

Chapter II

Psalm 90:1-17

1 תִּכְפֹּלֶה לְמֹשֶׁה אִישׁ־הָאֱלֹהִים אֲדֹנָי מַעֲוֹן אַתָּה הָיִיתָ לָנוּ בְּדֹר וָדֹר
 2 בְּטַרְסֵם הַרִים יִלְדוּ וְתַחֲלִל אַרְצָךְ וְתַחֲבֵל וּמַעֲוֹלָם עַד־עוֹלָם אַתָּה אֵל
 3 תִּשָּׁב אָנוּשׁ עַד־דָּפָא וְהִאמֵר שׁוּבוּ בְנֵי־אָדָם:
 4 כִּי אֵלֶיךָ שָׁנִים בְּעֵינֶיךָ כַּיּוֹם אַחְמוּל כִּי יַעֲבֹר וְאִשְׁמוּרָה בְּלִילָה
 5 זָרְמַתָּם שָׁנָה יִהְיֶה בַּבֶּקֶר כְּתַצִּיר גְּחֹלֶף
 6 בַּבֶּקֶר יִצִּיץ וְתִלְף לְעַרְב׃ מוֹלֵל וַיִּבֶשׁ
 7 כִּי־כִלְיָנוּ בְּאִפְךָ וּבַחֲמַתְךָ גִּבְהַלְנוּ:
 8 שֶׁפַע עֹנֹתֵינוּ לִגְדֹךָ עֲלַמְנוּ לְמֵאוֹר פְּנֶיךָ
 9 כִּי כָל־יָמֵינוּ פָּנוּ בְּעִבְרַתְךָ כִּלְיָנוּ שָׁנִינוּ כְּמוֹ־הֶגֶה
 10 יָמֵי־שָׁנוֹתֵינוּ בָּהֶם שָׁבָעִים שָׁנָה וְאִם בַּגְּבוּרַת שְׁמוֹנִים שָׁנָה וְרַחֲמֵיךָ עָמַל
 וְאָנוּ כִּי־גֹ חַיֵּשׁ וְנִעְפָּה
 11 מִי־יֹדַע עֹז אִפְךָ וּכְיִרְאַתְךָ עִבְרַתְךָ
 12 לְמִנּוֹת יָמֵינוּ כֵּן הִרְדַּע וְנָבֵא לִבְבִי חֲכָמָה
 13 שׁוֹבָה יְהוָה עַד־מָתַי וְהִנָּחֵם עַל־עֲבֹרֶיךָ
 14 שִׁבְעֵנִי בַּבֶּקֶר חֲסֹדְךָ וּנְרַנְנָה וּנְשַׁמְחָה בְּכָל־יָמֵינוּ
 15 שִׁמְחָנוּ כִּי־מוֹת עֲנִיתָנוּ שָׁנוֹת רָאִינוּ רָעָה
 16 וְרָאָה אֶל־עֲבֹרֶיךָ פָּעֲלֶךָ וְתִדְרֹךְ עַל־בְּנֵיהֶם
 17 וַיְהִי נֹעַם אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עָלֵינוּ וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ פּוֹנְנָה עָלֵינוּ
 וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ פּוֹנְנָהוּ

The title of the psalm ascribes its authorship to Moses,¹ which is unique in the Psalter. Many exegetes ignore the title by omitting it from their interpretation of the text, because there is a lack of visible correspondence between the title and the body of the psalm. In this case the title is regarded as not belonging to the text.

¹ The reference to “Man of God” is used six times in referring to Moses in the Old Testament (Deut 33:1; Jos 14:6; 1 Chron 23:14; 2 Chron 30:15; Ps 90: 1; Ezra 3:2).

Even though there are difficulties in connecting the title with the body of the psalm, an exegetical basis might be deduced from the title. Slomovic (1979:376) has made a useful remark relative to the use of the title: “The title of Psalm 90 was influenced by the similarities of thought between many utterances attributed to Moses and the identical expressions found in this Psalm.” In fact, some words and phrases occurring in this psalm are reminiscent of the events surrounding Moses (Slomovic 1979:376; Fishbane 1985:405). The words שׁוּב (turn back, v. 13), אַף (anger, vv. 7, 11), נַחַם (have pity, v. 13), עֲבָד (servants, v. 13), and כֹּלֵה (be consumed, v. 7) strike a parallel with the words found in Moses’ prayer after the apostasy of the golden calf (Exod 32:10-13). It is quite difficult to define how Psalm 90 and Exodus are related, but it is possible to deduce some clue to the interpretation of the text and their relationship, if we accept the remark of Freedman (1985:59) on Psalm 90: “. . . the composer of the psalm based it on the episode in Exodus 32 and imagined in poetic form how Moses may have spoken in the circumstances of Exodus” (cf. Tate 1990:438).² In addition, it is worth noting that the similarities of language between Ps 90 and the song of Moses in Deut 31:30-32:47 provide us with the basic understanding for the composition of the psalm. Various linguistic parallels between the song of Moses and Ps 90 strengthen the association of the psalm with Moses.³

² Krüger (1994:194, 195, 201-203, 208-212) interprets Ps 90 with the background of the Exilic community. He understands vv. 7-10 to be reflecting the difficult situation of the Babylon community, that is, their contemporary sufferings.

³ For useful lists on the linguistic relationship between Psalm 90 and Deut 32, see Briggs and Briggs (1969:272) and Tate (1990:438).

Apart from the title, on the whole, the psalm consists of two stanzas (1-12 and 13-17), the first of which has four strophes (vv. 1-2, 3-6, 7-10, and 11-12), while the second forms one strophe (13-17).

The first strophe of the first stanza, vv. 1-2, constitutes an introduction to the entire psalm. God's name יְהוָה in v. 1 and v. 17 forms an inclusio, embracing the entire psalm. The literary device of linking the beginning with the end is further observed when we understand that the word מְעַרְבֵן in v. 1 is reversed in v. 17 as נִעַם with identical consonants. The former refers to a timeless past, while the latter refers to the future (Magonet 1994:153-154). Thus, the opening of the psalm speaks of God's help in the past, on the basis of which his people have found confidence, while the end projects this experience ahead into the future, affirming that God may restore the joy of his people's salvation.

It is the thematic unity that binds vv.1b-2. These verses contrast God's time with the time of human beings. The concept of the transience of human beings is implied in such words as יָלַדוּ , בָּדְדוּ , וְנָחְלוּ , in vv. 1-2, while the phrase "from everlasting to everlasting" ($\text{וּמִעוֹלָם עַד־עוֹלָם}$) reveals God's time which encompasses past, present, and future. This theme of the transitoriness of man expressed in contrast to God continues throughout the psalm.

V. 2a and 2b form an extension that explains the statement in 1b, in turn explaining the transience of human beings. The verbs יָלַדוּ in 2a and וְנָחְלוּ in 2b are the terms used for birth pangs, and thus both correspond to the imagery of birth.⁴ Also, the word בְּטָרֶם serves both 2a

⁴ Tate (1990:432) notes that the consecutive imperfect verb $\text{וְנָחְחוּ וְיָלַדוּ}$ in 2b "has the force of making the birth of the earth and the world coincide with the birth of the

and 2b. The use of the birth imagery when describing creation, emphasizes the transitoriness of human beings by saying that though the mountains and the world belong to the permanent features of creation, they had a beginning, a physical birth (Magonet 1994:154). In contrast to this, God’s time is “from everlasting to everlasting” (מְעוֹלָם עַד-עוֹלָם). The conjunction וַ at the beginning of 2c bearing an explicative meaning (‘even’) serves to emphasize a strong contrast between the transcendence of God and the transience of human beings. The following chiasmic structure shows the thought of vv. 1b-2 clearly:

- A: אֱלֹהִים (God)
 B: יוֹם וָיָמִים (time)
 C: הַרְרִים (space)
 C': אֶרֶץ וְתֵבֵל (space)
 B': מְעוֹלָם עַד-עוֹלָם (time)
 A': אֱלֹהִים (God)

The above structure reveals that vv. 1-2 are surrounded by the divine God who encompasses time and space (McCann 1993b:157). This explains why the psalmist confesses God as “refuge” or “dwelling place” (מְעוֹן).⁵ The eternal God who dwells beyond the generation of the earth

mountains.”

⁵ מְעוֹן and מְעוֹן (“refuge”) can be interchanged in the Hebrew Bible. Indeed, they occur in similar contexts, as the following instances show:

Psalm 31:3b: הָיָה לִי לְצוּר-מְעוֹן לְבֵית מְצוּדוֹת לְהוֹשִׁיעַנִי

Psalm 71:3: הָיָה לִי לְצוּר מְעוֹן לְבֹא תְּמִיד צְוִיֶּתָ לְהוֹשִׁיעַנִי כִּי-סִלְעֵי וּמְצוּדֹתַי אֶתָּה

Psalms 31:3b and 71:3 both start with the same phrase הָיָה לִי

and share four words (צוּר, מְעוֹן, מְצוּדָה, and יִשַׁע) in common, but the מְעוֹן in the phrase לְצוּר-מְעוֹן of the former is interchanged with the מְעוֹן in the phrase מְעוֹן לְצוּר of the latter. In addition, Psalms 27:1 and 37:39 repeat the root יִשַׁע in common, but the

and the world of man has been a basis of the psalmist's confidence.

After the introduction to the thought of the whole psalm, the psalmist again returns to the theme of human transitoriness in v. 3, while vv. 4-6 deal with the theme of the eternal God from his point of view. In v. 3 the term אָדָם and the phrase בְּגִי־אָדָם refer to the transitory man and in vv. 4-6 the transcendence of God is implied in the following terms אֱלֹהֵי שָׁמַיִם (v. 4), אֶתְמֹל (v.4), אֲשַׁמְרֶהָ בְּלִילָהּ (v. 4), בְּקֶרֶב (vv. 5, 6) and עָרֶב (v.6) which emphasize the transitoriness of human beings.

V. 3 has two stichs, and the word שׁוֹב occurring in the first stich is repeated in the second stich. Dahood (1968:323), Weiser (1979:597), and Kirkpatrick (1903:549) take the same verb שׁוֹב in v. 3a and in 3b as a synonymous parallelism, by which the whole verse is understood as referring to man's return to dust (death). This view is acceptable, since we find in Gen 3:19 and Ps 104:29 a synonymous parallelism in the use of both verbs.

The emphatic וַי (Dahood 1968:324) at the beginning of v. 4 indicates the beginning of a new section. Its use at the beginning of v. 4 here serves to emphasize mankind's mortality in v. 3 by referring to the transcendence of God indicated in v. 4.

V. 4 is closely linked with vv. 5-6 through poetic style. The comparative preposition כִּי ("like") occurring in vv. 4-5 and the appearance of the preposition כִּי in all three verses indicate a close connection between all three verses. Also, in v. 4 the psalmist refers to

former has the word מָעֹן, while the latter holds the word מָעוֹן. The instances shown above indicate that the words מָעֹן and מָעֹן can be exchanged to each other, thus implying that the meanings of the words may also be interchanged.

time by narrowing from “a thousand of years in God’s sight” to a day (yesterday) to “a watch in the night” (Alter 1985:127). This theme of time is continued in vv. 5-6 where in v. 5 “sleep” (שָׁנָה) corresponds to “night” (לַיְלָה) in v. 4 and the reference to “the morning” and “the evening” in 5-6 is reminiscent of “the day” (כִּי יוֹם) mentioned in v. 4. In this way, a link is established between v. 4 and vv. 5-6. Vv. 5-6 form a chiasmic structure, as the following shows:

V. 5a: ‘sleep’ (night)

V. 5b: ‘morning’

V. 6a: ‘morning’

V. 6b: ‘evening’

Some exegetes distinguish v. 4 from vv. 5-6, suggesting that the former deals with the transcendence of God, while the latter deals with the transitory motif of human beings. However, it is more likely that vv. 4-6 should be read as a unity, which stresses the eternity of God.

In vv. 7-10 the psalmist changes focus from human mortality to human misery. The sinner under God’s wrath is described effectively by the use of the following terms: כָּלִינוּ (v. 7a), נִבְהָלָנוּ (v. 7b), עֲזוֹנֵהֵינוּ (v. 8a), לְמַאֲרוֹר פְּגִינָךְ (v. 8b), פָּנֹנוּ (v.9a), כְּמֹר־הַגָּה (v.9b), עָמָל (v. 10a), אָוֶן (v. 10b). The theme of mankind’s fragile and brief span of life binds these verses into a unity.

Vv. 7-10 constitute the third strophe which is divided into two parts (vv. 7-8 and 9-10). Vv. 7-8 refer to the miserable situation caused for man by God’s wrath, while vv. 9-10 describe the shortening of human life by God’s wrath and anger. The “we”-speaker as a subject dominating this strophe distinguishes it from the previous verses by referring to man in the third person. Vv. 3-6 describe the situations of

God and man in general, but vv. 7-10 deal with the suffering of “us” brought about by God’s wrath.

The conjunction ׀ at the beginning of v. 7a also functions as emphatic (Dahood 1968:324), which indicates a new unit of thought.

The theme of transitory man is continued in v. 7, since the terms “anger” and “wrath,” which literally mean “heat” and “hot breath of the nostrils,” are reminiscent of the image of withering grass (v. 6) in hot weather (Alter 1985:127-128). V. 7 refers to the transitoriness of man in the light of God’s anger and wrath, while v. 8 describes the experience of the transitoriness through reference to human frailty and guilt.

V. 7a and 7b are linked by means of a chiasm and v. 8a and 8b form a synonymous parallelism if we take the verb ׀ as serving both 8a and 8b. Together vv. 7 and 8 form a well-balanced structure if only the pronouns are considered:

- V. 7a: We . . . your (anger)
- V. 7b: Your (wrath) . . . we
- V. 8a: You . . . our (iniquities)
- V. 8b: Our (secret sins) . . . your (countenance)

The alternation of the first plural pronoun and the second-person pronoun in these four stichs ties vv. 7 and 8 into a unity. Through its parallelism v. 7 emphasizes God’s anger and wrath, while v. 8 focuses on our sin. The relation between vv. 7 and 8 lies in the fact that it is human sins (v. 8) which provoke God’s anger and wrath (v. 7).

The balance established in vv. 7-8 is broken in v. 9, because the first plural pronoun as subject and object (our days, we, and our years) occurs three times and the second person pronoun (your wrath) as object only once. Vv. 9-10 focus more specifically on the diminished days and years of transient man under the influence of God’s wrath (vv. 7-8). In

vv. 7-8 the life of human beings under the wrath of God is portrayed in general terms (“we are consumed”; “we are overwhelmed”), but in these verses the human life span resulting from the judgement indicated in vv. 7-8, is described in a more concrete and specific manner (seventy years or eighty; toil and trouble).

The occurrence of the words “days” and “years” in vv. 9-10 which are reminiscent of vv. 4-6, separates vv. 9-10 from vv. 7-8 where there is no mention of time. However, nevertheless vv. 9-10 are considered as an extension of the theme stated in vv. 7-8, because the former state the consequences of the judgement indicated in the latter, as the word “wrath” (עברה) in v. 9 implies a continuation of v. 7.

V. 9 starts with an emphatic וַי that signals the beginning of a new unity. The occurrence of the words “days” and “years” in both verses 9 and 10 marks a link. V. 9 describes man under God’s wrath with metaphors of time (“all our days”, “our years”, v. 9) and v. 10 depicts the life of man marked by brevity (“seventy years or eighty”, v. 10a) and annoyance (“toil” and “trouble”, v. 10b).

In v. 9a “all our days” (כָּל-יְמֵינוּ) is paralleled with “our years” (שָׁנֵינוּ) in 9b and the expression “pass away” (פָּנּוּ) in 9a is balanced with the word פָּלִינוּ in 9b. V. 10a and 10b are closely linked because they form a synthetic parallelism. The conjunction וְ at the beginning of v. 10b reinforces the statements made in v. 10a, and in v. 10c the third male plural suffix of וְרָקְעוּ refers back to the subject of 10a and 10b, so that v. 10a-c is linked together. It is likely that the וַי in 10d should be taken as emphatic and that וְנִשְׁפָּטוּ should be understood as adverbial, referring to the same subject as the verb וְנִשְׁפָּטוּ (thus, “Indeed, rapidly disappearing we fly away”), as Müller (1984:275) has

suggested. In this case the consecutive Qal imperfect plural of הִצַּדִּיק refers to the plural subject of vv. 9-10c. Thus, vv. 9-10 are tied together by the use of the same subject and the same thematic unity.

Vv. 11-12 form transitional verses which serve to conclude the previous part (vv. 3-10) and to open the following part (vv. 13-17). The words יָצַדְתָּנוּ and $\text{יָצַדְתָּנוּ עַדְיָנוּ}$ found in v. 11 mark a link with the preceding verses (especially, v. 7 and v. 9), while the term “our days” (יְמֵינוּ) in v. 12 recalls vv. 9-10 as well as vv. 4-6, also referring forward to v. 14 where the same word recurs. Thus, both motifs, God’s wrath and the transitoriness of man, mentioned in the previous verses, once again occur in these verses as a summary statement. Besides, the plea (“teach us so that we may get a heart of wisdom”) that begins in v. 12, echoes the series of petitions found in vv. 13-16.

Vv. 11-12 mark the transformation from the situation of distress to the hopeful prayer for its reversal. V. 12 forms a plea in which the psalmist asks God to make him realize how short life is, in order to obtain a heart of wisdom. The wisdom vocabulary “consider” (עָרַב) in v. 11a and 12a binds these verses into a tight unity and sets them apart from the preceding verses and the following.

Vv. 13-17 form the second stanza in which we find the “we-you” form of address with petitions for God’s compassion.

Vv. 13-16 form a stylistic unit. First of all, the word “servants” (עַבְדֵיךָ) in v. 13 again occurs in v. 16, thus forming an inclusio between these verses. V. 14 is linked to v. 15 by the use of the same words שָׁמַח and יָדָע . Also, v. 15 is linked with v. 16 by the occurrence of the word הִנָּחֵם in both verses. These verses, vv. 13-16, also constitute a chiasmic structure if we consider only the following words:

V. 13a: Servants

V. 14b: Us

V. 15b: Us

V. 16a: Servants

In addition, there is another stylistic unity. The first two verses, 13-14, have four stichs. Of these, the first three have an imperative (שׁוּבוּ, הִנָּחֵם, שׁוּבוּ עֲנִי, הִנָּחֵם) and the last stich ends with a cohortative (גִּדְּוּנָה, נִשְׁמָחָה). Similarly, vv. 15-16, consisting of four stichs, start with an imperative (שׁוּבוּ חֲנֹנִי) and end with a jussive (יִרְאָה). Through these stylistic structures, the psalmist emphasizes God's mercy towards his servants (us). The emphasis on God's mercy in these verses is also found in the use of the word שׁוּב in v. 13 which has already been employed in v. 3 where the word indicates the distance between God and human beings, whereas in v. 13 it refers to God's return (or mercy) to human beings to bridge the distance between God and human beings. This distance between creature and creator can only be overcome by grace (Van der Toorn 1985:98). Tate (1990:436) notes that when the niphil imperative of נָחַם is used with the preposition עַל, as shown in v. 13, it means "to change one's mind about something planned" (Exod 32:12, 14; Jer 18:8, 10; Jonah 3:10; Job: 42:6). It is quite obvious that v. 13 is referring to the change of God's mind about his servants.

Vv. 13-16 not only form a unity, but are also linked with the previous verses. In vv. 5-6 human beings are described as grass withering in the morning, but in v. 14 the psalmist prays to God to "satisfy us in the morning." Also, in v. 9 all the days of the people pass away under God's wrath, but in v. 14 the psalmist prays that they may enjoy all their days. In the same way, v. 15 corresponds to v. 12,

since the prayer “to number our days” in v. 12 finds its counterpart in the prayer in v. 15 “make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us.” In addition, the children in v. 16 are reminiscent of the “children of men” (בְּנֵי־אָדָם) in v. 3.

V. 17, as indicated earlier, has a link with v. 1 through the occurrence of the same word in both verses, thus functioning as a conclusion to the whole psalm. In addition, the word “work” (מַעֲשֵׂה) in v. 17 creates a tie with v. 16, though an alternative term (פְּעֻלָּה) is used in v. 16. Also, both verses use the same subjects, which suggest an additional link. Furthermore, the word “favours” corresponds to the word “love” in v. 14. On the whole, v. 17 reflects a hopeful future which will be changed by God’s favour which is opposed to the wrath of God summarized in v. 11. Alter (1985:129) notes an important function of the word פָּנָה in v. 17 in relation to other verses as follows:

The special force of the reiteration of this verb at the end of Psalm 90 must be felt as a reversal of the imagery of withering grass, sighs, things burnt up by God’s wrath, and ... humanity flooded or engulfed by sleep.

To summarize, the psalm is divided into two stanzas (vv. 1-12 and 13-17), and the first stanza consists of four strophes (vv. 1-2, 3-6, 7-10, and 11-12), while the second consists of one strophe (vv. 13-17). Some exegetes consider the psalm to be two separate compositions (vv. 1-12 and 13-17) (for instance, Müller 1984:267-268; Zenger 1994b:152-153). However, as we have seen so far, the psalm constitutes a coherent unity through the recurrent images and the structure (in agreement with the position of Schreiner [1978:80-90] and Auffret [1980:262-76]). The theme of the transitoriness of man runs through vv. 1-12 and vv. 13-17 respond to that with a series of petitions by emphasizing that the problem can be

overcome only by God's grace. The fact that several key words (for instance, "return" in vv. 3, 13; "morning," in vv. 5, 6, 14; "us" or "we," in vv. 7-10, 14-15; "day," in vv. 4, 9-10, 12, 14-15; "the Lord," in vv. 1, 17) in vv. 13-17 also occur in vv. 1-12, marks a clear link between them. Furthermore, the obvious *inclusio* at the beginning and the end, as well as the correspondence of v. 3 to v. 13, using different meanings of the verb (שׁוּב), all confirm the coherent structure of the psalm.

Vv. 1b-2 contain a prayer addressed to God with the plural speech of the "we-you" form; vv. 3-11 deal with life's transience as a general condition of humankind; and v. 12 ends with a petition. Vv. 13-17 form a series of petitions and prayers to God. Thus, the psalm shows mixed types which are not easily recognizable.

With regard to the genre of Psalm 90, Gunkel (1933:71, 224) classifies vv. 13-17 as community lament and vv. 1-2 as having elements of the hymn, while Westermann (1989:156-165) categorizes it as a communal lament, noting that vv. 1-2 belong to the psalms of trust and vv. 3-12 are a lament on transitoriness with an element of the individual lament. Kraus (1989:214-216) understands the psalm as a community lament, pointing out hymnic elements in vv. 1-4, and Mowinckel (1962a:220-221) interprets the psalm as a national lament reflecting the national distress and disasters of post-monarchical Judaism.

Psalm 90 seems to belong, as a whole, to the genre of the community lament. The introductory section (vv. 1-2), with the title "a prayer of Moses," recalls a cry for help, and the question "how long" (עַד-כַּיְהוֹמָיִם) in v. 13 and a series of the petitions occurring in vv. 12-17 are obviously reminiscent of lament psalms. Moreover, the contrast of human life with God, the confession of sins and the appeal to God's

mercy - all these features characterize the psalm as a lament. Community concerns are also predominant. In the introductory section, the speaker identifies himself with "us," and in vv. 7-17 the "we" form of address is continued. Thus, it is difficult to deny the communal characteristics manifest in the psalm. It seems safe to say that the psalm constitutes a community lament.

It is likely that the psalm was written with the purpose of addressing the post-exilic Israelite communities. The term עֲבָד ("servants," vv. 13 and 16) is frequently found in post-exilic texts (Isa. 56:6; 65:8-9; 65:13-15; 66:14; cf. Mal 3:18; 3:22) and Van der Ploeg (1963:150) also points out that the combination of קָדַר וְדָר is found only in exilic and post-exilic texts. Besides, as von Rad (1980:210-23) and Vawter (1975:460-470) have indicated, the psalm reflects the wisdom elements of the post-exilic period. All these features lead us to accept a late dating of the psalm, reflecting the misery life in the post-exilic communities. Vv. 13, 15 and 16 of Psalm 90 clearly refer to the experiences of the suffering communities.

As noted above, Psalm 90 forms certain ties with the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 31:30-32:47 as well as with Exod 32:10-13 (Briggs & Briggs 1969:272; Tate 1990:438). It is likely that Moses plays in this psalm the role of the applier to God. Freedman (1985:59) indicates that Moses is the only person in the Hebrew Bible who commands Yahweh not to act against the ancient Israelites in retribution for their sins.

Psalm 91:1-16

- 1 יֵשֶׁב בְּסֹחָר עֲלִיּוֹן בְּצֹל שְׁרֵי יְהוָה
- 2 אָמַר לַיהוָה מַחְסֵי וּמְצוּדוֹתַי אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתַי בּוֹ
- 3 כִּי הוּא יִצִּילֵךְ מִפֶּחַ יְקוֹשׁ מִדְּבַר הַיּוֹת
- 4 בְּאֲבָרְתוֹ יִסֶּךְ לְךָ וּתְחַת־כַּנְפָיו תִּחְסֶה צִנּוֹה וְסַחֲרָה אֲמַתּוֹ
- 5 לֹא־תִירָא מִפֶּחַד לְיִלָּה מִחַץ יַעֲוֵף יוֹמָם
- 6 מִדְּבַר בְּאִפְלֵ יְהוָה מִקֶּטֶב יְשׁוּד צְהָרִים
- 7 יִפֹּל מִצַּדֵּךְ אֶלְף וּרְבֻבָה מִיַּמִּינֶךָ אֵלֶיךָ לֹא יִגָּשׁ
- 8 רַק בְּעֵינֶיךָ תִּבְיֹט וְשִׁלַּמְתָּ רַשְׁעִים תִּרְאֶה
- 9 כִּי־אֲתָה יְהוָה מַחְסֵי עֲלִיּוֹן שִׁמְתָּ מְעוֹנֶךָ
- 10 לֹא־תֵאָנֶה אֵלֶיךָ רָעָה וְנֹגַע לֹא־יִקְרַב בְּאֲהֲלֶךָ
- 11 כִּי מִלְּאָכְיוֹ יִצִּיחֶךָ לְשִׁמְרֶךָ בְּכָל־דַּרְכֶיךָ
- 12 עַל־כַּפָּיִם יִשְׂאוּנֶךָ פְּנֵי־תִגֵּף בְּאָבֶן רִגְלֶךָ
- 13 עַל־שִׁחַל נִפְתָּח תִּדְרֹךְ תִּרְמַס כְּפִיר וְתַנִּין
- 14 כִּי בִי תִחַשֵׁק וְאִפְלֹטָהוּ אֲשַׁגְּבֶהוּ כִּי־יִדַע שְׁמִי
- 15 יִקְרָאֵנִי וְאֶעֱנֶהוּ עֲמוּר־אֲנֹכִי בְּצָרָה אֲחַלְצֶהוּ וְאֲכַבְּדֶהוּ
- 16 אֲרַךְ יָמִים אֲשַׁבִּיעֶהוּ וְאֲרַאֲהוּ בִישׁוּעָתִי

Psalm 91 consists of two stanzas (vv. 1-13 and 14-16). The first stanza consists of four strophes (vv. 1-2, 3-4, 5-9 and 10-13), while the second stanza is composed of one strophe (vv. 14-16).

