRINSLOO, W.S. 1991. Die Psalms leef! Halfway House: NG Kerkboekhandel.

PRINSLOO, W.S. 1994. A comprehensive semiostructural exegetical approach. *Old Testament Essays*, 7(4):78-83.

PRINSLOO, W.S. 2000. Die lof van my God solank ek lewe. Irene: Medpharm Publikasies.

PRITCHARD, J.B., *ed.* 1955. Ancient Near Eastern texts relating to the Old Testament. 2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

RAABE, P.R. 1990. Psalm structures: a study of psalms with refrains. Sheffield: JSOT Press.

RAABE, P.R. 1991. Deliberate ambiguity in the Psalter. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 110(2):213-227.

RAVASI, G. 1998. Psalms 90–150. (*In* Farmer, W.R., *ed.* The International Bible Commentary. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press. p.841-859.)

RENDTORFF, R. 1986. The Old Testament: an introduction. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

RIDDERBOS. N.H. 1963. The Psalms: style-figures and structure. *Oudtestamentische Studiën 13*. Leiden : E.J. Brill.

RODD, C.S. 1964. Psalms 73–150. London: The Epworth Press. (Epworth Preacher's Commentary.)

RODD, C.S. 2001. Psalms. (*In* Barton, J. & Muddiman, J., *eds*. The Oxford Bible Commentary. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.355-405.)

ROGERSON, J.W. & McKAY, J.W. 1977. Psalms 1–50. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

ROZENBERG, M.S. & ZLOTOWITZ, B.M. 1999. The book of psalms: a new translation and commentary. Jerusalem: Jason Aronson INC.

RYKEN, L., WILHOIT, J.C. & LONGMAN, T. 1998. Dictionary of Biblical imagery. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press.

SABOURIN, L. 1969. The Psalms: their origin and meaning. Vol. 2. New York: Alba House.

SÆBØ, M. 1997. אשׁר *'šr* pi. to call blessed. (*In* Jenni, E. & Westermann, C., *eds*. Theological lexicon of the Old Testament. Vol. 1. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers. p.195-197.)

SARNA, N.M. 1993. Songs of the heart: an introduction to the Book of Psalms. New York: Schocken Books.

SAUER, G. 1997. דֶּרֶךְ *derek* way. (*In* Jenni, E. & Westermann, C., *eds*. Theological lexicon of the Old Testament. Vol. 1. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers. p.343-346.)

SCHAEFER, K. 2001. Psalms: Berit Olam – studies in Hebrew narrative & poetry. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press.

SCHMIDT, H. 1934. Die Psalmen. Tübingen: Mohr.

SCHMITT, A. 1973. Entrückung–Aufnahme–Himmelfahrt. Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk.

SCHÖKEL, L.A. 1988. A manual of Hebrew poetics. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute.

SCOTT, R.B.Y. 1971. The way of wisdom in the Old Testament. New York: The Macmillan Company.

SCROGGIE, W.G. 1948. The Psalms. London: Pickering & Inglis Ltd..

SEOW, C.L. 1995. A grammar for Biblical Hebrew. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

SEYBOLD, K. 1996. Die Psalmen. Tübingen: J.C.B Mohr (Paul Siebeck). (Handbuch zum Alten Testament, 1/15.)

SHERWOOD, S.K. 1989. Psalm 112: a royal wisdom psalm? *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 51(1):50- 64.

SOGGIN, J.A. 1995. Amos and wisdom. (*In* Day, J., Gordon, R.P. & Williamson, H.G.M., *eds*. Wisdom in ancient Israel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.119-123.)

SOLL, W. 1991. Psalm 119: matrix, form, and setting. Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America.

SPANGENBERG, I.J.J. 1997. Psalm 49 and the book of Qohelet. *Skrif en Kerk*, 18(2):328-344.

STUHLMUELLER, C. 1983a. Psalms I (Psalms 1–72). Wilmington: Michael Glazier.

STUHLMUELLER, C. 1983b. Psalms II (Psalms 73–150). Wilmington: Michael Glazier.

TANNER, B.L. 2001. The book of Psalms through the lens of intertextuality. New York: Peter Lang.

TATE, M.E. 1990. Psalm 51–100. Dallas: Word Books. (Word Biblical Commentary.)
TATE, M.E. 2001. Psalms. (*In* Mills, W.E. & Wilson, R.F., *eds*. Mercer commentary on the Bible. Vol. 3. Macon: Mercer University Press. p.41-191.)

TATE, W.R. 1997. Biblical interpretation: an integrated approach. 2nd ed. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.

TERRIEN, S. 1962. Amos and wisdom. (*In* Anderson, B.W. & Harrelson, W., *eds*. Israel's prophetic heritage. London: SCM Press. p.108-115.)

TERRIEN, S. 2003. The Psalms: strophic structure and theological commentary. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

THOMAS, M.E. 1986. Psalms 1 and 112 as a paradigm for the comparison of wisdom motifs in the psalms. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 29(1):15-24.

TREVES, M. 1988. The dates of the Psalms. Pisa: E Stampatori.