One of the particular characteristics of this psalm is the frequent alternation of pronouns (He, I, He, You, I, He, I). This has caused some exegetes to identify different voices in the psalm speaking in between divisions (vv. 1-2, 3-4, 5-8, 9, 10-13 and 14-15). It is possible to give the psalm an antiphonal interpretation, but it is not certain how many speakers would be involved. This psalm is designed to strengthen the faith of those who take refuge in Yahweh.

Vv. 1-2 introduce the theme of the psalm, the Lord as refuge

and protection of the faithful. Four divine epithets (עֲלִיוֹן, שָׂדֵי, לִיְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵי) are used in these verses to evoke the confidence of those who trust in God, and the protection is described in metaphorical language such as “shelter,” “shadow,” “refuge,” and “fortress.” Through the use of these words the psalmist emphasizes that Yahweh is a refuge and a protector to those seeking trust in him.

Vv. 1-2 are closely tied together not only by content, as indicated above, but also by their parallel structure, as the following shows:

	A'	B'	B	A
V. 1:	יְהוֹנָן	שָׂדֵי	עֲלִיוֹן	בְּסֹתֵר
	A'	B'	B	A
V.2:	אֱלֹהֵי	אֱבֹתָנוּ	וּמְצוֹנָתֵנוּ	מִיְהוָה

Vv. 3-4 form the second strophe. The fact that v. 3 begins a new unity is evident, because the promises in the “you” form (“he will deliver you”; “he will cover you”; “you will find refuge”) after a general confession of the psalmist in vv. 1-2, are given in vv. 3-4. Here the psalmist develops the theme given at the introduction of the psalm (vv. 1-2) with detailed metaphorical language which underpins the statement of trust in vv. 1-2. At the beginning of v. 3 the use of the emphatic כִּי (‘verily, surely, indeed’) in connection with the phrase וְצִלָּתִי אֱלֹהֵי amplifies the statement of the previous verse that Yahweh is a refuge and a fortress. These features not only separate vv. 3-4 from vv. 1-2, but they also mark a close connection between the two units. The connection is further confirmed by the occurrence of the word חֹסֶה in both verses, 2 and 4. In addition, the words צָנָה and

סְחָרָה in v. 4 are reminiscent of the imagery of “refuge” and “fortress” in v. 2, thus also marking a connection.

Vv. 3-4 are closely linked by content and style. Both refer to two images (fowler’s trap [שׁוֹרֵט, מִכְנָס] and wings of a bird [אֲבִרְתָּוּ, כְּנָפָיו]) from the world of birds, and in both verses the two verbs יִצְּלֶנּוּ and יִסְּרֶנּוּ correspond to each other in that both refer to Yahweh’s protection. V. 3 describes the dangers that can be encountered by the faithful, while v. 4 refers to God’s protection from such dangers. In v. 3 the verb יִצְּלֶנּוּ functions as a double-duty verb serving both 3a and 3b, where a parallel structure of the pattern AB//A’B’ is found. In v. 4 we also have a parallel structure between the first two stichs.

Vv. 5-9 form the third strophe of the first stanza. Vv. 5-6 describe fourfold plagues which can be encountered by the faithful, while vv. 7-8 refer to the fate of the wicked which becomes a word of encouragement to the faithful.

The command form of prohibition with the negative אַל at the beginning of v.5 distinguishes this strophe from the previous strophe. The negative also occurs in v. 7, and its function in these verses is to emphasize the safety of those who trust in Yahweh.

Vv. 5-8 are closely linked not only through content, but also through style. In vv. 5-7 each stich contains the same preposition בְּ. In v. 5 the night (לַיָּמָה) and the day (בַּיּוֹם) respectively correspond to the darkness (לְחֹשֶׁךְ) and the noonday (בְּצֶלֶק) in v. 6, and the thousand and ten thousand who fall in v. 7 refer to victims of one of the plagues presented in vv. 5-6. Also, the verb יִשָּׁר in v. 6b and the verb יִצְּלֶנּוּ in 7a constitute a pair of stereotyped words suggesting a

close link. V. 8 also complements the statement of v. 7, because the wicked in v. 8 refer back to the thousand and ten thousand who would have fallen (v. 7). These features mentioned above bind vv. 5-9 into a unit.

Vv. 5 and 6 are structured synonymously. V. 7b has an ellipsis of the initial verb (יָפַל) in 7a, causing v. 7a and 7b to form a chiasmic structure if we disregard אֱלֹהֵינוּ לֹא יִגָּשׁ

V. 9 functions as a transitional verse concluding the previous section and introducing a new section. The fact that v. 9 is distinctive is evident, because only in v. 9 do we have a perfect verb form which is not found in the preceding verses and the following verses (except for v. 14d). V. 9 repeats a number of the words occurring in vv. 1-2 (v. 2, “refuge” [also v. 4]; v. 1, “the Most High”; v. 2, “Yahweh”). These words form an inclusio by surrounding vv. 3-8. The occurrence of an emphatic וַיִּשָּׂא at the beginning of v. 9 once again emphasizes that Yahweh is a protector from the dangers described in vv. 3-8. The statement of trust in v. 9 is also extended to vv. 10-13 where God’s protection enables the faithful to trample down fierce beasts (v. 13).

Vv. 10-13, comprising the fourth strophe, form a parallel to the third strophe of the first stanza. The beginning of this strophe, v. 10, begins with the negative אֵל, as did v. 5, and includes another negative in the middle of the verse (cf. also v. 7). The term נָגַע in v. 10 carries a range of meaning similar to the words דָּבַר and קָטַב in v. 6 (Tate 1990:456). Also, in content both strophes contain both words of assurance and the description of dangers. Thus, vv. 10-13 complement the ideas of vv. 5-9, referring to the centre of the latter verses. These features mark a strong link between the third strophe

and the fourth.

The verses 10-13 are closely linked by style. The preposition עַל in the second stich of v. 10 occurs in the second stich of vv. 11 and 12, and the preposition עַל of the first stich in v. 12 is also repeated in the first stich of v. 13. Thus, the prepositions are meaningfully located. In addition, the occurrence of the second masculine singular suffix (*your* tent, *your* ways, *your* foot) in vv. 10-12 binds these verses into a unity. In content, vv. 10-13 also form a unit. The positive declarations in v. 11 are contrasted to the negative statements in v. 10. This is also confirmed by the use of the particle כִּי in the beginning of v. 11, because it provides the reason for the statement of v. 10. V. 11 and v. 12 are also closely connected. Both describe God's protection, mediated by the guarding messengers. The expression "all your ways" (כָּל־דְּרָכַיִךְ) in v. 11, denoting a journey (Johnson 1979:189; Brueggemann 1984:156-157; in v. 11 the term "ways" may refer to actual journeys), aptly suits the contents of vv. 12-13: In v. 12 the messengers guard the psalmist on a journey to avert the dashing of a foot against a stone and v. 13 refers to the lion and the serpent which are the dangerous animals encountered by people on a journey. All these features mentioned above lead us to see vv. 10-13 as a unity.

Vv. 14-16, comprising the second stanza, constitute an oracle from Yahweh's mouth in which his salvation is addressed to the person who is "devoted" ("loves him", "knows his name") to Yahweh. One of the particular characteristics of vv. 14-16 is the use of the subjects "I" and "He" and the personal object, "him" in the singular. This distinguishes this stanza from the previous verses.

Vv. 14-16 are connected through syntax. In each of these verses, the frequent use (twice in each verse) of the third person masculine suffix הוּ in connection with a verb, as well as the frequent occurrence of \aleph alliteration (וְאֶפְלְטֵהוּ , אֲשַׁגְּבֵהוּ , וְאָעֲנֵהוּ , אָנֹכִי , אֲחַלְצֵהוּ , אֲחַלְצֵהוּ , וְאֶכְבְּרֵהוּ , אֲרַךְ , אֲשַׁבֵּיעֵהוּ , אֲרָאֵהוּ) mark a close connection between these verses. This link is also confirmed by the thematic relationship found between the verses. V. 14, containing a chiasm, specifies the reasons for the realisation of the promises in vv. 15-16: “Because he loves me” . . .; and “Because he knows my name.” The following verses, vv. 15-16, address detailed promises to the one who loves Yahweh and knows his name. In content v. 14a-b and v. 15a also constitute a chiastic structure, as the following shows:

	B		A
V. 14a:	וְאֶפְלְטֵהוּ	וְיִשְׁקֶנּוּ	$\text{כִּי יִקְרָא אֹתִי}$
	A'		B'
V. 14b:	$\text{כִּי יִקְרָא אֹתִי}$	אֲשַׁגְּבֵהוּ	וְאֶפְלְטֵהוּ
	B		A
V. 15a:	וְאָעֲנֵהוּ	וְאֶפְלְטֵהוּ	$\text{וְאֶרְאֵהוּ$

In vv. 14a-b and 15a, the A/A' element refers to what the psalmist should do (“he loves me,” “he knows my name,” “he calls me”), while the B/B' element mentions what Yahweh should do (“I will deliver him,” “I will protect him,” “I will answer him”) on behalf of his people (Auffret 1993a:292). A link between v. 14 and 15 is created by this chiastic structure. Also, v. 15 and v. 16 are related in that the expression “I will save him” (אֲחַלְצֵהוּ) in v. 15 closely resembles “I will show him my salvation” ($\text{וְאֶרְאֵהוּ בִּישׁוּעָתִי}$) in v. 16.

On the whole, vv. 14-16 constitute certain relationships with the preceding sections. The motif of God's protection found in the use of the metaphors "shelter" and "shadow" in v. 1 becomes more intensified with the use of terms *מִחֹטֵי* and *וּמִצִּלּוֹתָיו* in v. 2. This poetic tendency towards an intensified movement is also found in the second strophe, namely v. 4, because in v. 4a and 4b the metaphors *בְּאַבְרָתוֹ* ('pinions') and *בְּנִפְיָיו* ('wings') of God's protection correspond to a shield and a buckler in v. 4c, specifying stronger weapons for protection. The movement from a simple expression to a more intensified expression to emphasizing God's protection is not only found in v. 4, but is encountered in the psalm as a whole (Alter 1987:253-254). In vv. 7-8 God's protection makes ten thousand fall, but in vv. 12-13 God's protection by messengers causes the faithful not even to hurt their foot against a stone and instead helps them trample down fierce beasts. Thus, in the light of a comparison of vv. 7-8 with vv. 12-13, God's protection becomes more concrete and intensified in the latter verses. Once more, vv. 14-16 develop the previous theme still further, because it is the angels in vv. 11-13 that protect the faithful, but in vv. 14-16 it is God himself who saves and protects the one who trusts in him, by directly involving himself in the psalmist's situation (*עֲמֹר־אֲנִי בְּצָרָה*) and by honouring him (*וְאַכְבְּדֶהוּ*). . ., satisfying him (*אֲשַׁבֵּי יְהוָה*). . ., and showing him his salvation (*וְאַרְאֶהוּ בִּישׁוּעָתִי*). Thus, the theme of the psalm "the protection of God as a refuge," which runs from the beginning of the psalm to the end, shapes the entire psalm into a coherent unity.

To summarize, the psalm consists of two stanzas (vv. 1-13 and 14-15), and the first stanza has four strophes (vv. 1-2, 3-4, 5-9 and

10-13), while the second has one strophe (vv. 14-16). Vv. 1-2 set forth the theme of the psalm, namely, Yahweh is a refuge for those putting their trust in him and the following verses amplify the statement. Throughout the psalm the refuge motif is prevalent and the central key to understanding the psalm. Vv. 3-13 form a direct address from the speaker involved in the liturgical setting of this psalm and the psalmist is told of Yahweh's protection against different threats to life, while vv. 14-16 constitute a divine oracle from Yahweh's mouth, responding to the testimony in vv. 3-14. Thus, both parts, vv. 1-13 and 14-16, speak of the same truth, namely, Yahweh's protection. This psalm reveals a coherent structure through a thematic motif, "Yahweh the refuge."

The alternation of first and second person in the psalm seems to suggest that it was used in a liturgical worship service. Likewise many exegetes interpret it in connection with a liturgical setting. Dahood (1968:329) sees it as a royal psalm of confidence composed by a court poet who reads it before the king, while Kraus (1989:221-221) regards the psalm as belonging to the didactic address delivered to a sick person who entered the sanctuary with the purpose of being healed. By contrast, Johnson (1979:188) understands that the psalm was originally used to encourage a king in a pre-battle liturgy of worship, and Mowinckel (1962b:50-51) thinks of it as part of a larger liturgy for the healing of the sick.

It is difficult to determine what situation brought about the composition of the psalm. Yet it is clear that the psalm was designed to encourage the people who seek protection from Yahweh, and its contents reflect its use in a liturgical service in which the worshippers respond to one another.

Psalm 92:1-16

1 מְזוֹמֵר שִׁיר לַיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת
 2 טוֹב לְהַדוֹת לַיהוָה וּלְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְךָ עֲלֵיוֹן
 3 לְהַגִּיד בַּבֶּקֶר חֲסִדֶיךָ וְאִמּוֹנֹתֶיךָ בְּלִילוֹת
 4 עַל־עֲשׂוֹר וְעַל־נָבֶל עַל־הַגִּיֹּן בְּכִנּוֹר
 5 כִּי שִׁמְחַתְנִי יְהוָה בַּפִּעֲלֶיךָ בַּמַּעֲשֵׂי יְדֶיךָ אֲרַנֵּן
 6 מִהַגִּדְלוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְהוָה מְאֹד עִמָּקוֹ מִחֲשַׁבְתֶּיךָ
 7 אִישׁ־בַּעַר לֹא יִדַּע וְכֹסִיל לֹא־יָבִין אֶת־זֹאת
 8 בַּפֶּרֶחַ רִשְׁעִים כָּמוֹ עֵשֶׂב וַיִּצְיָצוּ כָּל־פְּעָלֵי אֱוֹן לְהִשְׁמָדָם עַד־יַעַר
 9 וְאַתָּה מְרוֹם לְעֵלְמָם יְהוָה
 10 כִּי הִנֵּה אֵיבֶיךָ יְהוָה כִּי־הִנֵּה אֵיבֶיךָ יִאֲבְדוּ יִתְפָּרְדּוּ כָּל־פְּעָלֵי אֱוֹן
 11 וְתָרַם פְּרָאִים קַרְנֵי בַלְתֵּי בְשִׁמֹן רַעֲנָן
 12 וַתִּבֹט עֵינֵי בְּשׂוּרֵי בַקָּמִים עַל־מַרְעִים תִּשְׁמַעְנָה אֲזִנֵּי
 13 צְדִיק פֶּתַחַר יִפְתַּח פֶּאֶרְזוֹ בַלְבָּנוֹן יִשְׁגָה
 14 שְׁחֹלִים בְּבֵית יְהוָה בַּחֲצֹרוֹת אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִפְרִיחוּ
 15 עוֹר וְנוֹבֹן בְּשִׁיבָה דְשָׁנִים וְרַעֲנָנִים יִהְיוּ
 16 לְהַגִּיד כִּי־יֵשֶׁר יְהוָה צוּרֵי וְלֹא־עוֹלָתָה בּוֹ

Psalm 92 consists of two stanzas (vv. 1-10 and 11-16) The first stanza is composed of three strophes (vv. 1-4, 5-7 and 8-10) and the second stanza of two strophes (vv. 11-12 and 13-16).

The first strophe of the first stanza, vv. 2-4, forms an introductory section to the whole psalm, where the psalmist sets a strong tone of praise to Yahweh. The repetition of the infinitive clauses (לְהַדוֹת, לְהַגִּיד, וּלְזַמֵּר) in vv. 2-3 which are used to sound the call of praise to Yahweh and the enumeration of the musical instruments (lute, harp, lyre) in v. 4 bind vv. 1-4 into a unity, because these verses breathe a strong tone of praise to Yahweh. Considering vv. 2-4, v. 3 stands as a central verse in which the psalmist presents the love and the faithfulness of

Yahweh. There is also a close connection between vv. 2 and 4, because the *עלי* of *עֲלֵי־וַיִּוֹךְ* at the end of v. 2 occurs three times in the use of the preposition *עלי* in v.4 (Auffret 1993a:306). The features mentioned above link vv. 2-4 into a unity.

Vv. 5-7 begin with the conjunction *כִּי* (“because”) in v. 5 which signals the beginning of a new strophe. With the *כִּי* vv. 5-6 introduce the reason stated in vv. 2-4 as to why Yahweh must be praised. In vv. 5-6 the greatness of Yahweh’s works (*מַה־גְּדֹלְתוֹ מַעֲשָׂיוֹ*, v.6) and the depths of Yahweh’s thoughts (*מֵאֵד עֲמֻקּוֹ מְחֻשְׁבֹתָיוֹ*, v.6) are two of the factors inducing the praise in vv. 2-4.

Vv. 5-7 are closely linked by style and content. The occurrence of the *מ* alliteration and of the term “work” (*מעשה*) in vv. 5-6, serves to tie them together. Vv. 6-7 are also related to each other by content, because the expression *מֵאֵד עֲמֻקּוֹ מְחֻשְׁבֹתָיוֹ* in v. 6 refers to the wonder of God’s plans⁶ which the dull and the stupid in v. 7 cannot know and understand. Of vv. 5-7, v. 6 constitutes a central verse where the divine name stands between the two clauses (“how great are thy works” // “thy thoughts are very deep”). In relation to the preceding verses and the following, God’s name *יְהוָה* in v. 6 comes between the two opposite reactors, namely, the faithful in v. 5 who rejoice in the work(s) of God and the wicked in the description of v. 7 who do not know or understand (Auffret 1993a:306). This contrast between the faithful and the wicked is further developed in the continuing strophes.

If vv. 1-7 are considered as whole, there are some links between

⁶ Tate (1990:461) notes that the word *עֲמֻקּוֹ* may mean “strength / violence,” while Sylva (1995:168) refers to it as meaning “the mysteriousness of God’s plans.” We here adopt Sylva’s view.

vv. 1-4 and 5-7. The central verses, 3 and 6 of both strophes, refer to Yahweh in the description praising the greatness of Yahweh: your love and your truth (v. 3) and your works and your thoughts (v. 6). Besides, two pairs of stereotyped words are distributed around Yahweh (Auffret 1993a:307):

v. 2	Good	v. 5	Rejoice
	Yahweh		Yahweh
	Your name		Your hands

Vv. 8-10 constitute the third strophe. The fact that v. 8 begins a new strophe is evident, because v. 8 (also v. 10) begins with three stichs which are not found in the previous strophe. Throughout the psalm three stichs are found only in vv. 8 and 10, while v. 9 has only one stich which is distinct from other verses. This characteristic distinguishes this strophe from the others.

Vv. 8 and 10 are linked through style. The phrase “all workers of evil” (כָּל-פְּעֹלֵי אָוֶן) in v. 8 occurs again in v. 10, and the meaning of the phrase “to be destroyed” (לְהִשָּׁמְדוֹת) in v. 8 corresponds to the meaning of the word “perish” (יִשָּׁמְדוּ) in v. 10. In content v. 8 is also linked with v. 10. The first two stichs of v. 8 portray the wicked with great success, while the last stich radically reverses the fortunes of the wicked “to be destroyed.” The theme of the destruction of the wicked developed in v. 8 continues in v. 10 where an anaphora is employed in that the expression, “for lo thy enemies” (כִּי הִנֵּה אֲוֹיְבֶיךָ) is repeated at the beginning of the first and the second stich. By means of the anaphora the psalmist emphasizes God's definitive reaction to the enemies (Sylva 1995:172; Kugel 1981:230) and indicates the total failure of the enemies (Tate 1990:467). The repetitive pattern created in v. 10 by means of the anaphora accentuates God's destruction of the enemies.

On the other hand, the last two stichs of v. 10 repeat the two verbs (יִהְיֶה כְּרֶדֶד, אֲבָרָה) which convey the idea of destruction of the enemies. As v. 8b emphasizes the demise of the wicked, so the repetition of the verbs in v. 10 still further stresses the total destruction of the enemies. In v. 8 the first two stichs refer to the success of the enemies, while in v. 10 the first stich mentions their existence. On the other hand, the last stich in v. 8 and the last two stichs in v. 10 speak of the demise of the enemies. Thus, both verses start with a statement about the enemies and end with their destruction (Sylva 1995:163, 170-173).

The central verse, v. 9, has a monostich. Bazak (1988:335) points out the importance of v. 9 by saying that there are fifty-two words before v. 9 and fifty-two words after it. Thus, it is centred in the psalm to stress the importance of the verse. V. 9 begins with the conjunctive “but” (וְ) which contrasts the fate of the wicked in v. 8 to Yahweh in v. 9. The image of God drawn in this verse is the one “being on high for ever” (וְאַתָּה מְרוֹם לְעֹלָם) which is contrasted to the image of the enemies “to be destroyed for ever” (לְהִשָּׁמְדָם עַד-עַד) in v. 8. The contrast is between “to destroy them for ever” and “but you will be exalted forever.” Lexically the word עַד-עַד parallels the word לְעֹלָם, which shows God's power “being on high for ever” that effects the ultimate destruction of the enemies (Sylva 1995:174). Thus, v. 9, placed in the middle of the psalm and surrounded by vv. 8 and 10, serves to emphasize Yahweh's power which causes the destruction of the enemies.

Vv. 11-16 form the second stanza which is divided into two strophes (vv. 11-12 and 13-16). The consecutive וְ that begins v. 11 indicates the beginning of a new unit. The first strophe deals with the victory of the psalmist bestowed through the triumph of God over the

wicked, while the second strophe describes the prosperity of the psalmist which is contrasted to the destiny of the wicked in vv. 8 and 10.

In the first strophe, the conspicuous use of the first person singular pronoun and the first person singular pronoun suffix (my, my, I, in v. 11; my, my, me, my, my, in v. 12), not found in other verses except for vv. 5 and 16, indicates vv. 11-12 as a unit.

The second strophe (vv. 13-16) also forms a unit. Vv. 13 and 14 share the same word “flourish” (יִפְרֹחַ) and v. 15 also contains the term יִנְבֹכֵן with the meaning similar to the word “flourish.” Besides, the repetition of the preposition בְּ, once in v. 13, twice in v. 14, and once in v. 15, characterizes vv. 13-15 as a unity. The theme of the prosperity of the righteous found in these verses (vv. 13-15) also ties them together as a unity, as seen in the following expressions: v. 13, “like the palm tree . . . flourish” // “like a cedar in Lebanon . . . grow”; v. 14, “planted in the house of Yahweh” // “in the courts of our God . . . flourish”; v. 15, “. . . bring forth fruit . . . flourishing and fresh”// “in the old age.” There is also movement of setting, from the reference to the trees in an unmentioned place in v. 13 to the temple in v. 14 and to the period of old age in v. 15.

Though each of these two strophes (vv. 11-12 and 13-16) forms its own unit, there is a close link between them. The repetition of the preposition כְּ (“like”) in vv.11 and 13 and of the word “fresh” (רֵעַן) in vv. 11 and 15 mark a close connection between them. As implied, the frequent occurrences of the preposition בְּ in both strophes (v.11: בְּשִׁמְךָ; v. 12: בְּשׁוֹרֵי, בְּקַמִּים; v. 13: בְּלִבְנוֹן; v. 14: בְּבַיִת, בְּחִצְרוֹת; v. 15: בְּשִׁבְיָה) also confirm a further connection between them. In addition, both strophes present God’s beneficial gifts. In v. 11 God’s exalting (רָם) the horn of

the psalmist like a wild ox (פָּרִי אֵיִם) conveys the victory of the psalmist which reflects the divine benefit given to the psalmist. The same thought continues in vv. 13-16 where the life of the psalmist depicted in tree imagery symbolizes longevity and fertility (Weiser 1979:616), reflecting God's blessings.

V. 16 can be linked to vv. 13-15. It summarizes the elements of the preceding verses. The expressions "Yahweh is just" (כִּי־יָשָׁר יְהוָה) and "there is no unrighteousness in him" (וְלֹא־ עוֹלָתָהּ בּוֹ) recall not only the righteous man described in vv. 13-15 who stands with God, but also God's actions against the evildoers expressed in v. 12. The use of the first person singular suffix "my" in v. 16 also marks a link with vv. 11-12.

All of the subdivisions of this psalm are related to one another. Vv. 1-4 correspond to vv. 13-16 in content and style. The opening and the concluding verses share a key- word לְהַגִּיד (to declare) in vv. 3 and 16, and they have in common stereotyped pair words conveying similar meanings, such as "good" (v. 2) and "upright" (v. 16)// "faithfulness" (v. 3) and "no unrighteousness" (v. 16) (Auffret 1993a: 309-310). In addition, in vv. 2-4 the reference to the description praising Yahweh in the *temple* also corresponds to the contents in vv. 13-14 where the psalmist praises the prosperity of the righteous who live within the courts of Yahweh's *house*. Thus, the latter verses complement the former.

The relation of vv. 5-7 to vv. 11-12 is now our concern. Here the words creating a link are "great" (v. 6) and "exalt" (v. 11), carrying a similar meaning, and the occurrence of the first person singular pronoun "I" and of the first person singular pronoun suffix "me," appearing in

both strophes, mark a tie between them. Also, their contents are correlative to each other. The depths of God's thoughts which are not comprehensible to the dull man and the stupid are contrasted to the success of the psalmist in vv. 11-12 who understands Yahweh's ways (Magonet 1982:371, 1994:46). The singing about the works of Yahweh in vv. 5-6 corresponds to the victorious celebration of the psalmist in vv. 11-12, as described in the expressions "anointing oil" (v. 11) and "seeing and hearing the fate of the enemies" (v. 12). Magonet (1994:47, cf. 1982:371) also notes that the clear link between vv. 6-7 and 11-12 is "their shared sense of security in the triumphing of God over evil, identified as the enemies of God and of the speaker itself."

The central verses, vv. 8-10, also have certain relationships to other verses. In v. 9 a key word מָרוֹם meaning "exalt" is related to the expression "you have raised" (רָם) of v. 11, because the verb רָם in v. 11 comes from the same root as the adjective "exalted" (מָרוֹם). V. 8 is also linked with vv. 13-15. In v. 8 the wicked is described as sharing the fate of grass which fades quickly, but in vv. 13-15 the prosperity of the righteous is compared with the lot of trees which symbolize a long life (Loewenstamm 1978:113). On the other hand, v. 8 (also v. 10) is compared to v. 5, since in v. 5 God's work (בְּפִעֲלֵיךָ) is to be praised, but in v. 8 (v. 10) all works (כָּל-פִּעְלֵי) of the wicked are mentioned as being destroyed. Thus, v. 5 points to the central verse with the words "בְּפִעֲלֵיךָ" and "מַעֲשֵׂיךָ", contrasting to "כָּל-פִּעְלֵי" (evildoers). In addition, vv. 9-10 are linked with vv. 11-12. In v. 9 God is described as being "on high" (מָרוֹם) and in v. 10 it is said that his enemies will perish. In a similar way, in v. 11 the psalmist refers to his horn as being "high" and in v. 12 it is stated that the psalmist will see

the fate of the wicked, which may recall the expression “Your enemies will perish” (v. 9). Thus, the victory of God in v. 10 reveals the fate of the wicked who rise against him. In these verses, vv. 9-12, the relationship between God and the psalmist is established in a close connection. The use of the same stem (see above, מָרַם, מָרַם) links the heights of God in v. 9 with the exalting of the psalmist in v. 11, and both man and God stand against the fate of the wicked which emerges from “the treacherous implications of the flower and grass imagery” (Fisch 1988:130) in v. 8.

To summarize: the psalm is divided into the two stanzas (vv. 1-10 and 11-16), composed of three strophes (vv. 1-4, 5-7 and 8-10) and two strophes (vv. 11-12 and 13-16) respectively. There are some words and phrases as well as repetitive contents linking one strophe to another. The whole psalm is framed by the occurrence of the word לְהַגִּיד (‘‘to declare’’) at the beginning (v. 3) and at the end of the psalm (v. 16). Throughout the psalm, the name of Yahweh occurs seven times in vv. 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 14, and 16, and it is distributed to important positions within the strophes, thus serving to bind them together. Vv. 1-4 are related to vv. 13-16 by content and style and vv. 5-7 have a definite relationship with vv. 11-12. Vv. 8-10 form the central verses of the psalm, and of these, v. 9 is placed in the middle of the psalm. V. 9 is linked to v. 11 by the same verbal root (see above) and v. 10 echoes the imagery drawn in v. 12. In addition, the growth of the grass in v. 8 also echoes the imagery of the trees in vv. 13-15, thus creating a definite relationship between them.

The wisdom motif is prominent in this psalm. The contrast between the wicked and the righteous, the idea of moral retribution, and the comparison of the prosperity of the righteous with the growth of a

tree clearly convey the characteristics of wisdom poetry (vv. 7-8, 13-16).

This psalm seems to belong to the genre of hymn of thanksgiving. The call to praise Yahweh in vv. 1-4 is typical of thanksgiving psalms. There is enough evidence to support the idea that the psalm might be used in connection with a liturgical situation. The mention of morning and evening, the phrase **טוֹב לַהַדְרֹת לַיהוָה**, with the allusion to **מִסְדְּרֵי רְאֲמוֹתָיִךְ** (v. 3), and the use of the musical instruments - all remind one of the temple service, as implied in other psalms.⁷

⁷ Pss 106:1; 107:1; 118: 29; 136: 1; cf. Ps 5: 4; 134: 1.

Psalm 93:1-5

1 יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ גָּאוֹת לִבַּשׁ לִבַּשׁ יְהוָה עֹז הַתְּאֲזָר אֶפֶס־תִּכּוֹן תִּבְל בַּל־תִּמְרוֹט
2 נִכּוֹן כִּסְאֲךָ מֵאֵז מֵעוֹלָם אָתָּה
3 נִשְׂאוּ נְהַרֹת יְהוָה נִשְׂאוּ נְהַרֹת קוֹלָם יִשְׂאוּ נְהַרֹת דְּכָכִים
4 מִקְלֹת מַיִם רַבִּים אֲדִירִים מִשְׁבָּרֵי־יָם אֲדִיר בַּמָּרוֹם יְהוָה
5 עֲדֹתֶיךָ נֶאֱמָנוּ מְאֹד לְבִיתְךָ נֶאֱוָה־קֹדֶשׁ יְהוָה לְאֶרֶץ יָמִים

Psalm 93 consists of two stanzas (vv. 1-2 and 3-5), the first of which has two strophes (vv. 1a-1b and 1c-2b) and the last three strophes (vv. 3a-3c, 4a-4c, and 5a-5c).

The first strophe, v. 1a-1b, is linked by content and style. Yahweh is the subject of all four verbs in v. 1a-1b and the verb לִבַּשׁ at the ending of 1a is repeated at the beginning of 1b, thus forming an anadiplosis. In addition, the first two words of 1a and 1b form a chiasm (AB/BA), while the last two words of 1a and 1b are paralleled synonymously (CB/CB) (Prinsloo 1993a:252), as the following shows:

	B (verb)	C (object)	B (verb)	A (subject)
1a:	לִבַּשׁ	גָּאוֹת	מֶלֶךְ	יְהוָה
	B (verb)	C (object)	A (subject)	B (verb)
1b:	הַתְּאֲזָר	עֹז	יְהוָה	לִבַּשׁ

V. 1a expresses the major theme of the psalm, “Yahweh is king” (יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ). By placing the subject יְהוָה before the verb מֶלֶךְ the psalmist emphasizes that no other god than Yahweh exercises kingship (Dahood 1968:340; Gelston 1966:507ff). 1b refers to Yahweh as a warrior (Prinsloo 1993a:252; Tarazi 1991:140), as the words עֹז and הַתְּאֲזָר imply. The terms are often used in a military setting in some passages of the Old Testament (cf. 2 Sam 22: 40; Ps 18: 40; 21: 1;

65: 7; 86: 16; Isa 8: 9; 45: 5; Job 38: 3; 40:7) Thus, Yahweh is portrayed in v. 1a-1b as a warrior-king, the motif of which closely connects these stichs.

The second strophe, 1c-2, is also closely linked. The occurrence of the same verbal root כּוֹן in 1c and at the beginning of v. 2 forms an anadiplosis between these verses, and through the repetition of the same verbal root, the two entities, הַכֶּלֶל (“the world”) and כִּסֵּאֶךָ (“thy throne”), which are the objects of the verbs (הַכֶּלֶל, הַכֶּלֶל), are closely connected. Also, in 1c the verb הַמְרוֹט forms an antonymic parallel with the verb נָכוֹן in 2a, but by the addition of the negative בַּל to the verb הַמְרוֹט in 1c, both verbs are paralleled synonymously (Pardee 1988:166; Prinsloo 1993a:253). In addition, the assonances and the repetition of the consonants (הַכֶּלֶל, הַמְרוֹט, הַכֶּלֶל; 2) occurring in the stichs of both verses give a further indication of the link between them. On the whole, vv. 1c-2 form a synonymous parallel, as the following shows:

C	B	A
בַּל-הַמְרוֹט	הַכֶּלֶל	אֶבֶן-הַכֶּלֶל
C'	B'	A'
מֵאֵז	כִּסֵּאֶךָ	נָכוֹן

The AA'/BB' elements do not need any comment. The meaning of the phrase בַּל-הַמְרוֹט in v. 1c corresponds to the one of the phrase מֵאֵז in v. 2 in the sense that the former refers to the certainty of the foundation of the world, whereas the latter denotes the firmness of the foundation of the throne. Through the parallelism the psalmist emphasizes that Yahweh's sovereignty, which is designated by the reference to his throne, had been an established fact when creation took place. The word מֵאֵז in connection with the phrase נָכוֹן כִּסֵּאֶךָ

obviously refers back to the time of creation in v. 1c and accordingly it implies that the “immovability” (בְּלִיַּת־מָוֶט) of the world is a consequence based on the firmness of Yahweh’s throne (נִכּוֹן כְּסֵאֵךְ).

Vv. 1c-2 form not only a unity, but are also linked with the previous strophe. Yahweh becomes the subject of all verbs in these verses (cf., in v. 2 Yahweh is mentioned directly or indirectly as subject), and the king motif designated by the phrase יְהוָה מְלִכְךָ and by the term כְּסֵאֵךְ dominates both strophes. Moreover, v. 1a gives prominence to “Yahweh” by placing the noun (יְהוָה) ahead of the verb (מָלַךְ) and v. 2 also ends with the emphatic “You are” (אַתָּה) (Tarazi 1991:143). Thus, in vv. 1a-2c the psalmist stresses Yahweh’s kingship by placing the emphatic terms at the beginning of the first strophe and at the end of the second.

Vv. 3-5 constitute the second stanza. The fact that v. 3 begins a new section is evident, since in v. 3 Yahweh no longer occurs as subject, but is replaced by the floods (נְקֻרֹת) as subject. Also, the nominal sentences of v. 2 are replaced by verbal sentences in v. 3 and a prevailing 2+2/2+2 metre in vv. 1-2 are changed into a 3+3+3 metre in vv.3-5 (Dahood 1968:340). Moreover, vv. 1-2 deal with Yahweh’s sovereignty over the world and the earth, while vv. 3-4 mention the chaotic power which is opposed to the sovereignty of Yahweh. Thus, vv. 3-4 are structured antithetically to vv. 1-2.

The first strophe is formed by v. 3a-3c. These three stichs describe the power of chaos represented by the floods (נְקֻרֹת). In v. 3a and 3b the first two perfecta refer to the events described in vv. 1-2 occurring in primeval times, while in 3c the imperfectum describes the present threatening of worldly order by the forces of chaos (Kraus

1989:235). The water motif representing the chaotic forces is also found in v. 4 where the waters and the sea correspond to the floods in v. 3. Some exegetes (for instance, Kirkpatrick 1903:564) understand that the floods refer to the nations which were Israel's enemies, but it is more likely that the reference to the floods is to the primeval deep and probably to the hostile nations (Anderson 1972:668).⁸

V. 3a-3c are closely linked by the use of the same subject **נְהָרוֹחַ** and of the same verb **נָשְׂאוּ** which occur in all the stichs, and at the same time they are linked by means of staircase parallelism (Prinsloo 1993a:253; Dahood 1968:341; Brettler 1989:145; Briggs & Briggs 1969:302). This emphasizes the overwhelming effect of the event in v. 3. In addition, the occurrence of the assonance (**נְהָרוֹחַ, נָשְׂאוּ, נְהָרוֹחַ, נָשְׂאוּ**), an end rhyme (**נָשְׂאוּ, נְהָרוֹחַ, קוֹלָם, דְּבָרִים, קוֹלָם**), an end rhyme (**דְּבָרִים, קוֹלָם**) between the second stich and the third, the alliteration with **נ** (**נְהָרוֹחַ, נָשְׂאוּ, נְהָרוֹחַ, נָשְׂאוּ**) between the first two words of the first two stichs and a sonorous **נ** or **מ** appearing in most words, bind v. 3a-3c to a unity (Prinsloo 1993a:254).

Vv. 4a-4c constitute the second strophe of the second stanza. V. 4, consisting of the three stichs, continues the water motif developed in v. 3, but by contrast with the latter verse where verbal sentences dominate, the former consists of nominal sentences. In addition, v. 3 refers to the threat by chaotic forces, but v. 4 focuses on Yahweh's victory over the chaotic forces. In v. 3 the expression **נָשְׂאוּ, נְהָרוֹחַ** is repeated three times to emphasize the strong threat by the chaotic

⁸ May (1955:9-21) has argued that in the Old Testament the "many waters" (**רַבִּימַיִם, יַמֵּיִם**) represent the chaotic, disorderly, insurgent elements which include not only mythical concepts but also the nations which were Israel's enemies.

forces, but in v. 4 the waters are no longer in a position to pose a threat to Yahweh's power, since Yahweh is exalted (בַּמָּרוֹם) above the waters. In v. 4 the term בַּמָּרוֹם carries the meaning of Yahweh's victory: Yahweh on high is mightier than the mighty waters. All these characteristics mentioned above distinguish v. 4 from v. 3.

V. 4a-c are closely linked by style and content. The word מְקַלּוֹחַ in v. 4a also serves 4b, thus marking an ellipsis between v. 4a and 4b (Prinsloo 1993a:255).⁹ This leads us to see a parallel between 4a and 4b without emending the text. The link between v. 4a and 4b is further apparent in the water metaphor (מִשְׁפְּרֵי-יָם, מַיִם), the assonance with im-sound (מַיִם, רַבִּים, אֲדִירִים), and the alliteration of the מ (מִשְׁפְּרֵי-יָם, אֲדִירִים, רַבִּים, מַיִם, מְקַלּוֹחַ), occurring in both stichs. V. 4c is also linked with v. 4a-4b by the use of the comparative preposition מִן in v. 4a and 4b (it is implied in 4b by means of ellipsis, as indicated above). This serves to contrast the power of the waters in v. 4a-4b to Yahweh's power in v. 4c. In addition, the word אֲדִיר appearing in 4b and 4c and the alliteration of מ and ר in v. 4a-4c indicate a further link between them.

The second strophe, v. 4a-4c, has a close tie with the first strophe, v. 3a-c. These strophes are linked by the frequent use of water motifs (the floods, waters, and sea), by the occurrence of the word קוֹל in v. 3b and 4a, and by the fact that the name יְהוָה forms an inclusio around them (Prinsloo 1993a:255-256). Moreover, v. 4 is contrasted to v. 3 in that the latter describes the hostile threat caused

⁹ Prinsloo notes that the expressions מַיִם רַבִּים and מִשְׁפְּרֵי-יָם must be read as synonymous. This suggestion is reasonable, and thus textual emendations are not necessary.

by forces of chaos, while the former refers to Yahweh's complete conquest of the danger. In addition, v. 4 is also linked with v. 2. The preposition ׀ occurs in both verses and both verses refer to places ("throne" in v. 2; "height" in v. 4).

V. 5a-5c form the last strophe of the second stanza. This verse describes Yahweh's kingship in terms of a historical perspective. The term עֲדֹתָיָךְ may refer to the laws or the commandments by which Yahweh establishes and orders his people,¹⁰ while the word לְבֵיתֶךָ may denote the temple in which Yahweh dwells and presents himself to his people. Through the use of these terms in v. 5, the psalmist emphasizes that Yahweh can be experienced through his decrees (עֲדֹתָיָךְ) and in his house (לְבֵיתֶךָ). Thus, the thought of the psalm moves from the superempirical dimension of the divine kingdom (vv. 3-4) to the historical dimension (v. 5) (Otto 1983:60).

The three stichs, v. 5a-5c, are closely linked by style and content. V. 5a and 5b are related by the occurrence of the same second person singular suffix ("your decrees"; "to your house") which refers to Yahweh, and 5b is linked with 5c, since both stichs contain the preposition לְ. In addition, in v. 5b and 5c the assonance with the sounds o- and e- (שָׁרָךְ, אֶרְךָ) is found. A poetic climax is found in the last stich, v. 5c, since the psalmist moves from Yahweh's

¹⁰ The meaning of the term עֲדֹתָיָךְ is "testimonies" or "affirmations." Shenkel (1965: 404-409) argues that the word means "your throne," thus marking a parallel with the one in v. 2, while Anderson (1972:669) understands it as "the Covenant as a whole (cf. 119:2), which includes, not only the mighty deeds of Yahweh, but also his promises and commands (cf. 25: 10; 132:12)." On the other hand, Weiser (1979:620) suggests that it means "the tradition of the *Heilsgeschichte* which was recited in the covenant cult" and Mays (1994a:301) sees it as referring to the laws and ordinances by which Yahweh orders human life. Anderson's suggestion and Mays's seem reasonable.

“decrees” and “house” in v. 5a-5b, belonging to his character and dwelling place, to Yahweh himself in v. 5c, as found in the following expression: יְהוָה לְאֶרֶץ יָמִים.

This strophe of the second stanza, v. 5, is linked with the second strophe of the first stanza, v. 1c-v. 2. In v. 5 Yahweh governs the disordered world which belongs to the chaotic sphere, through his decrees. In this sense the meaning of the term עֲדֹתָיָךְ may be paralleled with that of the expression תְּפוֹן תְּבִיל, which also refers to Yahweh’s sovereignty over the world. In the same way, the expression נְאֻמָּנוּ מְאֹד in v. 5 corresponds to the one בְּלִ-תְּמוֹט in v. 1c, because the former refers to the firmness of Yahweh’s decrees, while the latter stresses the stability of the world. Moreover, both strophes (vv. 1-2 and v. 5) mention the places “your house” in v. 5 and “your throne” in v. 2 paralleled with “the world” in v. 1c, and at the same time, they end with references to time, “מְעוֹלָם” and “לְאֶרֶץ יָמִים” (see, Prinsloo 1993a:257; Auffret 1991:105).

To summarize: On the whole, v. 1c, v. 2 and v. 5 refer to the firmness of Yahweh’s sovereignty, whereas vv. 3-4 mention the chaotic forces which are opposed to the stability of his sovereignty. However, the purpose of vv. 3-4 is to emphasize Yahweh’s power as being mightier than the threat by the chaotic forces. Throughout the psalm the psalmist has made it clear that Yahweh’s kingship stands firm, that his might is more powerful than the waters and that his commandments are trustworthy.

As indicated above, vv. 1-2 form the first stanza composed of two strophes (vv. 1a-1b and 1c-2) and vv. 3-5 the second stanza which can be divided into three strophes (vv. 3a-3c, 4a-4c and 5a-5c). Of all these strophes the last strophe of the second stanza forms the pivotal

verse of the psalm. There are many words and phrases linking one strophe to another which suggest the coherent unity of the psalm. V. 1a-1b are linked to vv. 1c-2 by the use of the same subject “Yahweh” and v. 3a-3c has a strong connection with v. 4a-4b by the same unifying motif “water.” Also, v. 4 has a certain relationship with v. 2 through the occurrence of the preposition ׀ן, but it is difficult to draw an exact relationship between them. V. 5 refers to vv. 1c-2c. The relationship between them is as strong as the one between v. 3 and v. 4. The internal bonds within the psalm are clearly seen through the repetition of contents as well as the repetition of words and phrases. It can without doubt be said that Psalm 93 forms a coherent unity.

There is no consensus among scholars concerning the Gattung of the psalm. Exegetes have classified the psalm as a so-called enthronement psalm (Mowinckel 1962a:106ff) or as “a song in praise of Yahweh’s kingship” (Weiser 1979:617; cf. Kraus 1989:232) or as “a hymn or praise psalm that celebrates Yahweh’s kingship and victory over primordial forces” (Tate 1990:474)... etc. It is difficult to define the Gattung of the psalm, because there is no obvious allusion within the psalm itself to its genre or the Sitz im Leben which we can deduce. Within the psalm itself there are no such summonses or calls to praise Yahweh as found in other hymns (e.g. Pss 95; 96; 100; 104). It has been widely classified as belonging to one of Yahweh’s enthronement psalms, but it is more difficult to say with certainty whether there was such a festival (a festival of Yahweh’s enthronement based on the thesis developed by Mowinckel) or not. It is clear that the psalm refers to the theme of Yahweh’s kingship, but this does not support the thesis that Mowinckel has argued. Accordingly it is better to leave the matter of genre-decision unanswered. What is more

significant here is to deduce the function of the psalm. As implied above, one of the psalm's functions may be to persuade the readers or listeners that Yahweh is powerful and reliable, and that his ordinance stands firm.

Psalm 94:1-23

- 1 אֵל-נִקְמוֹת יְהוָה אֵל נִקְמוֹת הוֹפִיעַ
- 2 הַנֶּשֶׂא שֹׁפֵט הָאָרֶץ הָשִׁב גְּמוּל עַל-גָּאִים
- 3 עַד-מָתִי רְשָׁעִים יְהוָה עַד-מָתִי רְשָׁעִים יַעֲלוּז
- 4 וַיִּבְעֹז וַיְדַבְּרוּ עֲתָק יִתְאַמְרוּ כָּל-פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן
- 5 עֲמָךְ יְהוָה יִדְכָּאוּ וַיִּנְחַלְתֶּךָ יַעֲנֹז
- 6 אֶלְמָנָה וַיְגַר וַיְהַרְגוּ וַיִּחַוְּמוּם יִרְצָחוּ
- 7 וַיִּאמְרוּ לֹא יִרְאֶה-יְיָ וְלֹא-יִבִין אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב
- 8 בֵּינוּ בַּעֲרִים בָּעַם וּכְסִילִים מָתִי תִשְׁפִּילוּ
- 9 הַנֹּטֵעַ אֲזֹן הָלֹא יִשְׁמַע אִמ-יֵצֵר עֵינַי הָלֹא נִבִּיט
- 10 הַיֹּסֵר גֹּוִים הָלֹא יוֹכִיחַ הַמְלַמֵּד אָדָם דַּעַת
- 11 יְהוָה יִדַּע מַחְשְׁבוֹת אָדָם כִּי-הִמָּה הִבָּל
- 12 אֲשֶׁר־יִהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר-תִּיַסְּרוּנִי יְיָ וּמִחֹרְתֶךָ תִּלְמַדְנוּ
- 13 לְהַשְׁקִיט לֹא מִיָּמִי רַע עַד יִכְרֶה לְרַשָּׁע שְׂחַת
- 14 כִּי לֹא-יִטֹּשׁ יְהוָה עַמּוֹ וַיִּנְחַלְתוּ לֹא יַעֲזֹב
- 15 כִּי-עַד-צָדֵק יָשׁוּב מִשְׁפָּט וְאֶחָדֵי כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל
- 16 מִי-יָקוּם לִי עַמ-מִרְעִים מִי-יִתְנַצֵּב לִי עַמ-פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן
- 17 לִוְלִי יְהוָה עֲזָרְתָה לִי כַמַּעַט שְׂכָנָה דוּמָה נִפְשִׁי
- 18 אִמ-אֲמַרְתִּי מָטָה כַּגְּלִי תִסְדֶּךָ יְהוָה יִסְעֲדֵנִי
- 19 בָּרֶב שׁוֹרְעֵפִי בְּקִרְבִּי תִנְחַוּמֶיךָ יִשַׁעְשַׁעוּ נִפְשִׁי
- 20 הַיִּתְחַבֶּךְ כִּסֵּא הַזֹּחַת יֵצֵר עֲמָל עַל־חֵק
- 21 וַיְגֹדְדוּ עַל-נַפְשִׁי צָדִיק וְדָם נָקִי יִרְשִׁיעוּ
- 22 וַיְהִי יְהוָה לִי לְמִשְׁגָּב וְאֱלֹהֵי לְצוּר מַחְסִי
- 23 וַיָּשֶׁב עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת-אוֹנָם וּבִרְעָתָם יִצְמִיחַם יִצְמִיחַם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ

Psalm 94 consists of three stanzas (vv. 1-7, 8-15, and 16-23). The first stanza is made up of three strophes (vv. 1-2, 3-4, and 5-7), the second of two strophes (vv. 8-11 and 12-15), and the third of two strophes (vv. 16-19 and 20-23).

The first strophe of the first stanza, vv. 1-2, consists of an appeal

to God to judge the wicked. The name of God יהוה in v. 1 is paralleled with the name יהוה in v. 23, and the word שׁוֹב in v. 2 is repeated in v. 23. These words occurring at the beginning and the end of the psalm, form an inclusio to the entire psalm. There is also the threefold use of anadiplosis occurring in vv. 1, 3, and 23 (as found in the following phrases “אֵל-נִקְמָוֹת יְהוָה אֵל נִקְמָוֹת” in v. 1, “עֲדַרְמָתִי רְשָׁעִים” in v. 3 and “נִצְמִיחֵם וְנִצְמִיחֵם” in v. 23) which might suggest a correlation between the beginning and the end of the psalm.

Apart from the stylistic perspective, in content the beginning of the psalm corresponds to the end, because the appeal to God to punish the wicked at the beginning is answered at the end by stating that the God of retribution will destroy the wicked because of their sins. In this way, the major theme of God's vengeance frames the whole psalm.

In content and style vv. 1-2 are linked together. The epithet, אֵל-נִקְמָוֹת (“God of vengeance”) in v. 1 is paralleled with the expression שֹׁפֵט הָאָרֶץ (“judge of the earth”) in v. 2 which clarifies the understanding of “vengeance,” and both verses refer to the theophany of God in that the words הוֹרִיֵעַ (“shine forth”) in the end of v. 1 and הִנָּשֵׂא (“rise up”) in the beginning of v. 2 are often used in the description of theophany (Deut 33:2, 5; Ps 50:2; 7:7; Judg 11:36; Ps 18:48). Furthermore, the kingship of Yahweh described in v. 1 is closely associated with Yahweh as judge in v. 2 (Peels 1995:211).

Whereas vv. 1-2 have the three imperative verbs (הוֹרִיֵעַ, הִנָּשֵׂא, הִשָּׁב) and are composed of an appeal to Yahweh to intervene as judge of the earth, vv. 3-4 have the four imperfecta (יִתְאָמְרוּ, יִדְבְּרוּ, יִבְיָעוּ, יַעֲלוּ) describing the attitude and words of the wicked. This feature distinguishes vv. 3-4 from vv. 1-2. However, despite this difference, both

strophes exhibit a close link in content and style. The staircase parallelism found in vv. 1 and 3 (Watson 1984:151) serves to link both strophes, and the פְּעֹלֵי אָוֶן in v. 3, the pronoun “they” and “the workers of evil” (פְּעֹלֵי אָוֶן) in v. 4 refer back to “the proud” (בְּאִנְיָא) in v. 2, so that both strophes mark a close connection to each other in these features.