TROMP, N. 1968/9. Psalm 49: armoede en rijkdom, leven en dood. *Ons Geestelijk Leven*. 45:239-251.

VAN DER MERWE, C.H.J., NAUDÉ, J.A. & KROEZE, J.H. 1999. A Biblical Hebrew reference grammar. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

VAN DER LUGT, P. 1980. Strofische structuren in de Bijbels–Hebreeuwse poëzie. Kampen: J.H. Kok.

VAN DER PLOEG, J. 1963. Notes sur le Psaume XLIX. Leiden: E.J. Brill. (Oudtestamentische Studiën, 13.)

VAN DER PLOEG, J.P.M. 1974. Psalmen. Deel 2, Psalm 76–150. Roermond: Romen & Zonen (Boeken van het Oude Testament, 7b.)

VANDERKAM, J.C. 1994. The Dead Sea Scrolls today. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

VANGEMEREN, W.A. 1991. Psalms. (*In* Gæbelein, F.E., *ed.* The expositor's Bible commentary. Vol. 5. Winona Lake: BMH Books. p.1-880.)

VOGELS, W. 1979. A structural analysis of Psalm 1. *Biblica*, 60:410-416.

VON RAD, G. 1966. The problem of the Hexateuch and other essays. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd.

VON RAD, G. 1970. Weisheit in Israel. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.

VON RAD, G. 1972. Wisdom in Israel. London: SCM Press.

VON RAD, G. 1975. Old Testament theology: the theology of Israel's historical traditions. Vol. I. London: SCM Press.

VOS, C.J.A. 2003. Psalm 1– as liedteks 'n literêre en teologiese evaluering. *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 24(2):636-643.

VOS, C.J.A. 2005. Theopoetry of the Psalms. Pretoria: Protea Book House.

WALTKE, B.K. & DIEWERT, D. 1999. Wisdom literature. (*In* Baker, D.W. &

Arnold, B.T., *eds*. The face of Old Testament studies. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. p.295-328.)

WALTKE, B.K. & O'CONNOR, M. 1990. An introduction to Biblical Hebrew syntax. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

WATSON, W.G.E. 1995. Classical Hebrew poetry. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

WEEKS, S. 1994. Early Israelite wisdom. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

WEISER, A. 1962. The Psalms. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.

WENDLAND, E.R. 2002. Analyzing the Psalms with exercises for Bible students and translators. 2nd ed. Dallas: SIL International.

WEST, M. 1992. Looking for the poem: reflections on the current and future status of Biblical Hebrew poetry. (*In* House P.R., *ed.* Beyond form criticism: essays in Old Testament literary criticism. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns. p.423-431.)

WESTERMANN, C. 1995. Roots of wisdom. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.

WHEDBEE, J.W. 1971. Isaiah and wisdom. New York: Abingdon Press.

WHYBRAY, R.N. 1974. The intellectual tradition in the Old Testament. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

WHYBRAY, R.N. 1995. The wisdom psalms. (*In* Day, J., Gordon, R.P. & Williamson, H.G.M. *eds*. Wisdom in ancient Israel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.152-160.)

WHYBRAY, R.N. 1996. Reading the Psalms as a Book. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

WHYBRAY, R.N. 2002. The good life in the Old Testament. London: T & T Clark.

WILCOCK, M. 2001. The message of Psalms 73–150. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press.

WILLIAMS, R.J. 1976. Hebrew syntax: an outline. 2nd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

WILLIAMSON, H.G.M. 1995. Isaiah and the wise. (*In* Day, J., Gordon, R.P. & Williamson, H.G.M. *eds*. Wisdom in ancient Israel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.133-141.)

WILLIS, J.T. 1979. Psalm 1: an entity. *Zeitschrift für Die Anttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 91:381-401.

WILLIS, J.T. 2000. The juxtaposition of synonymous and chiastic parallelism in tricola in Old Testament Hebrew Psalm poetry. (*In* Orton, D.E. *ed.* Poetry in the Hebrew Bible: selected studies from Vetus Testamentum. Leiden: Brill. p.156-171.)

WILSON, G.H. 1985. The editing of the Hebrew Psalter. Chico: Scholars Press.

WILSON, G.H. 1992. The shape of the book of Psalms. *Interpretation*, 46(2):129-142.

WILSON, G.H. 1993a. Understanding the purposeful arrangement of psalms in the Psalter. (*In* McCann, J.C., *ed.* The shape and shaping of the Psalter. Sheffield: JSOT Press. p.42-51.)

WILSON, G.H. 1993b. Shaping the Psalter. (*In* McCann, J.C., *ed.* The shape and shaping of the Psalter. Sheffield: JSOT Press. p.72-82.)

WOLFF, H.W. 1977. Joel and Amos. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

ZIMMERLI, W. 1972. Zwillingspsalmen (*In* Schreiner J., *ed.* Wort, Lied, und Gottesspruch: Beiträge zu Psalmen und Propheten. Würzburg: Echter Verlag. p.105-113.)