V. 3 starts with a question characteristic of the lament (“how long” x 2) in which the arrogance of the wicked is described. Kirkpatrick (1903:567) and Dahood (1968:347) suggest that vv. 3-4 be read as a series of questions, so that the force of the interrogative עַד-מָה in v. 3 is extended to v. 4. In this case, vv. 3-4 are structured in a parallel way by using the question “how long.” Another link between these verses is found in the use of the words פְּעֹלֵי אָוֶן in v. 3 and פְּעֹלֵי אָוֶן (“workers of evil”) in v. 4 referring to the same people. Besides, they are linked by the occurrence of the imperfectum and the repetition of the pronoun “they” (“they shall exult,” “they will pour out,” “they will speak,” they will boast”) suffixed in the verbs of both verses.

In contrast to the fact that v. 4 opens with a verb at the beginning, vv. 5-6 begin with nouns. This distinguishes vv. 5-6 from vv. 3-4, but nevertheless, the former has a link with the latter in its content. Vv. 3-4 refer to the words of the wicked, while vv. 5-6 describe their behaviour. The wicked who pour out arrogant words and boast about themselves in vv. 3-4 also “crush ... kill ... murder” the weak in vv. 5-6. Thus, in content vv. 3-4 and 5-6 are closely united.

V. 7 has a thematic relationship with vv. 5-6, because in v. 7 the phrase אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב (“the God of Jacob”) belonging to the semantic field

of covenant relationship, corresponds to the expressions ךָּמֶע (your people) and ךָּתְּלִמָּךְ (your heritage) in v. 5. Another indication that v. 7 is closely linked with the previous verse(s) is found in the use of the *waw* consecutive at the beginning of the verse which shows a continuation of v. 6. These features link vv. 4-7 into a unity. In addition, v. 7 has a certain relation to v. 4, because v. 7 again mentions the words of the wicked which express the statement in v. 4 more clearly. The occurrence of the word אָמַר in v. 4 and in v. 7 also marks the linkage between them. All these features tie vv. 3-7 into a close unity. It has already been implied that vv. 3-7 also have a close relationship with vv. 1-2. The reason for the appeal to God to judge the wicked in vv. 1-2 is given in vv. 3-7, because the words and behaviour of the wicked crush the weak which belong to God (cf. v. 5, ‘your people and your heritage’).

The second stanza, consisting of a wisdom section, constitutes two strophes (vv. 8-11 and 12-15). Kuntz (1974:200-202) points out that of the 15 conjectured wisdom words he lists in this psalm, “all but three appear within vv. 8-15.” Clear wisdom motifs occurring in these verses set them apart from the surrounding stanzas.

In spite of the conjunction between vv. 8-15, the first strophe of this stanza, vv. 8-11, can be distinguished from vv. 12-15, because the former strophe deals with rebuke of the wicked, while the latter turns to the righteous who respond to the divine instruction. Vv. 8-11 are tied together by the use of the two verbs יָדַע (“understand”, v. 8) and יָדָע (“know”, v. 11) which constitute a pair of synonymous terms. In content these verses form a reaction against the words and acts of the wicked in vv. 3-7. In fact, the negative particle לֹא occurring in vv. 9-10a constitute an answer to the arrogant words the wicked allude to in v. 7.

In this strophe the sharpness of the psalmist's tone is heightened by means of the stylistic feature of alliteration with the three ב sounds (בִּינִי, בְּעַרְיִם, בָּעֵם) and by the repetition of the interrogative particle אֵלֶּךָ (Booij 1994:141).

The command בִּינִי with an imperative at the beginning of v. 8a and the rhetorical question אֵלֶּךָ at v. 8b indicate the beginning of a new strophe. The verse reflects a reaction to the statements of the wicked made in v. 7. Vv. 9-10a repeat the negative particle אֵלֶּךָ before each verbal phrase and form parallelisms, as shown in the following: אֹזְן (ear) // יִשְׁמָע (hear), v. 9a; עַיִן (eye) // רְבִיט (see), v. 9b; חִטֵּה (chasten) // יוֹכִיחַ (judge), v. 10a. Because the negative particle is omitted in v. 10b, there is probably an ellipsis before the word הֲעָדָה, suggesting the reading of “does he not know?” (Anderson 1972:673) and thus 10b is paralleled with vv. 9a, b, and 10a.

V. 11 constitutes the conclusion of the arguments in vv. 8-10. As the conclusion to vv. 8-10, v. 11 stands in clear contrast to the statement in v. 7 (Kraus 1989:241), as do vv. 8-10.

As indicated above, vv. 8-11 have a close tie with the preceding section. In addition to the references made above, there are other linguistic links. The בְּעַרְיִם (“dull-hearted ones”) and the כֹּסְיָלִים (“fools”) in v. 8 refer to the wicked in vv. 3-7, and the occurrence of the word בִּין (“understand”) in v. 7 and v. 8 also marks a link between them. Also the appearance of the word עַם (people) in v. 5 and v. 8 is worth noting.

Vv. 12-15 form the second strophe of the second stanza. Vv. 12-13 describe God's kindness to the righteous, while vv. 14-15 refer to the motivation for the promises of God described in vv. 12-13. In vv. 12-13

we have the third person suffix ‘him’ referring to the righteous, while 14-15 describe the ‘him’ in vv. 12-13 as ‘his (Yahweh’s) people and heritage’ (עַמּוֹ וְנַחֲלָהוּ, v. 14) and ‘the righteous’ (צַדִּיק, v. 15a) and ‘all the upright in heart’ (כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, v. 15b). These features bind vv. 12-15 into a unity.

Vv. 12-13 start and end with alliteration, namely, אֲשֶׁר, אֲשֶׁר (v. 12) and לְרָשַׁע וְשָׂחָה (v. 13). After the alliteration at the beginning of v. 12, we have a chiasm in that תִּיַּטְּרֵנוּ (“chasten”) corresponds to הַלְמִדֵנוּ (“teach”) and יָהּ (O Yah) to חֻרְתְּךָ (law), and in v. 13 we also find a parallelism, as follows:

C	B	A
מִימֵי קֶדֶם	לוֹ	לְהַשְׁקִיט
C'	B'	A'
שָׂחָה	לְרָשַׁע	עַד יִכְרֶה

Vv. 14 and 15 both start with the conjunction כִּי that introduces the motivation for the statements in vv. 12-13, and each of verses 14-15 has a chiasm after the conjunction:

A'	B'	B	A
V. 14: לֹא יֵעֹזב	וְנַחֲלָהוּ	עַמּוֹ	כִּי-לֹא-יִטַּשׁ יְהוָה
A'	B'	B	A
V. 15: כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל	וְאֶחָדָם	יָשׁוּב מִשִּׁפְטֵי	כִּי-עַד-צֶדֶק

Vv. 12-15 have a certain relationship with the preceding passages. Vv. 10 and 12 share the words יָסַר and לָמַד, and the words עַם and נַחֲלָה also appear in vv. 5 and 14. V. 15 seems to respond to the call of vv. 1-2 (or, vv. 1-4), because both these verses contain the words שׁוּב and שִׁפְטֵי. In fact, these words function as an inclusio. When

compared with other verses, vv. 12-15 create a chiasm with vv. 2-11:

A: 'The proud' (v. 2; cf. also v. 4, 'all the evildoers')

B: 'Your people . . . your heritage' (v. 5)

C: 'Chasten . . . teach' (v. 10)

C': 'Chasten . . . teach' (v. 12)

B': 'Your people . . . your heritage' (v. 14)

A': 'All the upright in heart' (v. 15)

The comparison is effective: the wicked seem to dominate the weak in vv. 2-11, but in vv. 12-15 God triumphs over them. It is clear that vv. 12-15 provide the answer to the question raised in vv. 2-11, especially, vv. 4-6, with a promise of protection to "his people and his heritage" (v. 12).

The second stanza, vv. 16-23, forms two strophes (vv. 16-19 and 20-23). In this stanza, the psalmist, speaking in the first person singular form, now describes the present situation full of injustice expressed by the righteous in vv. 2-15. Each strophe starts with the interrogatives מִי (v. 16) and הֵן (v. 20), and the occurrence of the words רַעַע ("wickedness") and אָוֶן ("evil") in vv. 16 and 23 constitute an inclusio.

V. 16 starts with the question 'who' (מִי), but it seems to have a connection with vv. 3-4 where v. 3 has the question, 'how long?' (עַד-כַּיָּמַיִם). Both questions, 'how long?' and 'who?' concern the appeal to God's judgement against the wicked and the evildoers. The phrase אֲנִי פְעֹלֵי אָוֶן ("workers of evil") in v. 16 also occurs in v. 4, so that it is clear that vv. 3-4 and 16 form a certain relationship.

V. 17 is linked with v. 16 by the use of the word לִי ("to me") and the term גַּבְשֵׁי occurs in both verses, vv. 17 and 19. End-rhyme also occurs in vv. 17-19 (v. 17: לִי, לִוּלִי; v. 18: אֲמַרְתִּי, רַגְלִי; v. 19:

וּפְשֵׁי, בְּקִרְבֵּי, שְׂרָעֵפֵי. These features tie vv. 16-19 into a unity.

Vv. 20-23 are closely tied together by the repetition of words and content. The preposition *עַל* appears in vv. 20, 21, and 23, and “my God” (*אֱלֹהֵי*) and “Yahweh” (*יְהוָה*) in v. 22 correspond to “our God” (*אֱלֹהֵינוּ*) and “Yahweh” (*יְהוָה*) in v. 23. The repetition of the word *יִצְמִיחַם* in v. 23, which urges the vengeance of God, is reminiscent of the opening verse where the repetition of the phrase *אֵל-גִּקְמוֹת* sets forth the strong tone for the vengeance of God. This motif of God’s vengeance, with the repetition of the word *שׁוֹב* at the beginning and the end, governs the entire psalm.

To summarize, the psalm is made up of three stanzas. The first stanza is composed of three strophes (vv. 1-2, 3-4, and 5-7), the second of two strophes (vv. 8-11 and 12-15) and the third of two strophes (vv. 16-19 and 20-23). On the whole, the psalm constitutes a coherent unity through the repetition of words, phrases, and contents. The word *שׁוֹב* is meaningfully distributed through the psalm (vv. 2, 15, 23) binding the psalm together with “the act-consequence idea of retribution” (Tate 1990:486). The similar style in urging God’s vengeance appears in each of the important sections: “God of vengeance” (v. 1); “How long the wicked ...” (v. 3); “who rises up for me against evildoers ... ?” (v. 16); “He will destroy them, Yahweh our God will destroy them!” (v. 23). There are also many key-words that tie the different parts of the psalm together: *שָׁפֵט* (vv. 2, 15); *רָשַׁע* (vv. 3, 13, 21); *מַחִי* (vv. 3, 8); *אוֹן* (vv. 4, 16); *עַם* and *נַחֲלָה* (vv. 5, 14); *בֵּין* (vv. 7, 8); *יָהּ* (vv. 7, 12); *יָצַר* (vv. 9, 20); *יָסַר* and *לָמַד* (vv. 10, 12). The repetition of the words and phrases observed above ties each section together and binds the whole psalm into a unity. Thus, there is little doubt that the psalm forms a

coherent structure.

The psalm can be divided into three parts in terms of generic analysis. Vv. 1-7 reveal a communal concern, as the following expressions show: “Your people...your heritage...,” in v. 5; “the widow and the sojourner...the fatherless...,” in v. 6. As Kraus (1989:239) insists, it is likely that vv. 1-7 belong to a community lament. Vv. 8-15 have a clear wisdom motif and vocabulary, as we have noted above, while in vv. 16-23 we have the style of an individual prayer, as the repetition of the first person pronoun and the first person pronoun suffix occurring in these verses implies. Thus, the psalm is a poem of mixed styles: community lament (vv. 1-7); a didactic and admonitory address (vv. 8-15); a prayer song of an individual (vv. 16-23). In spite of the diversity of sections in the psalm, however, the unity of the psalm is maintained, as we have seen above.

Psalm 95:1-11

- 1 לכו נרננה ליהוה נריעה לצור ישענו
 2 נקדמה פניו בתודה בזמרות נריע לו
 3 כי אל גדול יהוה ומלך גדול על כל אלהים
 4 אשר בידו מחקרי ארץ ותועפות הרים לו
 5 אשר לו הים והוא עשהו ונבשת ידיו יצרו
 6 באו נשתחוו ונקרעה נברכה לפני יהוה עשנו
 7 כי הוא אלהינו ונאנחנו עם מרעיתו וצאן ידו היום אמ בקלו תשמעו
 8 אל תקשו לבבכם כמריבה כיום מסה במדבר
 9 אשר נסוני אבותיכם בחנוני גמראו פעלי
 10 ארבעים שנה אקוט בדור נאמר עם תעי לבב הם והם לא ידעו דרכי
 11 אשר נשבעתי באפי אמר באון אל מנוחתי

Psalm 95 consists of three stanzas, namely vv. 1-5, vv. 6-7b and 7c-11, each comprising two strophes (vv. 1-2, 3-5, 6 and 7a-b, 7c-9 and 10-11).

The first strophe of the first stanza, vv. 1-2, is composed of four hemistichs of the same rhythm. It starts with an emphatic imperative *לכו*, followed by four cohortatives (*נרננה, נריעה, נקדמה, נריע*) in the first person plural occurring in each hemistich. The four cohortatives with similar sets of verbs occurring in vv. 1-2 serve to emphasize the fact that praise and thanks should be given to Yahweh (Prinsloo 1995a:397). The two cohortatives in v. 1 are structured into a synonymous parallelism, while v. 2 has a chiasmic structure. These verses are closely linked by syntax and style. The second cohortative (*נריעה*) in v. 1 is repeated in v. 2 and the two third-person suffixes (his, him) in v. 2 refer back to Yahweh in v. 1. As indicated, both verses are also linked by the use of the four cohortatives.

V. 1 mentions Yahweh as “a rock of our salvation” (יְשׁוּעָה לְצַרֵּנוּ). Howard (1986:75; also Dahood 1968:353; Tate 1990:495) understands the rock as referring to the wilderness experiences of water flowing from a rock (Exod 17:1-7; Num 20:2-13), which is recalled in vv. 8-11, but the immediate context following v. 1 gives no indication of the suggestion. It is likely that the description of Yahweh as a rock is a metaphor of trust, namely, Yahweh as a refuge (Hossfeld 1994:33; Prinsloo 1995a:395).

Vv. 3-5 form the second strophe. The fact that vv. 3-5 form a new unit is evident, because the verbal sentences in vv. 1-2 are replaced by nominal sentences in vv. 3-5 and v. 3 begins with the conjunction וְ which signals the beginning of a new section.

Vv. 3-5 are closely linked by syntax and content. It is likely that all three verses, as Prinsloo (1995a:398) has indicated, contain the conjunction וְ, thus presupposing that there is an ellipsis in vv. 4 and 5 and that all these verses function as a motivation for the statements in vv. 1-2. In this case, vv. 3-5 are linked by the use of the conjunction. In addition, vv. 4-5 are also related to v. 3, since the former verses have the particle (וְשֵׁנֶה) modifying the main sentence of v. 3 and they also have third-person singular suffixes (v. 4, *his* hand, *his*; v. 5, *his*, *he* made it, *his* hands) referring to Yahweh in v. 3. On the other hand, vv. 4-5 are also linked. At the beginning of v. 5 the word לוֹ occurring at the end of v. 4 is repeated, and the two verses have the word “his hand(s)” in common. Considered as a whole, these two words form a chiasmic parallelism (Prinsloo 1995a:398), as follows:

V. 4:	לוֹ	בְּיָדוֹ
V. 5:	בְּיָדוֹ	לוֹ

Furthermore, v. 5 complements v. 4 in that the creation described in the latter refers to the vertical dimension of creation (depths of the earth - heights of the mountains), while v. 5 mentions the horizontal dimension of creation (sea-dry land) (Massouh 1983:85; Hossfeld 1994:34; Prinsloo 1995a:399). In v. 4 the “depths of the earth” is contrasted to the “heights of the mountains,” while in v. 5 the “dry land” is contrasted to “the sea.” The expressions of v. 4 emphasize the sphere of his sovereignty, namely “from the depths of the earth, where the powers of death reside, to the peaks of the mountains, where deities have their assemblies” (Tate 1990:501). Through this poetic device, the psalmist emphasizes that the whole of creation depends on Yahweh. The word “his hand(s)” in vv. 4 and 5 emphasizes his sovereignty over creation. In this connection, it is again worth referring to v. 3, since it describes Yahweh, whose sphere is in heaven, as being greater than all gods (Hossfeld 1994:34). Thus, vv. 3-5 refer to all dimensions of creation, namely, heaven, earth, and sea, as belonging to the sphere of Yahweh’s dominion.

The second stanza, vv. 6-7a, starts with the imperative בִּאֵר in v. 6 which indicates the beginning of a new section. This second stanza is parallel to the first in many ways.¹¹

V. 6 corresponds to vv. 1-2. It starts with the imperative בִּאֵר, which is synonymous to לָכֹךְ in v. 1, and the imperative is followed by the three synonymous cohortatives (נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה, וְנִכְרַעַה, וְנִבְרַכָּה) (cf. the four cohortatives in vv. 1-2). V. 6 also refers to the presence of Yahweh (לְפָנֵי-יְהוָה), just as v. 2 does (פָּנָיו, “into his presence”). Both stanzas, vv. 1-5 and 6-7a, also start with פִּי (v. 3 and v. 7) which is used as the

¹¹ For the contrast of the first stanza to the second, see Prinsloo (1995a: 399-401).

motivation clause for the call to Yahweh, and v. 6 describes Yahweh as “our maker” (עָשָׂנוּ), recalling the phrase “he made it” (עָשָׂהוּ) in v. 5 (cf. the use of the same verb). By adding the simple pronominal suffix “our”, the creator of everything described in vv. 3-5 becomes *our* creator in v. 6. This is reminiscent of v. 7 where Yahweh is mentioned as *our* God and the expression “we are the people of his pasture and the flock of his hand” speaks of the relationship between God and his people, namely, the covenant relationship. Thus, the psalmist moves from the general description of God to a more intimate description, namely, from the heavenly king (v. 3) to the creator of the universe (vv. 4-5), to the shepherd of Israel (the God of the covenant) (v. 7a). In addition, the nominal sentences in v. 3 after the cohortatives in vv. 1-2 correspond to those of v. 7 which also follow the cohortatives in v. 6, and the word “his hand” in v. 7 recalls vv. 4 and 5 where it is also used in relation to Yahweh’s act of creation. All these features mentioned above indicate a close relationship between the first strophe and the second. Davies (1973:188) has pointed out that the calls to worship often found in the Old Testament contain three elements: 1) an imperative; 2) the conjunction וְ; 3) a statement of faith. We find the same three elements in vv. 1-5 and 6-7a. As Massouh (1983:84-88) indicated, both stanzas are balanced and symmetrical.

Vv. 7c-11, comprising the final stanza, is composed of two strophes (vv. 7c-9 and 10-11). A prophetic oracle from the mouth of Yahweh dominates the whole of this section. The fact that v. 7c should be linked to the following verses rather than the previous verses is strongly evident.¹² The second-person plural verb form “you hear”

¹² See Prinsloo’s (1995a: 401-402) argument for this division.

(תִּשְׁמְעוּ) at the end of v. 7 (not found in the previous stanza) is implied in v. 8, and thus connection is created between v. 7c and v. 8 a. The occurrence of the second- person plural suffixes (“your heart,” v. 8; “your father,” v. 9) in vv. 8 and 9 also marks a connection with v. 7c. Moreover, the word ‘day’ in v. 7c is repeated again in v. 8. It is also likely that vv. 8-11 form the direct reason for the substance of the statement “listen to his voice” at the end of v. 7.

V. 7c as a transitional stich concludes the hymnic sections of vv. 1-7b and also introduces the subsequent part (vv. 8-11). The poetic line composed of three stichs in v. 7 “has the effect of isolating and thus emphasizing v. 7c” (McCann 1993b:47).

7c is structured in parallel with v. 8a. The expression “Oh, that day you would give heed to his voice” (הַיּוֹם אִמְצַקְלוּ תִשְׁמְעוּ) corresponds to “do not harden your heart” (אַל־תִּקְשֹׁר לְבַבְכֶם) in v. 8, and in both the meaning is the same: a call to obedience. Both verses, 7c and 8a show a chiasmic structure if we disregard the phrase אִמְצַקְלוּ in v. 7c:

B	A
תִּשְׁמְעוּ	בְּקִלּוֹ
A'	B'
אַל־תִּקְשֹׁר	לְבַבְכֶם

The word “today” in v. 7c reminds one of the instructional style in Deuteronomy (e.g. Deut 4:40; 5:3; 6:6; 7:11)¹³ and links the present (as implied in the word “today”) with the past (Tate, 1990:502), which is referred to in the following verses, vv. 8-11.

V. 8 emphasizes the disobedience of the people in the wilderness.

¹³ The “today” spoken of in v. 7 is “the day of the proclamation in worship” (Kraus 1989: 247).

The disobedience of the people is emphasized by the reference to the two places (Meribah and Massah, where the people in the past disobeyed God)¹⁴ encompassing the entire wilderness period. There is an ellipsis in that the phrase $\text{לִבְבָכֶם לֹא-תִקְשֶׁר}$ occurring in the first stich of v. 8 is deleted from the second stich (Prinsloo 1995a:403) and also serves to emphasize the disobedience of the people. By referring to the event of the past, the psalmist contrasts the action required of the current congregation (v. 7c) to that of their fathers on the day (v. 8) of Meribah and Massah in the wilderness. Here the historical motif is used as an admonition which warns the current community against the hardening of their hearts. Coats (1968:69) emphasizes that the expression “to harden one’s heart” means that one has an attitude of disobedience and apostasy.

V. 9 refers to the behaviour of the fathers who tested Yahweh (נִסְּוּנִי) and put him to the proof (בְּנִסְּוֵנִי). Thus, this verse continues the theme of v. 8. The use of the clause וְאִשָּׁר at the beginning of v. 9 also links v. 9 with v. 8, since it modifies the sentence of v. 8. V. 8 refers to the place and the specific day that the fathers disobeyed Yahweh, while v. 9 describes with the two synonymous verbs, נִסְּוּנִי (“they tested me”) and בְּנִסְּוֵנִי (“they put me to the proof”) how they disobeyed him. In this passage the disobedience to Yahweh in the past is emphasized by

¹⁴ Meribah literally means “quarrel” or “controversy” and Massah connotes “tempting” or “testing.” The places occur in Exod 17: 7 and Num 20: 13 (also see, Deut 6:16; 9:22; 33:8; Pss 81:7; 106:32), but Exod 17: 7 contains both place names. H. Davies (1973: 194) suggests that the use of Meribah with Massah in this psalm conveys not only the theme of disobedience connected with the lack of water which occurred at the Meribah incident, but also the theme of the presence of God from the Massah incident. He writes: “The oracular warning is saying not only ‘Do not be rebellious as your fathers were about the waters of Meribah’, but it is also saying ‘Do not question the presence of God here today, as your fathers questioned it at Massah’.” Davies’s suggestion seems acceptable.

the unusual repetition of the pronoun ("they").

V. 10 starts a new strophe by changing the subject of the verbs ("I loathed", and "I said"). V. 9 describes the behaviour of the fathers, while in v. 10 God judges the fathers as a people with "wayward hearts" (חַלְעֵי לֵבָב) and a people who "do not know Yahweh's ways" (וְהֵם לֹא יָדְעוּ דְרֹכָי). Therefore, the content of v. 10 does not show any difference from that of v. 9. V. 10 especially emphasizes the loathing of Yahweh for the wilderness generation. The expressions of Yahweh's discontent are found in words like "I loathed" (אָקוּט), "forty years" (אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה) and "that generation" (בְּדֹר) (Prinsloo 1995a:404).

V. 11 continues the content of v. 10. This is confirmed by the use of the particle אֲשֶׁר ("so that" or "therefore") that indicates the result of the previous sentence and by the first-person verb form (נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי, "I swore") and the first person suffixes (אֲפִי, "my anger"; מְנוּחָתִי, "my rest") which refer to Yahweh in v. 10. All this indicates a close connection between v. 10 and 11.

What should be pointed out here is the meaning of the word "rest." Von Rad (1966:99) understands it as a spiritual rest by seeing it as "a gift which Israel will find only by a wholly personal entering into its God",¹⁵ while Johnson (1979:21) refers to it as "home" which means the temple.¹⁶ However, a more likely meaning is that it should be understood as referring to entering into dwelling in land (Briggs & Briggs 1969:296), since the contents of vv. 8-10 and 11 obviously refer

¹⁵ Kraus (1989:248) takes a similar view to that of von Rad by saying the following: "...Yahweh's rest-a salvific blessing that is not material but personal, and that has its root and center in God himself..." Hossfeld (1994:38) also follows the views of Kraus and von Rad by arguing that here its meaning refers not to the land, but the rest in Yahweh.

¹⁶ Davies (1973:188ff) dates the origin of Psalm 95 to pre-exilic times. In this case the "rest" can be equated to the Jerusalem temple.

to its meaning in connection with the wilderness period.

As indicated, vv. 8-11 deal with the disobedience of the wilderness generation and the oracle from Yahweh's mouth. These characteristics bind these verses into a unity.

The last stanza, vv. 8-11, is somewhat antithetical to the previous stanza. First of all, whereas in v. 7 the worshippers define themselves as the people of Yahweh's pasture, in v. 10 God himself confirms that they are a "people" with wayward hearts. Moreover, in v. 7 the people are defined as those whom Yahweh led (cf. Yahweh as a shepherd), but in v. 10 they are mentioned as the people who did not know and therefore lost Yahweh's ways. In fact, v. 10 forms a close link with v. 7, because, as Dahood (1968:354) noted, the metaphor of sheep in the latter is resumed in the former where the terms $\text{לְעֵי} \text{ (Jer. 1:6)}$ and $\text{לְעֵי} \text{ (cf. Prov 3:5-6)}$ are elsewhere predicated as sheep. Another case of contrast is also found in the fact that while in v. 6 the worshippers are invited to come (בָּאוּ) before Yahweh (cf. "let us come," v. 1; "let us enter," v. 2), in v. 11 Yahweh swore that they should not enter (אַתְּמָן בָּאוּן) his rest. All these contrasts between the second stanza and the third mentioned indicate a close connection between them. In addition, there is a certain relationship between v. 7 and v. 11, since the words "his pasture" and "rest" might refer to the promised land (cf. Ps 23).

To summarize, the psalm consists of three stanzas (vv. 1-5, 6-7b and 7c-11) and between these stanzas a close connection is displayed. The first stanza forms a parallel with the second in that both start with an imperative verb plus cohortative verbs, followed by the conjunction כִּי which introduces the reason for praise. V. 7c stands as a transition linking the second stanza with the third, and the last stanza stands in an

antithetic relation to the second, and in many ways both the second and the last stanza are closely connected, as has been demonstrated above. Thus, the three stanzas exhibit a close link with each other in content and poetic style. There is no doubt that this psalm forms a coherent structure (also, see Hossfeld's [1994:31-32] argument for the unity of the psalm).

Vv. 1-7b form a hymn, while vv. 7c-11 is a prophetic oracle. Therefore, the psalm is a combination of two different genres. Many exegetes have classified Psalm 95 as a prophetic liturgy (e.g. Leslie 1949:212-214) or as an enthronement psalm (Mowinckel 1962a:156-7; Ringgren 1963:18) or as a liturgical psalm (Kirkpatrick 1903:571-2; Sabourin 1970:404; Weiser 1979:625; Kraus 1989:246). Because the first part of the psalm (vv. 1-7b) obviously forms the call to worship, it is assumed that the psalm was used on liturgical occasions. Mowinckel (1962a:156) sees the first part of the psalm as an enthronement hymn and the second part as a renewal of the covenant through the mouth of the cultic prophet, but the psalm gives no hint as to what the actual cultic function was. It is not possible to reconstruct the actual original cultic function by analysing the psalm itself.

Psalm 96:1-13

- 1 שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
- 2 שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה בְּרַכּוּ שְׁמוֹ בְּשָׂרוֹ מִיּוֹם־לְיוֹם יִשׁוּעָתוֹ
- 3 סִפְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ בְּכָל־הָעַמִּים נִפְלְאוֹתָיו
- 4 כִּי גָדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד נֹרָא הוּא עַל־כָּל־אֱלֹהִים
- 5 כִּי כָל־אֱלֹהֵי הָעַמִּים אֱלִילִים וַיהוָה שְׁמַיִם עָשָׂה
- 6 הוֹרֵד־וַהֲרִיר לִפְנֵי עֵז וַחֲפָאֲרַת בְּמִקְדָּשׁוֹ
- 7 הִבִּי לַיהוָה מִשְׁפָּחוֹת עַמִּים הִבִּי לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד וְעֵז
- 8 הִבִּי לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ שְׂאוּ־מִנְחָה וּבֵאוּ לְחֻצְרוֹתָיו
- 9 הַשְׁתַּחֲוִי לַיהוָה בְּהִרְחֹק־קִדְשׁ חִילוֹ מִפְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ
- 10 אָמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם יְהוָה מָלַךְ אֶרֶץ־תְּפוֹן חִבְלֵי בַל־תִּפְּוֹט יָדָיו עַמִּים בְּמִישְׁרֵים
- 11 יִשְׁמַחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ יִרְעֵם הַיָּם וּמַלְאוּ
- 12 יַעֲלוּ שָׂדֵי וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ אֵז וְרִנְנוּ כָל־עֵצֵי־יַעַר
- 13 לִפְנֵי יְהוָה כִּי בָּא כִּי בָּא לִשְׁפֹט הָאָרֶץ יִשְׁפֹט־חִבְלֵי בְצֹרֵק וְעַמִּים בְּאִמּוֹנָתוֹ

Psalm 96 consists of two stanzas (vv. 1-9 and 11-13). The first stanza has three strophes (vv. 1-3, 4-6 and 7-9) and the second stanza two strophes (vv. 11-12 and 13) Of these stanzas, v. 10 functions as a bridge linking the first stanza to the second.

The first strophe of the first stanza, vv. 1-3, is closely tied together by content and style. The series of six imperative parallel verbs (שִׁירוּ, שִׁירוּ, שִׁירוּ, בְּרַכּוּ, בְּשָׂרוּ, סִפְרוּ) bind the three verses together and emphasize the praise of Yahweh. The threefold use of “sing”(שִׁירוּ), the repetition of which strongly emphasizes the praise of Yahweh, is paralleled with the following three imperatives by which Yahweh’s greatness is described.¹⁷ In v. 1 “all the earth” (כָּל־הָאָרֶץ) is addressed and called upon to praise Yahweh, but in v. 3 Yahweh’s glory and

¹⁷ The root בָּשַׁר “tell” is frequent in Isaiah.

marvelous works are said to be declared *among* the nations (כָּל־גּוֹיִם) and all the peoples (כָּל־לְעַמֵּי־הָאָרֶץ). It is likely that “all the earth” in v. 1 includes “the nations” and “all the peoples” in v. 3, since in order to bring Yahweh’s praise from all the earth, Yahweh’s greatness should be proclaimed *among* “the nations” and “all the peoples” (v.3). Thus, vv. 1-3 are closely connected to one another by content and style.

V. 1 sets forth a theme for praise, namely a new song (שִׁיר נְדָבָה), while vv. 2-3 introduce four important theological terms (“name,” “deliverance,” “glory” and “wonderful deeds”), expounding the meaning of the new song in v. 1. Here “name” and “glory” signify that Yahweh has revealed himself through the history of Israel, while “deliverance” and “wonderful deeds” refer to the possibility of a new experience which God will perform for Israel (Beuken 1992:5). With regard to this, in v. 1 the phrase שִׁיר נְדָבָה (“a new song”), which occurs very frequently in the Book of Isaiah (e.g., Isa 40: 4; 42:10; cf., 41: 15; 43: 19; 48:6; also Ps 145:9), denotes an eschatological event, as many exegetes have insisted (Sabourin 1970:202; Feuillet 1951:244-260; Westermann 1981:148; Kraus 1989:252).¹⁸ Thus, at the beginning of the psalm the psalmist anticipates the new experience of salvation which Yahweh will bring in the future.

Vv. 4-6 form the second strophe which is distinct from the previous strophe. Vv. 4 and 5 start with the conjunction כִּי which introduces the reason for the praise sung in vv. 1-3 and the verbal sentences in vv. 1-3 are replaced by the nominal sentences in vv. 4-6, though v. 5 combines a nominal sentence with a verbal one. These features distinguish vv. 4-6 from vv. 1-3.

¹⁸ Longman (1982:300-302) understands the new song as referring to Holy War.

Vv. 4-6 are closely linked by content and style. Both verses 4 and 5 begin with the conjunction וְ and at the same time share the key phrase “all gods.” The resumption of the וְ in v. 5 in connection with the phrase כָּל־אֱלֹהִים, serves to extend and emphasize the statements of v. 4 (Tate 1990:514). Both verses likewise emphasize the fact that Yahweh is greater than other gods and that other gods are only idols, because he alone made the heavens which are the dwelling place of the gods.

V. 5 (v.4) has a definite link with v. 10, since both have the perfectum verb form (מָלַךְ, עָשָׂה), which only occurs in three verses, vv.5, 10, 13, and the two terms “the heavens” (שָׁמַיִם) and “the world” (תְּהוֹמֹת) in vv. 5 and 10 are complementary to each other, and accordingly the two themes, “Yahweh as king” (v. 10) and “Yahweh as a creator” (v. 5) are combined (Beuken 1992:6-7). V. 10 as a transitional verse, as we shall see, states the reasons for the statements made in vv.1-9 and in vv. 11-13. In sum, v. 10 contains Yahweh’s judgement which is the reason, not only for the call to worship in vv. 1-9, but also for the rejoicing in vv. 11-12. Vv. 4-5 likewise seem to contain such a motif, namely, Yahweh’s judgement and so the thought inferred from vv. 4-5 seems to point to Yahweh’s judging the gods. Thus it is correct when Kraus (1989:253) notes that vv. 4-5 reflect the views developed by Deutero-Isaiah: “the gods (אֱלֹהִים) are made by hands,” “they perish in judgement.”

V. 6 summarizes the contents of vv. 4-5. In v. 6 the psalmist refers to the royal splendour of Yahweh over the whole world, and in the sanctuary Yahweh’s people praise his majesty and strength. The statements of v. 6 are based on Yahweh’s greatness described in vv. 4-5. The psalmist now moves from the universal sphere (vv.4-5) to the historical sphere in the sanctuary where a new song is to be proclaimed.

At this point the worshippers think of God within the historical sphere.

Vv. 7-9 form a new unit, therefore, which is the third strophe. These verses are linked by a series of imperative verbs (שָׂאוּ, הִבְיֵאוּ, הִבְיֵאוּ, הִבְיֵאוּ) and by the repetition of words (glory, vv.7 and 8; his court and holy array, vv.8 and 9). The phrase “all families of the people” (כָּל-הָאֲרָצִים) in v. 7 corresponds to “all the earth” (כָּל-הָאֲרָצִים) in v. 9 (cf. the fact that “all the earth” and “all the families of the nations” are paralleled in Ps 22:28), both thus forming an inclusio. In addition, the concept of the word “glory” (כְּבוֹד) in v. 7 and the expression “worship before Yahweh” (הִשְׁתַּחֲוּי לַיהוָה) in v. 9 are closely connected to the description of Yahweh’s kingship (Ps 22:28; 24:7-10; 29:9; 99:1,5,9; Isa 6:3,5) (Booij 1994:156), and they may constitute another inclusio.

Vv. 7-9 are paralleled with vv. 1-3 on many points. First of all, in vv. 2-3 the Israelites are told to proclaim a new song among the nations and all the people (the phrases “among the nations” and “among all the peoples” imply that the speakers are the Israelites themselves), but in vv. 7-9 the “families of the peoples” who correspond to “the nations and all the peoples” in v. 3, are invited into the sanctuary (v. 8, cf. 6) to bring an offering and to worship Yahweh. On the other hand, just as vv. 1-3 use a series of imperative verbs to convey the call to praise, so vv. 7-9 have the seven imperative verbs by which the psalmist sets the tone of the call for worshipping Yahweh. The following contrasts show a certain relationship between vv. 1-3 and 7-9:

Vv. 1-3	Vv. 7-9
שִׁירָה (Sing: 3 times)	הִבְיֵאוּ (Ascribe: 3 times)
בְּרַכּוּ (Bless)	שָׂאוּ (Bring)
בְּשָׂרוּ (Tell)	בָּאוּ (Come)

סָפְרוּ (Declare)	הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ (Worship)
-----	הִילָלוּ (Tremble)

The contrasts shown above indicate that the first threefold set of imperatives (“sing”) in vv. 1-3 are paralleled with the first threefold set of imperatives in vv. 7-9. These threefold imperatives in both sections constitute three acts of speech, while the rest of the imperatives refer to the acts of cultic worship (Beuken 1992:3). The close links between both sections are further evidenced by the repetition of many key- words, namely: “all the earth” (vv. 1 and 9); “his name” (vv. 2 and 8); “glory” (vv. 3 and 8); “the people” (vv. 3 and 7); also the divine name יְהוָה (vv.1,2,4,7,8,9). Considered as a whole, they form a chiasmic structure (Auffret 1993b:152), as follows:

		כָּל-הָאָרֶץ(v. 1)
		שְׁמוֹ(v. 2)
	כְּבוֹדוֹ(v. 3)	
הָעַמִּים(v. 3)		
עַמִּים (v. 7)		
	כְּבוֹד(vv. 7b, 8a)	
	שְׁמוֹ (v. 8)	
		כָּל-הָאָרֶץ(v. 9)

It is clear that vv. 7-9 have a close connection with vv. 1-3.

The phrase “all the earth” forms an inclusio between v. 1 and v. 9 (Dahood 1968:358) and the divine name יְהוָה also occurs in both verses 1 and 9, thus forming another inclusio.

Vv. 7-9 have a certain relationship not only with vv. 1-3, but also with vv. 5-6, especially v. 6. The following words and phrases occur in both sections: “strength” (vv. 6, 7); “majesty” (vv. 6, 9); “sanctuary” and “holy array” (vv. 6, 9); “before him” (vv. 6, 9); “people” (vv. 5a, 7a); “all” (vv. 4b, 5a, 9b). In addition, the word “his sanctuary” (מִקְדָּשׁוֹ) in v. 6 corresponds to the word “his courts” (חֲצֵרוֹתָיו) in v. 8.

As indicated earlier, v. 10 functions as a bridge between what precedes and what follows (Howard 1986:90-94; Tate 1990:515). First of all, a link between v. 3 and v. 10 can be noticed. The expression אָמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם (“say among the nations”) in v. 10a is almost identical with that of v. 3a סִפְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם (“declare among the nations”) and at the same time both verses are linked by the use of the word עַמִּים (“peoples”). A link between v. 10 and v. 6 is also added, because both depict Yahweh’s kingship with the phrases הוֹדוּ וְהִקְדֵּרוּ (“honour and majesty”) and יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ (“Yahweh reigns”) which imply Yahweh’s kingship. Moreover, v. 10 marks a link with vv. 7-9. The word עַמִּים occurs in both sections (v. 7 and 10), and the term הָאָרֶץ at the end of v. 9 corresponds to תְּבִל in v. 10. In addition, the imperative verb אָמְרוּ (“say”) in v. 10 can be linked to the series of the imperative verbs in vv. 7-9. As noted earlier, vv. 5 and 10 exhibit a link by the use of the perfectum verbs (מִלְכָּה, עָשָׂה) and the complementary images, namely, “Yahweh as creator” and “Yahweh as king.”

On the other hand, v. 10 exhibits a close connection with the following verses. The judgement motif introduced in v. 10 (by the expression “the world is established and it shall never be moved” and by the word יִדְּוֶן [“he will judge”] in v. 10b) echoes v. 13 where the word “judge” (שֹׁפֵט) is repeated twice in order to emphasize the judgement of Yahweh and at the same time the expression עַמִּים בְּמִישָׁרִים (“people with equity”) in v. 10 is identified with the one וְעַמִּים בְּאֵמֶת וְחֵן (“the peoples with truth”) in v. 13. Another case for the link of v. 10 to v. 13 can also be added: as noted above, both verses, vv. 10 and 13, have the perfectum verbs (בָּא, מִלְכָּה), found only in vv. 5, 10, and 13 throughout the psalm, and this further reinforces the link between both

verses. It is also worth noting that the imperfect verb יָרִין in v. 10 serves to introduce a series of five imperfect verbs in vv. 11-12.

Vv. 11-13, comprising the second stanza, can be divided into two strophes (vv. 11-12 and 13). The first strophe describes the universal praise (“heaven”, “earth”, and “sea”) for Yahweh, the basis of which is the judgement of Yahweh. Both verses, vv. 11-12, are linked by a series of five imperfective verb forms (יִרְנְנוּ, יַעֲלוּ, יִרְעִים, וְתִגַּל, וְשִׂמְחוּ) and in content v. 12 complements v. 11 in that the latter includes the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the universe with the words “heavens,” “earth,” and “sea,” while the former points to the things relative to the earth which is placed in the middle of the structure of v. 11, e.g, “the field” and “all the trees of the wood.” Both verses are closely linked by content. Dahood (1968:359) notes that the adverb אָז (“then”) denotes “when Yahweh comes to govern the world himself ...” This indicates that the coming of Yahweh to judge is the cause for the joy described in vv. 11-12.

As implied, v. 13 gives the reason for the statements in vv. 11-12. The repetition of the conjunction כִּי (“because”) in v. 13 links the verse to the previous verses and serves to emphasize the reason for the joy in vv. 11-12. The repetition of the phrase כִּי בָּא (“because he comes”) and of the word שֹׁפֵט (“judge”) stresses a strong anticipation of Yahweh’s judgement, a judgement “to restore his order in the world” (Weiser 1979:630).

V. 13 concludes not only the second stanza, but also the whole psalm. The word אֶרֶץ (“the earth”) also occurs in v. 1, thus serving as an inclusio to the whole psalm. As indicated above, v. 13 forms a link with v. 10 which is a transitional verse linking vv. 1-9 and 11-12, and

as such the verse is connected to all the verses of the psalm. In v. 13, the use of the phrase לְפָנָי יְהוָה (“before Yahweh”) also creates the relationship between v. 13 and vv. 6 and 9 where the phrase לְפָנָיו (“before him”) occurs, and the statement כִּי בָא (“for he comes”) also stands on the same level as the acts of Yahweh’s creating the world (v. 5) and establishing order in the world (v. 9), since the purpose of Yahweh’s coming is to establish his order in the world.

To summarize: the psalm forms two stanzas (vv. 1-9 and 11-13), and v. 10 serves as a transitional verse. The first stanza, consisting of three strophes (vv. 1-3, 4-6, and 7-9), exhibits a close link through the repetition of words and phrases as well as through the repetition of imperatives. Vv. 4-6 provide the reason for the call to praise in vv. 1-3, and vv. 7-9 are reminiscent of vv. 1-6 in many ways. V. 10 serve as a hinge verse forming the link between vv. 1-9 and 10-13. The second stanza, vv. 11-13, continues the theme of Yahweh’s kingship introduced in v. 10 and is focused on conveying the cosmic praise of Yahweh which has already begun in the earlier section. Throughout the psalm, the continuing concern for the praise of Yahweh and the repetition of words and phrases show us that the psalm constitutes a coherent structure.

Concerning the genre of the psalm: it has commonly been accepted among scholars that it can be described as a hymn. Howard (1986:91) has noted that of the 28 verb forms in the psalm, “18 (14 imperatives and 4 jussives) urge acts or attitudes of praise by the people or the elements of creation.” The designation of the psalm as a hymn is quite acceptable.

Psalm 97:1-12

1 יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ תִּגְלַח הָאָרֶץ יִשְׂמְחוּ אַיִם רַבִּים
 2 עָנָן וְעָרְפֶל סָבִיבוּ צָדֵק וּמִשְׁפָּט מִכּוֹן כְּסֵאוֹ
 3 אֵשׁ לִפְנֵי תֵלֶךְ וְתִלְהֹט סָבִיב צָרוֹ:
 4 הָאֵירוּ בְרָקוֹ תָּבֵל כָּאֶתָּה וַתַּחַל הָאָרֶץ
 5 הָרִים כִּדְוֹנָג נִמְסוּ מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה מִלִּפְנֵי אָדוֹן כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
 6 הַגִּידוּ הַשְּׁמַיִם צְדָקוֹ וְרֵאוּ כָל־הָעַמִּים כְּבוֹדוֹ
 7 וַיִּבְשׂוּ כָל־עֲבָדֵי כָסֵל הַמַּתְהַלְלִים בְּאֵלִילִים הַשְׁתַּחֲוִי־לוֹ כָּל־אֱלֹהִים
 8 שָׁמְעָה וַתִּשְׂמַח צִיּוֹן וַתִּגְלַנָּה בְּנוֹת יְהוּדָה לִמְעַן מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ יְהוָה
 9 כִּי־אָתָּה יְהוָה עֲלִיוֹן עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ מֵאֵד נְעֻלִיתָ עַל־כָּל־אֱלֹהִים
 10 אֲתִבִּי יְהוָה שִׁנְאוֹ רַע שָׁמַר נִפְשׁוֹת חַסִּידָיו מִיַּד רָשָׁעִים וַיְצִילֵם
 11 אֹרֶךְ יָרַע לְצַדִּיק וּלְיֹשְׁרֵי־לֵב שָׁמְחָה
 12 שִׂמְחוּ צַדִּיקִים בַּיהוָה וְהוֹדוּ לְזִכְרֵךְ קֹדֶשׁ

Dividing this psalm into stanzas is not easy, but it seems natural to divide it into two stanzas (vv. 1-9 and 10-12). Both stanzas consist of two strophes (vv. 1-6, 7-9 and vv. 10-11, 12) respectively.

V. 1 forms an introduction to the whole psalm. The initial statement “Yahweh reigns” (יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ) serves to introduce the theme of this psalm and the word “rejoice” (שָׂמַח) occurring in vv. 1 and 12 frames the whole psalm, thus forming an *inclusio* (Watson 1984:284). Vv. 1b and 1c constitute a synonymous parallelism. In these stichs the psalmist describes the reaction of the earth and the islands to the initial statement of the majesty of Yahweh.

Vv. 2-5 describe the theme of Yahweh’s kingship in terms of theophany, while v. 6 summarizes its effect. The verses of the first strophe, vv. 1-6, are all linked together by content and style.

V. 2 marks a link with v. 1 by the occurrence of the third-person singular suffixes “him” and “his” which refer to Yahweh in v. 1 and by

the phrase “the foundation of his throne” (מָכוֹן פְּסָאוֹ) which complements the statement of v. 1, “Yahweh reigns” (cf. Kuntz 1967:207). The expression עָנָן וְעֲרֵפֶל (“clouds and thick darkness”) in the first stich are structured parallel to the צְדָקָה וְיִשְׁפָּט (“righteousness and justice”) in the next stich, while the term סְבִיבוֹ (“round about him”) is similar to the phrase מָכוֹן פְּסָאוֹ (“the foundation of his throne”). The words “clouds” and “thick darkness” point to the invisibility and mystery which surround Yahweh, and “righteousness” and “justice” are the foundation of his throne, on the basis of which his kingship is exercised (Anderson 1972:687). Thus, the “clouds” and “thick darkness” refer to physical phenomena describing Yahweh’s kingship, while the “righteousness” and “justice” mention Yahweh’s moral attributes, by which the world is ruled.

V. 3 continues the theme of the previous verses. In v. 3 the occurrence of the word סְבִיב, also found in v. 2, and of the third-person suffixes (him, his, him, his) in v. 3 mentioning Yahweh, creates the connection with the previous verses. Worth noting is that the word סְבִיב is used in v. 2 in order to describe the greatness of Yahweh, while in v. 3 it is used in order to specify the destruction of Yahweh’s enemies. This poetic device creates a contrasting effect (Prinsloo 1995b:1093) between Yahweh’s greatness and the destruction of the enemies.

In v. 3 a parallelism of the pattern A+B+C//C'+B' is found:

C	B	A
אֵשׁ	לְפָנָיו	תִּלְךָ
B'	C'	
וּתְלַהֲטֵהוּ	סְבִיב	צָרָיו

The word שָׁאֵל functions as a double-duty modifier serving both stichs. In the second stich the absence of an A'- element is compensated for by the extension of the B's element in the second stich, so that we find a ballast variant in v. 3 (Prinsloo 1995b:1093).

The description of the theophany in v. 3 is also continued in v. 4 where the third-person suffix "his" refers to Yahweh in the preceding verses. Besides, an end-rhyme (תִּלְךָ, תִּבְלָה) occurs between v. 3a and v. 4b. These features, along with the continuation in v. 4 of the theme in v. 3, bind v. 4 to the previous verses.

V. 4 forms a chiasmic parallelism with the following elements: verb-subject (הָאֵירוּ, בָּרָקִיוּ)// subject-verb (תִּבְלָה, רָאָתָהּ)// verb-subject (וַתִּחַל, אֶרֶץ), but the arrangement of the words תִּבְלָה and אֶרֶץ is structured synonymously. V. 4 continues the theophany of v.3, but the perspective is changed, because v. 4 deals with the reaction of the world and the earth rather than with the theophany itself. The expressions "the world sees" and "the earth trembles" denote a cosmic reaction which reflects Yahweh's theophany.

The reaction of the earth stated in v. 4 continues in v. 5 and the perfectum verb form found in v. 4 is also employed in v. 5 (נִמְסוּ). The word "mountains" is reminiscent of the word "earth" in v. 4 and both verses, vv. 4-5, are linked by means of anadiplosis, since both end with the word "earth." By adding the קָל to the word אֶרֶץ ("earth") the reaction to the theophany of Yahweh is effectively emphasized. In addition, there is alliteration between הָאֵירוּ in 4a and הָרִים in 5a. All these characteristics mentioned above point to a close link between vv. 4 and 5.

V. 5 forms a synthetical parallelism, as follows:

d	c	b	a	
מִלְפָּנֵי יְהוָה	נִמְסוּ	כְּדֹנַג	הָרִים	5a
	d			
		כָּל-הָאָרֶץ	אֶדְוֶן	5b

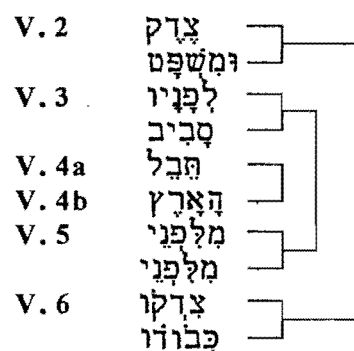
Only the d-element of v. 5a is repeated in the second stich of v. 5. Thus, the emphasis falls on v. 5b referring to Yahweh's kingship of "all the earth." By repeating the preposition מִלְפָּנֵי and by placing the divine names יְהוָה and אֶדְוֶן in parallel, the psalmist stresses that even the mountains, which are a symbol of permanence, melt like wax before Yahweh's theophany.

In v. 6 the expression כָּל-הָעַמִּים ("all the peoples") corresponds to the כָּל-הָאָרֶץ ("all the earth") in v. 5 and the third-person suffixes (*his* righteousness, *his* glory) in v. 6 refer to Yahweh in v. 5. The perfectum verb form which has been used in vv. 4-5, is again used in v. 6 (וַיִּרְא, הִגִּידוּ).¹⁹ These features mark a link with the preceding verses.

The reaction of the earth to Yahweh's theophany described in v. 5 is not mentioned directly in v. 6. Instead, the reaction of the heavens and all the peoples is described. However, this does not imply the disconnection of v. 6 from the previous verses, since the term כְּבוֹדוֹ

¹⁹ The verbs in vv. 4-6 are perfects. If Psalm 97 is understood as a cultic presentation, then we assume that the perfects may be associated with the ritual that has just taken place. However, we agree with Kraus (1989:258) when he says the following: "Psalm 97 is to be understood first of all not cultically but eschatologically. The theophany has an eschatological-universal direction ... 'The judgment is awaited from the future, but it is described in images that are taken from the past' (F. Notscher)." In this case, the perfects connote the perfects of assurance in the future event. Kraus (1989:259) also notes the following: "But one has to begin with the imperfects in v. 3. They take up the eschatological event of the coming of God ... The perfects which then follow set up (after the imperfect) future events which are to be awaited with assurance" See also Cook (1992:82-99, esp., 94-95).

(“glory”) is seen as “a summary description of the theophany in the preceding verses, that is, as a comprehensive term for the royal apparel of God, which is composed of cloud, fire, and lightning” (Mettinger 1982:119). In fact, vv. 2-6 reveal a close connection through a chiasmic structure,²⁰ as follows (cf. Auffret 1995:59):



The above structure shows that the two parallel elements, “righteousness and justice” in v. 2 and “righteousness and glory” in v. 6 refer to Yahweh’s attributes, by which Yahweh exercises his kingship, while the centre of the structure points to locations (earth and world). When this structure is compared with v. 1, it is observed that the elements related to Yahweh’s attributes (which are positioned at the beginning and at the end of the structure) correspond to the expression “Yahweh reigns” in v. 1a, while the places “earth” and “many islands” in v. 1b-c are related to the centre of the above structure where the places “earth” and “world” are also found (Auffret 1995:59-60). All these observations show us that vv. 1-6 should be regarded as a unity. Within this strophe, the word “earth” appears as a recurrent motif since it occurs four times (vv. 1, 4, 5 and 9) throughout the whole psalm, but

²⁰ Prinsloo (1995b:1095-1096) notes a close connection between vv. 4b-6b, with the following words רָאָה (4b) מִלְּפָנָי (5a)// מִלְּפָנָי (5b) רָאָה (6b).

three times in vv. 1-6. Through the frequent repetition of the word the psalmist underscores Yahweh's power and majesty over "all the earth" (v. 5). Worth noting is that the earth and the islands in v. 1b-c rejoice due to Yahweh's theophany, while the earth in the centre of the above structure (v. 4) trembles because of Yahweh's coming. Thus, the places in v. 1 stand in antithetical relation to those of v. 4.

Vv. 7-9 form the second strophe. These verses deal with the reactions of the idol worshippers, all gods, and peoples which emerge from Yahweh's manifesting himself in theophany. This feature distinguishes this strophe from the preceding strophe, but it also exhibits a close connection with the previous strophe, since the expressions "all the earth" in v. 5 and "all the peoples" in v. 6 correspond to "all worshippers" in v. 7 and "all the earth" in v. 9, and the third person suffix of the preposition לו ("before him") in v. 7 refers to Yahweh in the previous verses.

V. 7 constitutes a synthetical parallelism, as follows:

b		a
כָּל-עַבְדֵי כְּסֹל		יְבֹשׁוּ
b'		
כָּאֵלִילִים	הַמְתַּהַלְלִים	
b□		a'
כָּל-אֱלֹהִים	הַשֹּׁתְתוּ-לוֹ	

By the synthetical parallelism, the emphasis is moved from the idol worshippers in v. 7a to all the gods themselves in v. 7c. The alliteration of v. 7b (כָּאֵלִילִים הַמְתַּהַלְלִים) exposes the boast of the persons worshipping the idols as worthless, and the end-rhyme (כָּל-אֱלֹהִים, הַמְתַּהַלְלִים) found in 7b and 7c serves to

identify all gods as “worthless idols” (כִּלְאֵלִים לֵאלֹהִים) (Prinsloo 1995b:1096; cf. Anderson 1972:689). A climax occurs in v. 7c, since there “all gods” served by all worshippers of idols in v. 7a-b, bow down before Yahweh (לַיהוָה). The image of ‘all gods’ drawn in this verse is contrasted to that of Yahweh as described in vv. 5-6, since in the latter verses Yahweh is acknowledged as the king over all the earth and all the people. A link between v. 7 and the previous verses is created through this contrast.

Vv. 8-9 are linked by the use of the second-person singular and singular suffix (*your* judgments, *You*, *You* are exalted) referring to Yahweh, which is found only in these verses throughout the psalm, and by the use of the particle וְ at the beginning of v. 9 which serves to connect v. 9 with v. 8. In v. 8 the rejoicing of Zion and of the daughters of Judah is contrasted to the picture drawn in v. 7 where all worshippers of idols are put to shame, and in v. 9 the exalting of Yahweh is compared to the image of all gods bowing down before Yahweh in v. 7. These characteristics distinguish vv. 8-9 from the previous verse, but the occurrence of the כִּלְאֵלִים לֵאלֹהִים (“all gods”) in vv. 7, 9 links all three verses into a unity.

V. 8 constitutes a synthetical parallelism, by which the thought of the first and the second stich is completed in the third stich. The perfectum verb שָׁמְעוּ (“hear”) in v. 8a refers to the reaction of the event described in v. 7 and the two imperfectum verbs (וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ, וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ) linked by means of the *waw* consecutive, point to the content of v. 8c (Dahood 1968:362; Prinsloo 1995b:1097). In this way, the psalmist notes that Zion and the daughters of Judah rejoice because of Yahweh’s judgment in v. 8c. With regard to this, the links with other verses can be noticed. Vv. 1 and 8 have the words גִּיל and שִׂמְחָה in

common. V. 2 also contains the word מִשְׂפָּט occurring in v. 8. Thus, vv. 1-2 and v. 8 are linked by the occurrence of the words noted above. It is likely that in vv. 1-2 the source of joy is Yahweh's judgement (cf. v. 2 and v. 8).

V. 9 has a synonymous parallelism in that a wordplay between the words עֲלֵי־יָרֵךְ ("most high") in v. 9a and הִלָּלְתָּךְ ("thou are exalted") in v. 9b (Dahood 1968:362; Prinsloo 1995b:1097) occurs in it, and the phrase עַל־כָּל ("over all") in v. 9a is also repeated in 9b, thus forming a parallelism. V. 9 especially emphasizes Yahweh's exaltation over all other gods and over all the earth by directly addressing him as "thou" and by using the repeated phrase עַל־כָּל underscoring the supremacy of Yahweh. The phrase כָּל־אֱלֹהִים refers back to that of v. 7, and the expression כָּל־הָאָרֶץ echoes v. 4 (perhaps the first strophe where the word "earth" is prevalent) where the phrase is also found. It is likely that v. 9 concludes both strophes (vv. 1-6 and 7-8). The link between the first strophe and the second is also noticed by the repetition of the words: אָרֶץ (vv. 1, 4, 5, 9); הָיָה (vv. 1, 5, 8, 9); שָׂמַח (vv. 2, 8); צָדִיק (vv. 2, 6); כָּל (vv. 5, 6, 7, 9).

Vv. 10-12 make up the second stanza which can be divided into two strophes (vv. 10-11 and 12). Vv. 10-11 are concerned with Yahweh's deliverance of the righteous, while v. 12 urges the righteous to praise Yahweh. Thus, vv. 10-11 are a little different from v. 12 in perspective, though they share the same idea. This marks a distinction between vv. 10-11 and 12.

While v. 9 contains a direct address to Yahweh, v. 10 starts with an exhortation addressed to the righteous. Another distinctive characteristic which is discernible in this stanza is the use of the

imperative verbs (שָׁנְאוּ, שָׂמְחוּ, וְהִרְדּוּ) which are found only in vv. 10 and 12 of the psalm. These features mark vv. 10-12 as a new unity.

Vv. 10-12 are closely linked by style and content. In v. 10a the expression “those who love Yahweh and hate evil” (אֲהַבְי יְהוָה שָׁנְאוּ רָע) corresponds to “his royal ones” (וְצַדִּיקָיו) in v. 10b, and vv. 11-12 again refer back to the וְצַדִּיקָיו with the terms “the righteous” (צַדִּיקִים), “the upright in heart” (וְלִישְׁרֵי-לֵב), and “you righteous ones” (צַדִּיקִים). In v. 11 we find an ellipsis, since v. 11b has no verb, but the verb וְרָע in 11a serves both 11a and b. This stylistic device is also found in v. 12 where the term denoting addressees, “you righteous ones” (צַדִּיקִים) is supposed to be the subject serving both verbs (שָׂמְחוּ, וְהִרְדּוּ) in v. 12a-b. This stylistic feature functions in linking both verses. A close link between the verses is further confirmed by means of anadiplosis, since v. 11 ends with the word שְׂמֵחָה (“joy”) and v. 12 starts with the same root. In addition, all three verses display wisdom terminology which also serves to reinforce a close unity, as is found in the following words: רָע and רָשָׁעִים, v. 10; אֵוֶר, צַדִּיק, and לִישְׁרֵי-לֵב, v. 11; צַדִּיקִים, v. 12.

In summary, the psalm is divided into two stanzas (vv. 1-9 and 10-12), composed of two strophes (vv. 1-6, 7-9 and 10-11, 12) respectively. On the whole, the psalm displays a coherent unity in style and content. The word שָׂמְחָה is distributed to important positions (vv. 1, 8, 12) across the psalm, and the occurrence of the words “שָׂמְחָה” in vv. 1, 12, “צַדִּיק” in vv. 2, 12, and of the divine name “יְהוָה” in vv. 1, 12, seems to form an inclusio for the whole psalm. The two strophes of the first stanza are joined together by dealing with the same theme, namely Yahweh’s theophany, the first strophe describing the theophany itself, the second its result. The two strophes of the second stanza also present a

close tie through poetic devices and through the repetition of words, as we have seen above, but the statement of v. 12 stands in contrast to the content of v. 7, since the rejoicing of the righteous in the former is compared to the shame of the idol-worshippers in the latter. Thus, the two stanzas form a close relationship. In light of the above discussions, it is shown that Psalm 97 is structured as a unity.

Regarding the genre of the psalm, it has commonly been accepted as a hymn. In v. 1 the exhortation to praise lends a hymnic character to this psalm and in v. 12 the psalm concludes with two imperative calls to praise.

Psalm 98:1-9

1 מְזִמֹּר שִׁירֵי לַיהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ כִּי־נִפְלְאוֹת עָשָׂה הוֹשִׁיעָה־לוֹ יְמִינוֹ וַיְרֹעַ קִדְשׁוֹ
 2 הוֹרִיעַ יְהוָה יְשׁוּעָתוֹ לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם גְּלָה צְדָקָתוֹ
 3 זָכַר חֲסִדוֹ וַאֲמִנָּתוֹ לְבַיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל רָאוּ כָל־אֲפֹסֵי־אָרֶץ אֵת יְשׁוּעַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 4 הֲרִיעוּ לַיהוָה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ פָּצְחוּ וַרְנְנוּ וַיִּזְמְרוּ
 5 וַיִּזְמְרוּ לַיהוָה בְּכִנּוֹר בְּכִנּוֹר וְקוֹל זִמְרָה
 6 בְּתַצְצֻרוֹת וְקוֹל שׁוֹפָר הֲרִיעוּ לְפָנָי הַמַּלְךְ יְהוָה
 7 יִרְעַם הַיָּם וּמַלְאוֹ תִּבְּלֵי יִשְׁבִּי בָּהּ
 8 נְהַרְוֹת יַמֹּתֶיךָ יַחַד הַרִים יִרְנְנוּ
 9 לְפָנֵי־יְהוָה כִּי בָּא לִשְׁפֹט הָאָרֶץ יִשְׁפֹט־חֲבָל בְּצַדֵּק וְעַמִּים בְּמִישְׁרִים

Psalm 98 comprises three strophes (vv. 1-3, 4-6 and 7-9). The first strophe forms a call to praise Yahweh for the great acts he has done, the second invites all humanity to exalt Yahweh as king, and the third calls all nature (sea, world, floods and hills) to rejoice at Yahweh's coming.

The first strophe is closely integrated by style and content. Apart from the imperative שִׁירֵי in v. 1a, vv. 1b-3 have six perfect verb forms (רָאוּ, זָכַר, גְּלָה, הוֹרִיעַ, הוֹשִׁיעָה, עָשָׂה) which describe the reason for the imperative in v. 1a. All six these verbs take Yahweh as subject and describe his great deeds as the reason for praise. The particle כִּי in v. 1b, used to give the reason for the praise, is syntactically linked to all six perfect verbs, thus binding vv. 1-3 into a unity. In addition, the third-person suffixes (for *him*, *his* right hand, the arm of *his* holiness, v. 1; *his* victory, *his* vindication, v. 2; *his* love, *his* faithfulness, v.3) in vv. 1b-3 referring to Yahweh also serve to bind them together.

The repetition of the word “sing”²¹ in v. 1a introduces the importance of the praise for Yahweh and the following verses describe what Yahweh has accomplished. In v. 1b the meaning of the word “wonderful works” (נִפְלְאוֹת) ²² is not immediately apparent, but the following verses describing Yahweh’s acts seems to define the נִפְלְאוֹת as “the victory” (יְשׁוּעָה) (lit. ‘salvation’) of Yahweh, manifested in the history of his people (Anderson 1972:691; Kraus 1989:264). The root יְשׁוּעָה occurs three times in vv. 1-3 and the expression “he has done wonderful works” (נִפְלְאוֹת עָשָׂה) forms a parallel with the expression הוֹרִישֵׁה-לוֹ (“has gotten victory”) in the next line, which is also structured parallel to the הוֹרִיעַ יְהוָה יְשׁוּעָתוֹ (“Yahweh has made known his victory”) in v. 2a. In v. 1d end-rhyme (קִרְשׁוֹ, יְמִינוֹ) occurs and the terms used there (“his right hand” and “the arm of his holiness”) are reminiscent of holy war ideology (Longman 1984:269). The use of these terms emphasizes that Yahweh has won by virtue of his own strength without any essential help (Anderson 1972:691; Weiser 1979:637).

V. 2 is linked with v. 1 by the use of the same root יְשׁוּעָה and of

²¹ The reference to “new song” occurs seven times in the Old Testament (Pss 33: 3; 40: 3; 96: 1; 98: 1; 144: 9; 149: 1; Isa 42: 10). Longman (1984:269, 272) notes that the reference each time occurs in the context of holy war and that Psalm 98 “could be recited after any of the numerous deliverances that Israel experienced during his history.” On the other hand, Anderson (1972:691) states the following: “If indeed the Psalm had its origin in the last few years of the Babylonian exile, the ‘new song’ might have been intended to express Yahweh’s triumph at the new Exodus ...” Kraus’s (1989) view is similar to Anderson’s, but is different: “In the cultic celebrations of postexilic times, the miracle of the “second exodus” and the eschatological theophany of Yahweh . . . are strongly emphasized. For this new act of God the new eschatological song is the answer” (264).

²² Dahood (1968:365) notes that פְּלֵאָה refers to “cosmic wonders worked by God as well as his historical achievements on behalf of his people Israel.” He here holds both senses. Rogerson and McKay (1977:226) also similarly mention that the term can refer to “the works of creation, or the exodus, or the return from exile.”

the third-person singular suffixes (*his* victory, *his* vindication) referring to Yahweh which are also found in v. 1. In addition, as noted, the expression יהוה ישועתו in v. 2a corresponds to הושיעה לו in v. 1c (cf. Auffret 1995:71). These features mark a close connection between vv. 1 and 2.

V. 2a and 2b are structured in parallel: the verb הודיע (“he has made known”) in v. 2a corresponds to the verb גלה (“he has revealed”) in v. 2b and the ישועתו (“victory”) to the word “his vindication” (צדקתו). The phrase לעיני הגוים (“to the sight of the nations”) at the centre of v. 2 functions as a double-duty modifier (Longman 1984:268; Howard 1986:109; Tate 1990:523; Prinsloo 1994a:158) serving both hemistichs of v. 2. Its position in the centre of v. 2 underlines the phrase and emphasizes Yahweh’s acts (ישועתו, צדקתו) in the sight of all nations.

V. 3a is linked to the previous verse. The third-person suffixes (*his* love, *his* faithfulness) referring to Yahweh, which are found in previous verses, occur in v. 3a, and the phrase לבית ישראל (“to the house of Israel”) in v. 3a corresponds to לעיני הגוים in v. 2, both being linked by the use of the preposition ל (Prinsloo 1994a:159; Auffret 1995:71-72). In addition, the expression נזכר חסדו (“He has remembered his love”) in v. 3a constitutes a parallelism with גלה צדקתו (“he has revealed his vindication”) at the end of v. 2 (Auffret 1995:71-72).

Yahweh has been taken as the subject of all the verbs in vv. 1-3a, but in v. 3b the phrase “all the ends of the earth” (כל־אפסי־ארץ) is used as the subject of the verb ראי. Thus, in v. 3b a change is noticed. As Prinsloo (1994a:159-160) has noted, it is likely that v. 3b should be regarded as a transition connecting the first strophe with the second. In

fact, the word *ישׁוּעָה* in 3b refers to vv. 1-2 where the same roots are also used, while the phrase *כָּל-אַפְסֵי-אָרֶץ* ("all the ends of the earth") corresponds to the *כָּל-הָאָרֶץ* in v. 4. In addition, the use of the perfect verb in v. 3b most likely links it with the preceding perfect verbs, and the statement "all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God" points to the following verse, since everything that has seen Yahweh's victory must praise him, which is confirmed in v. 4. All these arguments make it possible that v. 3b should be read as a hinge linking vv. 1-3b and the following verses.²³

The second strophe, vv. 4-6, is linked by content and style. The word *הִרְיֵעוּ* occurs in vv. 4 and 6, thus forming an inclusio. The divine name *יְהוָה* appears in all three verses and the occurrence of six imperative verb forms (*הִרְיֵעוּ, נִמְרוּ, וְנִמְרוּ, וְרִנְנוּ, פָּצְחוּ, הִרְיֵעוּ*) links vv. 4-6 into a unity. The initial jussive verb form in v. 7 makes it clear that vv.

²³ The events described in vv. 1-3 are spoken of as past without mentioning any specific event. The language used here is reminiscent of the events in Exodus. The expression "his right hand" in v. 1 reminds one of Exod 15:6 where Yahweh's "right hand" is mentioned and the word *נִפְלְאוֹת* in v. 1 is also found in Exod 3:20 (cf. in Exod 13:9 Yahweh's strong hand as the source of victory at the exodus event) which describes the mighty acts of Yahweh concerning the exodus. Moreover, the phrase *לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם* ("to the sight of the nations") in v. 2 corresponds to the *בְּעֵינֵי מִצְרַיִם* ("to the sight of the Egyptians") in Exod 3:21 and the expression "his love and faithfulness" (*רַחֲמֵי וְאֱמֻנָתוֹ*), along with the references to "the house of Israel" and to "our God" in v. 3 is reminiscent of Yahweh's covenant promise made to Israel (Kraus 1989:264) which is also associated with the theme of the exodus. On the other hand, Psalm 98 exhibits the close linguistic and thematic affinities with Isaiah (Isa 40-66) (Gosse 1997:29-30): e.g., for Ps 98:1, Isa 42:10; 52:7, 10a; cf. 59:16; 62:8; 63:5; for v. 2, Isa 52:10b; for v. 3, cf. Isa 40:5, 52:10; 63:7, 66:18; for v. 4, Isa 59:9a, 44:23; for v. 5, Isa 51:3, etc. All these considerations, along with the connection of Psalm 98 with Exodus, suggest that the psalmist, using traditional language about Yahweh's past saving events, describes his coming in the future, as in Psalm 97. Davis (1992:172) correctly remarks the following: . . . "Psalm 98 functions within the canon as a "new song" (Isa 42:10) celebrating the accomplishment of what the exilic prophet foretold: "And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God (Isa 52:10; cf. 98:3)."

4-6 are distinct from the following verses. In addition, there are poetic devices in vv. 4-6 which reveal an internal unity. First of all, there is anadiplosis (Longman 1984:268, note 8; Prinsloo 1994a:160), because the verb זמר at the end of v. 4 is repeated at the beginning of v. 5. V. 4 is also linked with v. 5 by a parallel structure: קריעו ליהנה // זמרו ליהנה, and vv. 5-6 are related by the occurrence of the word וקול in both verses as well as by the common description of musical instruments (lyre, trumpets, horn). All these characteristics mentioned above reveal the close unity of vv. 4-6.

V. 4 invites all earth to praise Yahweh. The phrase “all the earth” (כָּל-הָאָרֶץ), placed in the centre of the verse, functions as a double-duty modifier serving both hemistichs and by positioning it at the centre, the psalmist emphasizes the fact that all the earth should praise Yahweh. While v. 4 emphasizes the fact that Yahweh should be praised, v. 5 refers to the means of praise, namely musical instruments. In v. 5 we again encounter anadiplosis, since the first hemistich ends with the word בְּכִנּוֹר and the second hemistich also starts with it. In v. 5b there is no verb, but the verb זמרו in 5a also serves v. 5b, thus the verb serves as a double-duty modifier. On the whole, v. 5 forms a chiasmic parallelism of the pattern A+B//B'+A'. In v. 6a the reference to musical instruments marks a close connection with v. 5, but the second hemistich, v. 6b, summarises the contents of vv. 4-6a by repeating the word קריעו, found in 4a, as well as the divine name יהנה, also found in 4a and 5a. In addition, in v. 6b the introduction of יהנה as the הַמְלִיךְ provides the reason for the praise of Yahweh, since the summons to the praise in vv. 4-8 is motivated by the appearance of the king who will judge, as v. 9 shows (see below). For the psalmist the appearance of the king is the

reason for the call to praise Yahweh.

Vv. 7-9 form the final strophe. The fact that v. 7 starts a new unity is evident: the imperative verb forms in the previous verses are replaced by imperfect verb forms (יִרְעֵם, יִמְחֲאוּ, יִרְגְּזוּ) in vv. 7-8 and vv. 7-9 are framed by an inclusio with the תִּבְלֵן in vv. 7 and 9. The expression “the people who dwell in it” (וְיֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ); the אָרֶץ refers to “the world”) in v. 7b corresponds to “the people” (עַמִּים) in v. 9b.

Vv. 7-8 describe the praise of all creation (‘sea’, ‘world’, ‘floods’ and ‘hills’) with a poetically personified image. The יָם (sea) in v. 7a corresponds to the word “floods” in v. 8a, while the word תִּבְלֵן (“world”) in 7b corresponds to the הָרִים (“mountains”) in v. 8b in that both refer to land. When these words are taken into consideration together, vv. 7-8 form a synonymous parallelism. The alternation of these words creates a kind of merism (cf. Anderson 1972:693) and the purpose of its use lies in emphasizing that the whole created world should praise the coming of Yahweh which is stated in v. 9. In v. 7 we find an ellipse, since there is no verb in v. 7b, but the verb יִרְעֵם in v. 7a is to be supposed in v. 7b.

V. 9 provides the reason not only for the rejoicing described in vv. 7-8, but also for the statements of praise in vv. 4-6. The particle כִּי (“because”) serves to link v. 9 with the previous verses and introduces the reason for the singing stated in the preceding verses, namely Yahweh’s coming in judgement. The fact that the words “the earth” and “the world” found in vv. 4 and 8 are also repeated in v. 9 indicates that v. 9 has a close connection with the second strophe, vv. 4-6, as well as with this strophe, vv. 7-9. In addition, the phrase “before Yahweh” (לְפָנֵי-יְהוָה) at the beginning of v. 9 corresponds to the “before

the king Yahweh” (לְפָנַי הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה) in v. 6, and thus the theme of Yahweh’s kingship introduced in v. 6 is restated in v. 9. In addition, v. 9 has a link with v. 2 in the occurrence of the קָדַשׁ in both verses and the word יְרַאֲהוּ occurs in vv. 3, 4, and 9 as well, thus binding the verses together. In sum, v. 9 concludes not only the third strophe, but also the whole psalm. The reason for all invitations to praise Yahweh in vv. 1-8, with imperative verb forms or imperfect verb forms, is given in v. 9 where Yahweh’s judging the earth and the world with righteousness, i.e., establishing right order, includes the messages of vv. 1-8.

To summarize: Psalm 98 is composed of three strophes (vv. 1-3, 4-6 and 7-9) and the whole psalm displays a coherent unity, each strophe revealing its own unity. The psalm is a hymn in praise of Yahweh’s kingship. The first strophe praises Yahweh because of his wonderful works revealed in the salvation history of Israel and the second and the third strophes are focused more on Yahweh as king than on a theme of praise. However, in the light of the whole psalm structure, its main message consists of Yahweh’s coming, depicted in v. 9.

Psalm 99:1-9

- 1 יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ יִרְגְּזוּ עַמִּים יֵשֶׁב כְּרוּבִים תְּנוּט הָאָרֶץ
- 2 יְהוָה בְּצִיּוֹן גְּדוֹל וְרָם הוּא עַל-כָּל-הָעַמִּים
- 3 יוֹדוּ שִׁמְךָ גְּדוֹל וְנוֹרָא קְדוֹשׁ הוּא
- 4 וְעַז מֶלֶךְ מִשְׁפָּט אָהַב אֶתְּהָ כּוֹנֵנֶת מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל מִשְׁפָּט וְצַדִּיקָה בִּיַּעֲקֹב אֶתְּהָ עָשִׂיתָ
- 5 רוֹמְמוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְהֵדָם רַגְלָיו קְדוֹשׁ הוּא
- 6 מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן בְּכַהֲנֵי וְשִׁמְוֵאל בְּקִרְאֵי שְׁמוֹ קִרְאִים אֶל-יְהוָה וְהוּא יַעֲנֵם
- 7 בְּעַמּוּד עָנָן יְדַבֵּר אֲלֵיהֶם שְׁמְרוּ עֻדְתָיו וְחֻק נִתְּנָה לָמוֹ
- 8 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְּהָ עֲנִיָּהֶם אֵל נִשְׂא הַיִּיֶת לָהֶם וְנִקֵּם עַל-עֲלִילוֹתָם
- 9 רוֹמְמוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְהַר קְדְשׁוֹ כִּי-קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ

Psalm 99 consists of two stanzas (vv. 1-5 and 6-9), each of which concludes with a summons to exalt Yahweh's kingship. The last verses of both stanzas, vv. 5 and 9, have identical expressions: רוֹמְמוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ; לְהַר קְדְשׁוֹ; לְהֵדָם רַגְלָיו // כִּי-קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה; קְדוֹשׁ הוּא ("extol Yahweh," "extol Yahweh") // ("at his footstool," "at his holy mountain") // כִּי-קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה; קְדוֹשׁ הוּא ("he is holy," "for Yahweh is holy"), comprising an inclusio of sorts. Throughout the psalm the term קְדוֹשׁ ("holy") referring to Yahweh occurs four times (3b, 5c, 9b, and 9c), so that the "holiness" of Yahweh forms an important aspect of the psalm. The word אֱלֹהֵינוּ ("our God") which indicates the covenant relationship between Yahweh and his people, also occurs four times (5a, 8a, 9a and 9c), balanced by the קְדוֹשׁ. In fact, both words have a twofold repetition in the concluding sections (vv. 5, 9) of each stanza, which implies a definite relationship. Moreover, the sevenfold occurrence of the divine name יְהוָה (vv. 1a, 2a, 5a, 6c, 8a, 9a, 9c) is balanced by the sevenfold repetition of the personal pronouns הוּא ("He") and אֶתְּהָ ("You") (2b, 3b, 4b, 4c, 5c, 6c, 7b) referring to Yahweh. All these remarks noted above show us that the whole psalm is

closely integrated through the distribution of repetitive words. In addition, an inclusio is created by יהוה in v. 1 and the phrase יהוה אלֵהינו in v. 9.

Both stanzas consist of two strophes (vv. 1-3, 4-5 and 6-7, 8-9), respectively. The first strophe of the first stanza, vv. 1-3, is closely integrated by style and content. Vv. 1-2 take Yahweh as subject and the occurrence of the word עַמִּים (“the peoples”) in vv. 1-2 links both verses. In v. 1 the expression יָשָׁב (“he sits enthroned upon”) corresponds in meaning to the phrase יהוה בְּצִיּוֹן (“Yahweh in Zion”) in v. 2a, while the word “the cherubim” in v. 1 corresponds to the phrase הוֹרָא (“he is exalted.”) in v. 2. Once again the עַמִּים is referred to in v. 3 by the use of the third person plural form “them” suffixed to יָדָה, and the suffix of the term שָׁמַיָּם and the pronoun הוֹרָא refer to Yahweh in vv. 1-2. Also, vv. 2 and 3 share the word גָּדוֹל (“great”). In addition, the words יִרְגְּזוּ, תָּנוּט, v. 1; גָּדוֹל, v. 2; וְנִרְאָה, v. 3 belong to the same semantic field because they all describe the greatness of Yahweh. Finally, it is noteworthy that vv. 1-3 start with the ך, which also serves as a link. All these considerations given above make it clear that vv. 1-3 form a close unity.

As in Psalm 93:1, v. 1 places the divine name first, before the verb. This emphasizes that no other god except Yahweh is king. Yahweh’s kingship is described through the reactions of the peoples and the earth: יִרְגְּזוּ עַמִּים (“let the peoples tremble”); תָּנוּט הָאָרֶץ (“let the earth quake”). The expression of the former indicates the international dimension of Yahweh’s kingship, while the expression of the latter displays the cosmic dimension of his kingship. V. 1 therefore mentions the universal reign of Yahweh. The expression “he sits enthroned upon

the cherubim" is often related to the ark of the covenant in the Old Testament (Ps 80:2; cf. 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 1 Chr 13:6), but here it should be understood as referring to Yahweh as the king who sits enthroned on the cherubim (Tate 1990:529; Prinsloo 1993b:623-624).

V. 2 describes the centre of Yahweh's reign as Zion from which his universal kingship emerges to manifest over all the nations, while v. 3 deals with the reaction of the nations (all peoples) to Yahweh's reign: "let them praise your name" (Kraus 1989:269-270; Scoralick 1989:115-116).

The refrain קָדוֹשׁ הוּא (cf. also, vv. 5, 9) at the end of v. 3 marks a natural break, and v. 4 starts a new section. In v. 4 Yahweh is described as an ideal king who has juridical functions, as the following terms imply: מִשְׁפָּט ("justice"), מִישְׁרִים ("uprightness"), וְצֶדֶקָה ("righteousness"). The sovereign kingship of Yahweh found in vv. 1-3 is based on the justice and righteousness executed in the history of Jacob, i.e. Israel.

V. 4a and 4b are closely linked by the use of the word מִשְׁפָּט, which forms a parallel in both hemistichs. The perfect verb forms כִּוְנַנְתָּ and עָשִׂיתָ in v. 4a and 4b emphasize the juridical function of Yahweh and are structured in parallel, as follows:

4a: כִּוְנַנְתָּ אֶתָּה

4b: עָשִׂיתָ אֶתָּה

Though v. 4 is distinguished from the previous verses, it nevertheless has a strong connection with them. The *waw* consecutive ׀ at the beginning of v. 4 serves to link v. 4 with the previous verse, and the following chiasmic structure also confirms the connection, emphasizing the supremacy of Yahweh (Prinsloo 1993b:625):

v. 1: מֶלֶךְ

v. 2: גָּדוֹל

v. 3: גָּדוֹל

v. 4: מֶלֶךְ

As the refrain קָדוֹשׁ הוּא (vv. 3, 5, 9) implies, its appearance in v. 5 indicates that v. 5 serves as a concluding section to the second strophe. As v. 3 ends with the phrase “holy is he” and has an exhortation (יִרְדֵּב) to praise Yahweh, so v. 5 has the phrase and the exhortation with two imperatives (וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה, וְרוּמָמוּ). These features characterize v. 5 as the concluding verse to the second strophe.

It is likely that v. 5 also functions as a concluding verse to the first stanza. The linguistic links between v. 5 and the preceding verses confirm this. The root רָמַם in v. 5 forms a link with v. 2 where the same root is also found and the אֱלֹהֵינוּ (“our God”) speaks of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and his people (Kraus 1989:270; Anderson 1972:696) which was already implied in the word בְּיַעֲקֹב in v. 4. As was noted above, the expression קָדוֹשׁ הוּא occurring at the end of vv. 3 and 5 also shows the link that exists between them.

A new stanza starts at v. 6. In this stanza Yahweh’s kingship, explained in vv. 1-5, is illustrated by historical examples of Israel and is explained in terms of the salvation history which is represented by Moses, Aaron and Samuel. The stanza emphasizes that throughout the history of Israel Yahweh had been a king who responded to the Israelites with his attributes which are reflected in vv. 1-5. The word “name” in v. 3 is again picked up in v. 6 and the concept of the justice and righteousness of Yahweh reflected in v. 4 is illustrated in this strophe by saying that Yahweh answered the people in need and gave

them concrete commandments and laws. The concept of a forgiving-punishing God in v. 8 is also found in the description of v. 4, since Yahweh's exercising justice and righteousness in Jacob corresponds to the concept of a forgiving-punishing God (Scoralick 1989:102, 117-118). In this strophe great priestly figures such as Moses, Aaron and Samuel are taken as mediators of God who kept and preserved the commandment and the law, the concepts of which are also reflected in the description of v. 4.

As indicated earlier, vv. 6-7 constitute the first strophe of the second stanza, while 8-9 form the second. One of the conspicuous features that distinguishes vv. 6-7 from v. 8 is that while in the former Yahweh is spoken of as the subject in the third person (he), v. 8 takes him as the subject in the second person (you). This feature closes v. 8 off from vv. 6-7.

Vv. 6-7 are closely linked. The assonance (לָמוֹ, וְשָׁמוֹ) found between 6a and 7 serves to tie both verses, and if only the subject-object relationship in vv. 6-7 is considered, a chiasmic relationship is found between vv. 6 and 7, which emphasizes the dialogue between Yahweh and his people:

those who called on *his* name and *He* answered *them* (v. 6)

He spoke to *them* and *they* kept *his* testimonies (v. 7)

In addition, the expression עַמֹּד עָנָן ("in the pillar of cloud") in v. 7a functions as a double-duty modifier serving both that which precedes (v. 6b) and that which follows (Dahood 1968:369; also Prinsloo 1993b:627). Thus, these features link vv. 6-7 closely.

Though v. 8 is distinct from vv. 6-7 in subject, all three verses are closely linked in content and style. The expression אָמַרְתָּ לָהֶם ("You answered them") in v. 8a is paralleled with the הֵאָמַר ("He

answered them”) in v. 6 and the alliteration produced by the phrases אָנַחְתָּם (v. 6) and אָנַחְתָּם (v. 8), and the word אָנַחְתָּם in v. 7 serves to link all three verses (Prinsloo 1993b:628). Furthermore, the occurrence of the third-person plural suffixes (אָנַחְתָּם , לָהֶם , אָנַחְתָּם) in v. 8, referring back to Moses, Aaron and Samuel in vv. 6-7, also tie vv. 6-8 into a close unity. In addition, there exists a definite relationship between vv. 6-8, given by the following observations: “*He answered them*” (v. 6b); “*He spoke to them*” (v. 7a); “*He gave them*” (v. 7b); “*You answered them*” (v. 8a); “*You were a forgiving God to them*” (8b).

As noted, vv. 6-8 take three figures, Moses, Aaron and Samuel as the mediators of God. In Israel’s history they are recalled as great intercessors (Jer 15:1; 1 Sam 12:6, 9; for Moses, see Exod 32-33; for Aaron, see Num 16:44-48; for Samuel, see 1 Sam 7:9 [7-12]; 1 Sam 12:6-25) and these verses reflect the tradition (Briggs & Briggs 1969:310; Tate 1990:529; Mommer 1986:27-30; cf. Scoralick 1989:117-119). The juxtaposition of a forgiving and punishing God in v. 8 may be reminiscent of Exod 34:6-7 where Yahweh is portrayed as having both the functions of saving and of judging (Brueggemann 1984:149; Tate 1990:530). Basically, v. 8, along with the reference to the wilderness experiences in v. 7 (cf. “the pillar of cloud” which recalls the wilderness experience), reflects “the terrible acts of sin and apostasy by the Israelites, in the past ...” (Tate 1990:528).

The final strophe, v. 9, concludes the whole psalm as well as the second stanza. The twofold repetition of the words אֱלֹהֵינוּ and קְדוֹשׁ , along with the double-call ($\text{יְהוָה שְׂתַחַרְחֵוּ, לְרֹמְמוֹ}$) to praise Yahweh, highlights the significance of this verse. In fact, this verse has the refrain $\text{אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה קְדוֹשׁ}$, which is longer than the others in vv. 3 and

5, thus creating a climax (Watson 1984:297). The two words קָדוֹשׁ and אֱלֹהֵינוּ appear in a chiasmic sequence which provides the relationship between the holiness of Yahweh and the covenant (as implied in the אֱלֹהֵינוּ “our God”) and which also provides the motivation for the praise of Yahweh in the whole psalm as well as this verse. The following chiasmic pattern confirms the above statements:

a	b	b	a
אֱלֹהֵינוּ	קָדוֹשׁ	קָדוֹשׁ	אֱלֹהֵינוּ

In sum, Psalm 99 consists of two stanzas, which are divided into two strophes (vv. 1-3, 4-5 and 6-7, 8-9) respectively. As mentioned at the beginning, the psalm shows a well-balanced structure through the distribution of words and phrases, and the last verse of the first stanza is also balanced with that of the second stanza by the occurrence of the same words. The divine name יְהוָה is distributed through the psalm (see above) and the occurrences of many words, i.e. “name” and “holy,” in both stanzas strengthen the unity of the psalm. In view of all these considerations, it is likely that the psalm is structured into a coherent unity.

Like Psalms 93 and 97, Psalm 99 begins with the expression מְלֶכֶךְ יְהוָה and thus it can be classified as a hymn of praise which exalts Yahweh’s kingship. Since the last verse of the first stanza, v. 5, begins with an imperative call to praise and the last verse of the second stanza, v. 9, ends with the same imperative call, there is little doubt that Psalm 99 is a hymn of praise.

Psalm 100:1-5

1 מְזַמֵּר לְתוֹרָה הִרְיעוּ לַיהוָה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
2 עֲבֹדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה בְּשִׂמְחָה בְּאוּרֵי לִפְנֵי בְרִנָּה
3 דָּעוּ כִּי־יְהוָה הוּא אֱלֹהִים הוּא־עָשָׂנוּ וְלֹא אֲנִחנוּ עָמַר וְצֹאן מִרְעִיתוֹ
4 בְּאוּרֵי שְׁעָרָיו בְּתוֹרָה חֲצֹלְתוֹ בְּתִהְלֵה הוֹדוּ־לוֹ בְּרַכּוּ שְׁמוֹ
5 כִּי־טוֹב יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם תִּסְדֹּדוּ וְעַד־דֹּר נֹדֵד אֲמוֹנָתוֹ

The structure of the psalm is simple. It is divided into two strophes (vv. 1-3 and 4-5). Each strophe has imperatives for praising Yahweh, followed by the reason for the praise. Each verse except for v. 4 contains the divine name יְהוָה (vv. 1, 2, 3, 5) or אֱלֹהִים (v.3). V. 4 instead has the word שְׁמוֹ (“his name”) referring to Yahweh. It is clear that Yahweh is the subject of the praise in all five verses. There are seven imperatives composing the call to worship. Thus, the worship includes all elements that these seven imperatives embody.

Vv. 1b-3a, comprising the first strophe, have four successive imperatives (הִרְיעוּ, עֲבֹדוּ, בְּאוּרֵי, דָּעוּ). The first three imperatives are more concerned with acts involving worship and the fourth emphasizes the inner significance of the act, based on the fact that Yahweh is the only God and that he made us (הוּא אֱלֹהִים). The addressees of the summons to praise are found in the first imperative: “all the earth” (כָּל־הָאָרֶץ) representing a hyperbole. The summons is universal. The people of all the earth are called upon to praise Yahweh (Anderson 1972:698). In vv. 2a and 2b the use of the prefix בְּ and the occurrence of end-rhyme (בְּרִנָּה, בְּשִׂמְחָה) mark a close link between them, and both hemistichs in v. 2 are structured in parallel with an ABC//A'B'C' pattern.

V. 3a begins with the imperative דָּעוּ (“know”). In this context it

emphasizes the fact that worship should include the recognition of the true God (Anderson 1972:699; Mays 1969:323). The imperative יָעַבְדְּ is placed in the centre of the seven imperatives, that is, with three imperatives before and after it. If we take account of only imperatives, the psalm has a concentric structure, and the significance of the imperative יָעַבְדְּ is underlined by the following concentric structure;

- A: הִרְיֵעוּ (“make a joyful noise”)
 B: עֲבַדוּ (“serve”)
 C: בֹּאוּ (“come”)
 D: יָעַבְדְּ (“know”)
 C: בֹּאוּ (“come”)
 B: הוֹדוּ (“give thanks”)
 A: בְּרַכּוּ (“bless”)

The third and fifth imperatives are identical, and all the verses with their imperatives are framed around the centre verse (D).

The second strophe of the first stanza begins with v. 3b. In v. 3b the imperative sentence is replaced by a nominal sentence. In vv. 1b-3a Yahweh is the object, but in 3b he is the subject. Thus, it is reasonable to distinguish vv. 1b-3a from v. 3b-3c. However, these two strophes, vv. 1-3a and 3b-3c, are closely linked, since the third person singular pronouns (he, his), referring to Yahweh, appear in both strophes.

V. 3b indicates the relationship between Yahweh and “us” with the expression “he made us” (הוּא־עָשָׂנוּ), and v. 3c complements v. 3b by saying that “we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.” The third person pronoun “He” (הוּא) which is not found in any other verses throughout the psalm, is repeated twice in v. 3, and the first person plural “we” or “us”, also not found in other verses, occurs in v. 3b-c.

These pronouns seem to be used to illustrate the intimate relationship between Yahweh and his people. As implied earlier, v. 3b-3c provides the motivation for the imperatives in vv. 1b-3a. The facts that Yahweh made his people and that he is the shepherd of his people are the motivation for the summons to praise.

V. 4 starts again with an imperative, closely linking 4a-4c. Ellipsis can be found between v. 4a and 4b, because the verb **יִצַּח** in v. 4a also serves v. 4b. The occurrence of the third masculine singular suffixes (his gates, his courts and his name) as well as of the prevalent three imperatives signify that v. 4a-4c is a close unity.

V. 5 begins with the conjunction **וְ** and the imperatives in v. 4 are replaced by nominal sentences in v. 5. These features indicate the beginning of a new strophe, namely the second strophe of the second stanza.

The conjunction **וְ** that begins in v. 5a introduces the motivation for the imperatives in v. 4a-4b. The goodness, love, and faithfulness of Yahweh described in v. 5 provide the reason for the praise of Yahweh. Verse 5a and 5b are tied together by the use of nominal sentences and by end-rhyme (**וְיִצַּח**, **וְיִצַּח**), both dealing with the permanent love of Yahweh. In this verse the occurrence of the third-person suffixes (“his love,” “his faithfulness”) marks the link with the preceding verse where they are also found.

To summarize, the psalm consists of two stanzas (vv. 1-3 and 4-5), each of which is divided into two strophes. Each stanza has imperative sentences, followed by the motivation sentences which provide the reason for the imperatives. Of the seven imperative verbs used in this psalm, the fourth imperative **יִצַּח** is placed at the centre of the concentric structure created by their arrangement and the word **יִצַּח**

implies that the worship should include the recognition of the only God.

On the whole, the coherent structure of the psalm is shown by the repetition of the third-person masculine singular suffixes (his presence, his people, his pasture, his gates and his courts, his name, his steadfast love, his faithfulness) and by the distribution of the name יהוה (vv. 1, 2, 3, 5) as well as by the use of seven imperatives which are distributed through the psalm. The imperative באו in v. 2 is repeated in v. 4, and the word תודה occurs in vv. 1 and 4, while v. 4c has the stem ידה.

The title of the psalm is "a psalm of thanksgiving." The word תודה in the title also occurs in v. 4 where the word is paralleled with the word ידה ("praise"). Most scholars classify the psalm as a hymn, associated with worship (Dahood 1968:371; Anderson 1972:698; Kraus 1989:274). Since v. 2 speaks of coming into Yahweh's presence and v. 4 refers to the places (gates and courts) where the worship has taken place, it is likely that it was used as a hymn for the purpose of worship.

Psalm 101:1-8

1 לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר חֹסֵד וּמִשְׁפָּט אֲשִׁירָה לְךָ יְהוָה אֲזַמְרָה
 2 אֲשַׁפִּילָה בְּדַרְכְךָ חַמִּים מְחִי חִבְרָא אֱלֹי אֶתְהַלֵּךְ בְּחַס־לִבִּי בְּקֶרֶב בֵּיתִי
 3 לֹא־אֲשִׁיחַ לְגִגַּד עֵינַי דְּבַר־בְּלִיעַל עֲשֵׂה־סִטִּים שְׁנֵאתִי לֹא יִדְבַק בִּי
 4 לִבִּי עֲקֹשׁ יִסּוֹר מִמֶּנִּי רַע לֹא אֲדַע
 5 מְלוֹשְׁנִי מְלִשְׁנִי בִּסְתֵר רַעְהוּ אִוְחוֹ אֲצַמִּית גְּבַה־עֵינַיִם וּרְחַב לִבִּי אִוְחוֹ לֹא אוֹכַל
 6 עֵינַי בְּנֹאמְרֵי־אָרֶץ לְשֹׁכֵחַ עֲמֹדֵי הַלֵּךְ בְּדַרְכְךָ חַמִּים הוּא יִשְׁרָתֵנִי
 7 לֹא־יֹשֵׁב בְּקֶרֶב בֵּיתִי עֲשֵׂה רַמְיָה דְּבַר שְׁקָרִים לֹא־יִפּוֹן לְגִגַּד עֵינַי
 8 לְבָקָרִים אֲצַמִּית כָּל־רָשָׁעֵי־אָרֶץ לְהַכְרִיחַ מֵעִיר־יְהוָה כָּל־פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן

Psalm 101 consists of four strophes (vv. 1-2, 3-5, 6-7 and 8) and these strophes exhibit close ties to one another through the repetition of words and phrases. The title of the psalm is ascribed as לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר (“A psalm of David”), but the immediately following contents do not give any hint of David’s authorship. The fact that this psalm can be classified as a royal psalm (see below) suggests a possible connection between the title (the king David as implied in the title) and the body of the psalm.

V. 1b introduces the main theme of the whole psalm - praise of the “royalty” and “justice” of Yahweh. The rest of the psalm could be regarded as explaining these attributes in greater detail. The divine name יְהוָה occurs only in vv. 1 and 8 throughout the psalm and thus the whole psalm is framed by this inclusio. V. 1 ends with a cohortative (אֲזַמְרָה) and v. 2 starts with another cohortative (אֲשַׁפִּילָה). Thus, both verses are linked by means of these cohortatives. However, there is a certain difference between these verses. V. 1b begins by placing the terms “royalty” and “justice” first in the sentence, while v. 2a reverses this order by positioning the verb (אֲשַׁפִּילָה) first in the sentence.

Watson calls this a chiasmic tricolon (Watson 1984:182; Prinsloo 1988a: 118). The second part of v. 2a forms a monocolon which breaks the parallelistic pattern of the tricolon in vv. 1b-2a. With regard to the interruption of this parallel pattern, Kselman (1985:46) rightly remarks as follows: “Although it departs sharply from the balance and parallelism of the tricolon, the monocolon is not without connection to its context. The noun *drk* associates naturally with the verb of motion (*tbw*) that follows, while the prepositional phrase *'ly* corresponds syntactically to *lk* of the second colon; together they identify the two participants in the dialogue of Psalm 101, Yahweh (*lk*) and the king (*'ly*).”

The connection between v. 2a and 2b is shown by stylistic features. Each hemistich of v. 2a and v. 2b has a verb (אֲשַׁכִּילָהּ, אֶתְהַלֵּךְ), followed by a prepositional phrase (בְּתַמ־לִבִּי, בְּדַרְךְ תָּמִים) which includes the root תָּמַם. The sentence אֲשַׁכִּילָהּ בְּדַרְךְ תָּמִים (“I will give heed to the way that is blameless”) in v. 2a is syntactically paralleled with אֶתְהַלֵּךְ בְּתַמ־לִבִּי בְּקֶרֶב בֵּיתִי (“I will walk with integrity of my heart within my house”) in v. 2b, and both seem to serve as an introduction to or a summary of the following statements. The connection with what follows is clearly apparent in the following comparisons: בְּתַמ־לִבִּי // לִבְ עֵקֶשׁ (v. 4a); רָחַב לִבִּי // בְּתַמ־לִבִּי (v. 5); בְּדַרְךְ תָּמִים // הֵלֵךְ בְּדַרְךְ תָּמִים (v. 6); בְּקֶרֶב בֵּיתִי // בְּקֶרֶב בֵּיתִי (v. 7). Especially, v. 6 combines the verb הֵלֵךְ (“walk”) in v. 2b and the same phrase בְּדַרְךְ תָּמִים (“to the way that is blameless”) in v. 2a into one sentence הֵלֵךְ בְּדַרְךְ תָּמִים (“he who walks in the way that is blameless”). With consideration of all this, it is clear that v. 2 is closely joined to the following verses, serving to introduce the contents of what follows.

Vv. 3-5, comprising the second strophe, display a close unity.

Conspicuous characteristics such as the negative formulas (לא + a verb; לא־אָשִׁיחַ, לא יִדְבֶק in v. 3; לא אֲדַע in v. 4; לא אוֹכֵל in v. 5) appearing in these verses show that vv. 3-5 form a close unity. The alternation of negative-positive verbs (לא־אָשִׁיחַ, שָׁנְאוֹתַי, לא יִדְבֶק, יָסוּר, לא אֲדַע, אֲצַמִּיחַ, לא אוֹכֵל) in vv. 3-5 presents a further argument for unity. The expression לְנֶגְדַּי עֵינַי דְּבַר־בְּלִיעַל (“before my eyes anything that is base”) in v. 3 corresponds to the גְּבוּהַ־עֵינַיִם (“haughty of eyes”) in v. 5 and both expressions partly form an inclusio of sorts around vv. 3 and 5.

V. 3a and 3b stand in a chiasmic relation to each other. The second part of v. 3a corresponds to the first part of v. 3b and both refer to something associated with sin that is visually recognizable. The following shows a close relation between v. 3a and 3b (Prinsloo 1988a:119):

A	B
3a: לא־אָשִׁיחַ + mention of sin	
B'	A'
	3b: mention of sin + לא יִדְבֶק

While the first hemistich of v. 3a mentions the eyes in connection with sin, the first hemistich of v. 4a refers to the heart with regard to the sin which the psalmist rejects. Thus, the word עֵין (“eyes”) is semantically balanced by the לֵב (“heart”). A parallel structure to v. 3b and 4 binds these verses together, as follows:

3b: indication of sins + verb + לא יִדְבֶק
4: indication of sins + verb + לא אֲדַע

The connection between v. 4 and v. 5 is established by the repetition of the word “heart” (לֵב עֲקָשׁ “a twisted heart”; רֹחַב לֵב “arrogant of heart”) in both. The first hemistich of v. 5 does not include

a negative statement, but it is closely linked with v. 5b by the use of the third-person suffix (אָרְחָר) as a direct object, which occurs also in v. 5b with the same function. By contrast with vv. 3-4 where the eyes and the heart are respectively mentioned, v. 5 includes both, thus referring to vv. 3 and 4 and strongly emphasizing what the psalmist should do (“I will destroy”) and not do (“I will not endure”).

Vv. 6-7 comprise the third strophe. The fact that v. 6 starts a new section is evident, since the verbal sentences found in the previous verses are replaced by a nominal sentence with which v. 6a begins, and the אָל + a verb form, frequently found in vv. 3-5, does not occur in v. 6. The word “my eyes” (עֵינַי) found in v. 3 is again used in v. 6 to round off vv. 6-7 as a unity. On the other hand, v. 5 refers to the persons who exert negative influences on the community of faith, namely, the persons who slander others in secret and who have “haughty eyes and a proud heart,” while v. 6 deals with the faithful and the blameless who are contrasted to the persons in the preceding verse. Thus, v. 6 is structured in contrast with v. 5.²⁴

Vv. 6-7 are tied together by an inclusio with the word עֵינַי occurring at the beginning of v. 6 and at the end of v. 7. The verb stem יִשַׁב, which is used only twice throughout the psalm, also occurs in vv. 6-7 (יִשַׁב, לְשֹׁכֶחַ), so that its occurrence too, creates a close connection between both verses. Moreover, both verses display a link in the use of the participles (בְּנִאֲמָנִי, הֹלֵךְ in v. 6; עֹשֶׂה, דֹּבֵר in v. 7), appearing twice in

²⁴ According to Kselman (1985:45-62), vv. 3-5 deal with the king’s confession of not associating with the acts of the persons negatively described in the verses, while vv. 6-7 contain a divine oracle addressed to the king in response to his protestation of innocence stated in vv. 3-5. If this is the case, in content vv. 6-7 are distinguished from vv. 3-5, and it is natural to distinguish the former from the latter.

each verse. In addition, v. 6 stands in an antithetical relationship to v. 7, since in the former the psalmist deals with the presence of the faithful on the land, while the latter states the discontinuation of the wicked in Yahweh's house (if vv. 6-7 form a divine oracle from Yahweh's mouth). Thus, both verses are balanced in content.

As indicated above, vv. 6-7 form a tie with the previous verses. In v. 7 the phrase בְּקֶרֶב בֵּיתִי ("in my house") occurs in vv. 2 and 7 and the phrase לְנֶגַד עֵינַי ("before my eyes") at the end of v. 7 is also found in v. 3. Thus, vv. 3 (perhaps, v.2)-7 are framed by the repeated phrases (Watson 1984:284). In addition to the close link with vv. 2-3, vv. 3-7 exhibit a chiasmic structure (Kselman 1985:47) which indicates a close unity, as the following shows:

- A: לְנֶגַד עֵינַי (v. 3)
 B: דְּבַר-בְּלִיעַל (v. 3)
 C: עֲשֶׂה-סֹטִים (v. 3)
 D: גְּבַה־עֵינִים (v. 5)
 D: עֵינַי (v. 6)
 C: עֲשֶׂה רַמְיָה (v. 7)
 B: דְּבַר שְׁקָרִים (v. 7)
 A: לְנֶגַד עֵינַי (v. 7)

V. 8 forms a conclusion to the whole psalm. As noted earlier, the divine name יְהוָה constitutes an inclusio to the entire psalm, and the description of the judgement of the wicked in v. 8 is balanced by the reference to "royalty and justice" in v. 1 (Kenik 1976:393). In addition, v. 1b stands in contrast to v. 8 by forming an antithetical inclusio, since in the former the psalmist is obliged to praise Yahweh, while in the latter he should eradicate the wicked from the city of Yahweh. The word

אֶצְמַח (“I will destroy”) in v. 5 is again picked up in v. 8, thus establishing a link between them. In addition, the expression “the faithful of the land” (בְּאֵמֶן-אֶרֶץ) in v. 6 forms an antithetical relation with the phrase “all the wicked of the land” (כָּל-רְשָׁעֵי-אֶרֶץ) in v. 8, both thus creating a definite tie. V. 8 forms close links with other parts of the psalm by taking up the same words and by balancing and contrasting them with other verses. In v. 8 the repetition of the “all” (כָּל) with the reference to “wicked” (רְשָׁעֵי) and “the doers of evil” (פְּעֹלֵי אָוֶן) strongly emphasizes the elimination of the wicked from the city and the land of Yahweh.

To summarize, the four strophes of the psalm (vv. 1-2, 3-5, 6-7 and 8) exhibit close ties with one another through the repetition of words and phrases. In v. 1 the “loyalty” and “justice” of Yahweh (טוֹרָה-וְיִשְׁפָּט) introduce a main theme of the whole psalm and v. 2 contains many aspects of the following verses, thus functioning as an introduction or a summary to the continuing statements. One of the characteristics of this psalm is the repetitive use of many words and phrases, as illustrated above, and each part of the psalm forms close ties with other parts through the repetition. The repetition of words and phrases and the same motif frequently occurring throughout the psalm shows that the psalm forms a structural unit.

It has generally been agreed that this psalm is a royal psalm. This may be deduced from the expressions “within my house,” “I will destroy,” “he shall minister to me,” “the city of Yahweh,” which suggest that the speaker might hold a high position in a nation. Kenik (1976:391-403) interprets Psalm 101 as a code of conduct for a king, noting wisdom motifs appearing in the psalm, and Kselman (1985:45-62) regards it as a dialogue involving both king and deity (king’s

protestation of innocence [vv: 3-5]; divine oracle [vv. 6-8]). It is difficult to determine in what situation it was used, but it is likely that Psalm 101 belongs to the royal psalms. With regard to this, it is also worth noting that the beginning of the psalm echoes that of Psalm 89 which is also a royal psalm, since the words אֲשִׁרָה , יְהוָה , and חַסֵּד occur in both Psalm 89:2 and 101:1. In fact, the term חַסֵּד , one of the two words (חַסֵּד , מִשְׁפָּט) that form the theme of Psalm 101, is a key term used throughout Psalm 89, and in the latter the word חַסֵּד is paralleled with אֱמוּנָה (“faithfulness”), but in the former it forms a parallel with מִשְׁפָּט . All these considerations support the fact that just like Psalm 89, Psalm 101 is a royal psalm.



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Psalm 102 consists of three stanzas (vv. 1-12, 13-23 and 24-25). The first stanza has four strophes (vv. 2-3, 4-6, 7-8 and 9-12); the second and third stanza consist of three strophes (vv. 13-15, 16-19, 20-23 and vv. 24-25a, 25b-28, 29) respectively.

The first strophe of the first stanza, vv. 2-3, contains an appeal to Yahweh for help. It uses the traditional language of liturgy which resembles “a mosaic of terms of supplication” (Briggs & Briggs 1969: 318; Anderson 1972:705). Both verses are closely linked. In both Yahweh is addressed, and the appeal of v. 3 exemplifies the content of the *תפלתִי* (“my prayer”) in v. 2a and of the *שועתי* (“my cry”) in v.2b. In v. 3a the negative supplication *אל-תסתר פניך* (“do not hide your face”) is paralleled with the positive one *הטה-אלי אונך* (“incline your ear to me”) in v. 3b, and both are addressed to Yahweh occurring in v. 2. In addition, the expressions *שמעה תפלתִי* (“hear my prayer”) in 2a and *הטה-אלי אונך* (“incline your ear to me”) in v. 3 bear the same meaning, because Yahweh should turn his ear toward the psalmist to hear his prayer.

V. 2a and 2b form a chiasmic structure; *יהנה שמעה תפלתִי* // *ושועתי אליך תבוא*, while, as indicated, the negative and positive supplications in v. 3a and 3b are structured in parallel. In addition, the phrase *ביום צר* (“in the day of my distress”) in v. 3a forms a parallel with the *ביום אקרא* (“in the day when I call”) in v. 3b, and both functions as double-duty modifiers serving both what precedes and what follows (Dahood 1970:10).

Vv. 4-6 constitute the second strophe. The particle *כי* at the beginning of v. 4 signals a new section, introducing the reason for the appeal of the psalmist in vv. 2-3. Vv. 4-6 are closely tied together in

that all these verses describe the distress of the psalmist in terms of physical suffering. The phrases יָמַי, “my days” (4a), עֲצָמוֹתַי “my bones” (4b), לִבִּי “my heart” (5a), עֲצָמַי “my bones” (6), לְבָשָׁרִי “to my flesh” (6) are all employed to reveal the physical and mental suffering of the psalmist. The phrase “my bones” (עֲצָמוֹתַי, עֲצָמַי) used in both vv. 4 and 6 forms an inclusio to this strophe, emphasizing the seriousness of the suffering. In vv. 4-6 the subject forms, consisting of a possessive pronoun plus noun are dominant: “my days” (v. 4a); “my bones” (v. 4b); “my heart” (v. 5a); “my bones” (v. 6), except for v. 5b where the first person pronoun “I” is used. These features close off vv. 4-6 as a unity.

Vv. 7-8, comprising the third strophe, describe the psalmist’s loneliness (Kraus 1989:285). In these verses the first person singular pronoun “I” is taken as subject, which is not found in the preceding verses (vv. 4-6, cf. except for v. 5b), and the comparison of the psalmist’s mental condition to the image of birds also characterizes these verses as a unity.

Vv. 7-8 show a close link to vv. 4-6 in that in the latter strophe the psalmist compares himself to grass, while in the former he is compared to birds. The use of the comparative ׀ in both strophes (vv. 4, 5, 7, 8) also gives a further indication of the link.

Vv. 9-12 form the last strophe of the first stanza. V. 9 deals with the suffering of the psalmist caused by the mockery (חֲרִפּוֹנֵי אֹיְבֵי מְהוֹלְלֵי) of the enemies, while v. 11 (also along with vv. 10 and 12) refers to God’s rejection of the psalmist. On the surface there seems to be no connection between these two motifs, namely the mockery of the enemies and God’s rejection. However, there may be a certain relationship. V. 9 does not articulate the content of the mockery, but the mocking seems to be directed at the abandonment of the psalmist by

God. In this case it may well be that the enemies mock the sufferer by saying, “Where is your God?” (Dahood 1970:14; Lindstrom 1994:233). Thus, v. 9 deals with the abandonment by God out of which the enemies’ mocking arises, while v. 11 mentions Yahweh as the cause of the reproach of the enemies. There is a corresponding relationship between these verses. Westermann (1981:183-194) has also noted the trilogy of “I-enemies-God” as subjects which is commonly found in individual psalms of lament and if this is the case, vv. 2-12, composed of these elements of the individual psalm of lament, suit the case well.

In style vv. 9-12 are closely tied. V. 10 describes the result of the mocking by the enemies (v. 9) as the particle *כִּי* (“for”) at the beginning of v. 10, which serves to introduce the explanation of the previous verse, implies, and vv. 10-11 are linked by the use of the preposition *מִכִּי* (“because of”). Also, v. 12 forms a link with vv. 9-11 by referring to the result which the mockery of the enemies (v. 9) and Yahweh’s wrath (v. 11) effect on the psalmist.

In addition to these close ties found in vv. 9-12, there are some ties with the previous verses. The comparative *כִּי* (“like”) occurs twice in each strophe (vv. 4, 5, 7, 8, and 10, 12). The *כָּלֹךְ בְּעָשָׁן יָמַי* in 4a (“my days pass away like smoke”) corresponds to the *יָמַי כְּצֶלֶל נְטוּי* (“my days are like an evening shadow”) in 12a, while the *הוֹפְקָה-קְעֵשֶׁב וַיִּבֶשׁ לִבִּי* (“my heart is smitten like grass, and withered”) in 5a parallels the expression *אֲנִי כְּעֵשֶׂב אֵיבָשׁ* (“I wither like grass”) in 12b. The phrase *יָמַי* appears in both vv. 4 and 12, thus forming an inclusio. The word *יָמַי* occurs five times in vv. 4-12 (vv. 3, 4, 9, 12), twice in v. 3 and three times in vv. 4, 9, 12, and the repetition of the word emphasizes the lifetime of the psalmist spent in suffering. Vv. 4-12 are also related to

vv. 2-3 by means of the conjunction כִּי that opens v. 4a. Vv. 4-12 explain the reason for the prayer of the psalmist described in vv. 2-3.

The second stanza (vv. 13-23) can be divided into three strophes (vv. 13-15, 16-19, and 20-23). The fact that this stanza is distinct from the previous stanza is evident, because in v. 13 the psalmist addresses Yahweh with an emphatic “But You” (הֲאֵלֶיךָ) which marks the abrupt transition from v. 12 to v. 13. Moreover, in v. 12 the theme of human frailty is contrasted to that of Yahweh’s eternity in v. 13 and all verses, vv. 13-23, are concerned with themes relating to Zion’s future destiny rather than the theme of human transitoriness which is dominant in vv. 3-12. In addition, the divine name יהוה occurs seven times through the psalm, but six of these instances belong to this stanza (vv. 13, 16, 17, 20, 22, 23; also, הוה, v. 19). This is a further indication of this stanza’s distinction from the previous stanza.

The first verse, v. 13, of the second stanza describes Yahweh as “one who sits enthroned forever” (וְיָתֵב יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם תָּשִׁיב), and the following verses exemplify the content of v. 13 (Steck 1990:361). Vv. 13-15 display a close link in style and content. Vv. 13 and 14 take Yahweh as subject and both verses start with the הֲאֵלֶיךָ which serves to emphasize Yahweh. The particle כִּי (“because”) at the beginning of v. 15 serves to introduce the reason for the statement in v. 14, and the terms אֶת־אֲבָנֶיהָ (“her stones”) and אֶת־עֲפָרָהּ (“her dust”) in v. 15 refer to Zion in v. 14. The עֲבָדֶיךָ (“thy servants”) in v. 15 refers back to the people of Yahweh in v. 13. In addition, a link between vv. 14 and 15 is also found in the occurrence of the word חַנּוּן (“favour”) in both verses. Therefore, the unity of vv. 13-15 is confirmed by all these observations noted above.

Vv. 16-19, which form the second strophe, express the confidence that Yahweh will arise and restore Zion. These verses display a close tie in style and content. Vv. 16 and 17 share the word כְּבוֹד (“glory”) and the particle עַי (“when,” Steck [1990:361]) at the beginning of v. 17 serves to illustrate the statement in v. 16. Verses 17 and 18 are closely linked by taking Yahweh as subject of their verbs (“he will build,” “he will appear,” in v. 17; “he will regard,” he will not despise,” in v. 18). Two instances of wordplay link vv. 16, 17 and 18 (Dahood 1970:17-18). The word יִירָאוּ (“shall fear”) in v. 16 is a case of wordplay on the word יֵאָרָא (“he will appear”) in v. 17 and בָּנָה of v. 17 is a wordplay on בָּנָה in v. 18. In addition, vv. 16-19 are conceptually linked. Vv. 17 and 18 have perfect verb forms, stating that when Yahweh has built up Zion (v. 17a) he will hear the prayer of the supplicant (v. 18a). Vv. 16 and 19, on the other hand, consisting of imperfect verb forms, mention the result of Yahweh’s glorious appearance in Zion. The fear of the nations (v. 16) and the coming generation’s praise of Yahweh (v. 19) are based on the fact that Yahweh will rebuild Zion (v. 17) and regard the prayer of the destitute (v. 18). Thus, vv. 16 and 19 frame vv. 17 and 18 by stating the reaction of the nations (v. 16) and the coming generation’s praising of Yahweh (v. 19), the motivations of which are stated in vv. 17-18.

In addition to the illustrations of links between vv. 16-19 noted above, vv. 16-19 exhibit close ties with the previous verses. Vv. 13 and 19 are linked by having in common the word דֹּר (“generation”). In the former the expression זְכֶרְךָ לְדֹר וָדֹר (“your remembrance is from generation to generation”) corresponds to the תִּכְתָּב זֵאת לְדֹר אַחֲרוֹן (“this will be recorded for another generation”) in v. 19, because in the latter

the recording (בְּזָכְרוֹ) of “this” (זֶה) for another generation is for the purpose of *remembering* Yahweh’s salvation stated in the previous verse(s). Thus, v. 19 forms a tie with v. 13 through the concept of “remembrance” which is implied in the content. V. 14 displays a link with v. 18, since both describe Yahweh’s mercy on Zion (v. 14) and on his people (v. 18, cf. “the prayer of the destitute,” “their supplication”). In v. 15 the reference to “her stones” and “her dust” which denotes the destruction of Zion are also paralleled with “Yahweh’s building up Zion” (בָּנָה יְהוָה צִיּוֹן) in v. 17. If all these are considered together, vv. 13-19 can be structured into a chiasm of the pattern ABCDC’B’A’, as follows:

A: remembering Yahweh for ever (v. 13)

B: Yahweh’s mercy on Zion (v. 14)

C: Salvation for Zion (v. 15)²⁵

D: reaction of nations (v. 16)

C’: Salvation for Zion (v. 17)

B’: Yahweh’s mercy for his people (v. 18)

A’: the coming generation’s remembrance of Yahweh’s salvation
(v. 19)

The above structure reveals that v. 16, positioned in the centre, strongly emphasizes the fear of the nations and Yahweh’s glory when Yahweh rebuilds Zion.

Vv. 20-23 form the last strophe of the second stanza. The use of the temporal conjunction כִּי (“when”) at the beginning of v. 20 indicates the beginning of a new strophe.

²⁵ The salvation of Zion is implied in the word הַחַנּוּן (“have pity”) in connection with the terms אֶת־אֲבָנֶיהָ and אֶת־עֲפָרָהּ, which refer to Zion in v. 14. Steck (1990:361) marks the links between vv. 14-18, but fails to note the tie between vv. 13 and 19.

This strophe also reveals a close link in style and content. A wordplay between the following words - מַשְׁמַיִם (“heaven,” v. 20), שָׁמַע (“hear,” v. 21), שֵׁם (“name,” v.22)- links these verses (Allen 1983:10), and except for v. 20 all other verses contain infinitive verb forms (לְשָׁמַע, לְפַתַח, in v.21; לְסַפֵּר, in v. 22; בְּהִקְבֹּץ, לַעֲבֹד, in v. 23) which suggest the tie between them. The infinitives לְשָׁמַע and לְפַתַח in v. 21 are used to express the purpose of Yahweh’s acts described in v. 20, and thus, both verses are linked by means of the infinitives. Vv. 21 and 22 also display a link in the use of the infinitive לְסַפֵּר at the beginning of v. 22, since it introduces the result (“so that”) for Yahweh’s deliverance described in vv. 20-21, which is to declare the name of Yahweh in Zion. A further link is also found between vv. 22 and 23 in that the temporal preposition (“when”) prefixed to the infinitive בְּהִקְבֹּץ at the beginning of v. 23 marks the continuation of v. 22 by connecting the contents of v. 22 to that of v. 23. Furthermore, in v. 23 the expression “when peoples gather together” (בְּהִקְבֹּץ עַמִּים יַהֲדוּדוּ) refers to Zion (v. 22) where the worship of Yahweh will be taking place. In addition, the phrase “to declare in Zion Yahweh’s name and his praise” in v. 22 corresponds to the expression “to worship Yahweh” in v. 23, and Yahweh’s looking down from the heavens (הַשְׁקִיף מִמְּרוֹם, cf. “heaven” in the next line) in v.20 causes not only the prisoners to be set free (v. 21), but also causes all people to praise Yahweh’s name (v. 22) and to worship him (v. 23). Therefore, in view of all these observations, it is clear that vv. 20-23 form a close unity.

Despite the internal bonds within vv. 20-23, these verses also exhibit some ties with the preceding verses. The “persons” found in the expression בְּנֵי תְמוּתָהּ (“those who were doomed to die,” cf. “prisoners”)

in v. 21 echo הָעֵרְעָרָה (“the destitute”) in v. 18 and the word מַמְלָכוֹת (“kingdoms”) in v. 23 recalls כָּל-מַלְכֵי הָאָרֶץ (“all the kings of the earth”) in v. 16. The matching and repetition of the following words and phrases confirm further connections: שֵׁם יְהוָה (“the name of Yahweh,” vv. 16, 22); תְּהַלֵּלֵהוּ//תְהַלֵּלֵהוּ (“praise Yah” in v. 19, “his praise” in v. 22); עַמִּים//גוֹיִם (“nations” in v. 16, “people” in v. 23; cf. עַם “people” v. 19); צִיּוֹן (“Zion” in vv. 14, 17, 22); עַבְדְּךָ//עַבְדֶּיךָ (“your servants” in v. 15, “serve” in v. 23). In addition, the word כָּי occurs in vv. 15, 17, 22 and as Allen (1983:10) notes, wordplay can be discerned in the occurrence of the words שָׁמַע-שָׁמַע-שָׁמַע (vv. 16, 20, 21; also, v. 22).

Vv. 24-29 constitute the last stanza which can be divided into three strophes (vv. 24-25a, 26-28, and 29). In contrast to the fact that vv. 20-23 form a series of infinitives, v. 24 starts with the perfect verb form עָנַתָּהּ which distinguishes this verse from the previous verses. The resumption of the first person pronoun “I”, dominating in vv. 1-12 but not in vv. 20-23, indicates the beginning of a new section. In content these verses repeat the earlier elements of lament and confidence. Just as the theme of human transience in v. 12 is contrasted to the eternity of God in v. 13, so here the mortality of human life (vv. 24-25a) is compared to the eternity of God (vv. 25b-28).

Vv. 24-25a are tied together by content. Both verses, vv. 24-25a, deal with individual lament and the phrase “my days” (יָמַי) occurring at vv. 24 and 25a link them closely. Besides, the expression קָצַר יָמִי in v. 24 stands in direct contrast to the supplication אֲלֹהֵי בְחַצֵּי יָמִי in v. 25.

Vv. 25b-28 comprise the second strophe. These verses are contrasted to vv. 24-25a in that the latter verses deal with human

transience, while the former deal with the eternity of Yahweh. In vv. 25b-28 the psalmist confirms his confidence by saying that Yahweh's years will endure throughout generations.

Vv. 25b-28 display a close link. First of all, v. 26 is closely tied with v. 27. In v. 27 the words הַמָּה and כָּלָם, which are the third masculine plural suffixes of the verbs יִאֲבְרוּ, יִבְלוּ, and the suffix of the word תִּמְלִיכָם all refer to the words הָאֲרָץ and שָׁמַיִם in v. 26. V. 27 also shows a close link with v. 28. Yahweh's eternity found in the expression אָתָּה תִּעְמָד ("You endure") in v. 27, corresponds to שְׁנוֹתַי לֹא יִתְמוּ ("your years have no end") of v. 28 referring to the eternity of Yahweh. Moreover, the second person suffixes ("your years" in v. 25b; "your hands" in v. 26; "your years" in v. 28) referring to Yahweh occur in vv. 25b, 26 and 28, and the second person pronoun (אַתָּה) referring to Yahweh also appear in vv. 27 and 28. In addition, the expression שְׁנוֹתַי לֹא יִתְמוּ ("your years continue generation after generation") in v. 25b is synonymous to שְׁנוֹתַי לֹא יִתְמוּ ("your years have no end") in v. 28, and the word שְׁנוֹתַי ("your years") occurring at the beginning (v. 25b) and at the end (v. 28) of this strophe seems to serve as an inclusio to the strophe.

While vv. 25b-28 describe Yahweh's eternity, v. 29 refers to the result which it has on his children. The eternity and unchangeableness of Yahweh described in vv. 25b-28 provide the psalmist with trust and hope in God for the future (v. 29).

The three strophes of the third stanza, vv. 24-29, exhibit a close tie to each other by the repetition of the same theme (as mentioned) as well as that of words and phrases. Besides the links we have already noted above, there are some links showing the unity of vv. 24-29. As

noted, vv. 24 and 25a are tied together by the occurrence of the word “my days.” The second person suffixes of the words (שְׁנוֹתַי in v. 25b; יָדַי in v. 26; שְׁנוֹתַי in v.28; עֲבָדַי, לְפָנַי in v.29) in vv. 25b-29, the second person pronoun אַתָּה (“you”) in vv. 27-28, and the second singular suffix of the verb תִּפְּחֵם in v. 27 all refer back to אֱלֹהֵי (“my God”) in v. 25a. Moreover, the word שְׁנוֹתַי (“thy years”) in v. 25 recurs in v. 28, as noted, and the preposition לְפָנַי (“before”) in v. 26 also echoes לְפָנַי (“before you”) in v. 29.

In addition to the internal bonds within the third stanza, vv. 24-29 exhibit certain relationships to the previous stanzas. First of all, the first strophe of the third stanza, vv. 24-25a, picks up the words and motifs of vv. 2-12. The word יוֹם (“day”) in vv. 24-25 frequently occurs in the first stanza (vv. 3, 4, 9, 12) and the motif of human transitoriness, found in vv. 24-25, echoes that of vv. 2-12. In addition, Allen (1983:14) notes that the word נִשְׁבַּח (“he has broken”) in v. 24 “functions as a homonymous echo of אֶנְוֵנִי ‘answer me,’ v. 3”. Vv. 25b-29 also have some links with the previous verses. The word דֹר (“generation”) occurs in vv. 13, 19, 25 and the occurrence of the term אֶרֶץ (“earth”) in v. 26 links the verse to vv. 16 and 20 where the term is also found. In addition, the occurrence of the following words שָׁמַיִם (“heaven”, vv. 20, 26) and עֲבָדַי (“thy servants,” vv. 15, 29; cf. , v. 23) creates definite associations between the verses in which the words appear.

To summarize: the psalm consists of three stanzas (vv. 1-12, 13-23 and 24-25) and each stanza forms its own unity. Structurally, vv. 2-12 exhibit a close link through the repetition of words, phrases, and motifs. The word “day,” which is a key term in this stanza, occurs five times and the term יָמַי (“my days”) occurring in vv. 4 and 12 forms an

inclusio around vv. 4-12. These verses, vv. 2-12, contain individual prayers and laments in the “I” form and vv. 13-23 describe the announcement of the restoration of Zion. The sixfold repetition of the divine name יהוה , and the repetition of words and motifs, i.e., “Zion” (vv. 14, 17, 22), “name” (vv. 16, 22), and salvation motifs (“you will arise,” v. 14, “Yahweh will build up,” v. 17; “he will regard,” v. 18. . .etc.) characterize vv. 13-23 as a close unity. Vv. 24-25a again return to a situation of individual misery, which echoes the motif of vv. 2-12. Vv. 25b-29 depict God’s eternity and the future of his people. As noted earlier, vv. 24-25a repeat the theme of vv. 2-12, thus creating the link with the latter and the theme of vv. 25b-29, “the eternity of God,” is contrasted with that of vv. 24-25a, “human transitoriness,” though the two parts form a structural unity. On the whole, vv. 2-13 and 24-25a describe a situation of individual suffering with prayers and laments in the “I” form, while vv. 13-23 and 25b-29 reflect the concerns of a community. Despite this division of the two parts regarding a genre aspect, there is no compelling reason for denying the unity of the psalm, as our observations treated above have implied.

Concerning the genre of the psalm, it follows the pattern of individual lament (Westermann 1989:110-111), as the title indicates. The title denotes the psalm as “a prayer of one afflicted,” but the expression attached to the title “when he is faint and pours out his complaint before Yahweh” may be intended to describe the contents of the psalm. However, since the psalm can be divided into the two parts consisting of an individual lament (vv. 2-12, 24-25a) and a community lamentation (vv. 13-23, 25b-29), it is difficult to determine the exact relationship between the title and the body of the psalm.

Despite a measure of difficulty, it is possible to classify the psalm

as an individual complaint, as many scholars have suggested (Anderson; Weiser; Westermann; Kraus). In this case, the presence of the two separate parts in the psalm needs some explanation. Anderson (1972:704) provides a due explanation: "... Ps 102 is an Individual Lament in which the troubles of the afflicted man are related to, and set against the background of, the destruction of Jerusalem and its hoped-for restoration" (see also Rogerson and McKay 1977:18). In a similar way, Lindstrom (1994:218-238) has suggested that the suffering in the individual sections is identical with the national affliction of Israel, which may be associated with the situation of the exile. It is likely that the psalm was used as an individual prayer which reflects an analogy between his own suffering and the national suffering of Israel. In this case, as many exegetes have suggested, the psalm may have a connection with the situation of the exile.

Psalm 103:1-22

- 1 לְדוֹר בְּרַכִּי נַפְשִׁי אֶת־יְהוָה וְכָל־קִרְבֵי אֶת־שֵׁם קְדוֹשׁ
- 2 בְּרַכִּי נַפְשִׁי אֶת־יְהוָה וְאֵל־תִּשְׁכַּחַי כָּל־גְּמוּלוֹ
- 3 הַסֵּלַח לְכָל־עֲוֹנֹתַי הַרְפָּא לְכָל־תַּחֲלָאֵיכִי
- 4 הַגּוֹאֵל מִשַּׁחַת חַיִּיכִי הַמַּעֲטֵרְכִי חֶסֶד וּרְחָמִים
- 5 הַמְשַׁבֵּיעַ בַּטּוֹב עֲדוֹנְךָ תַחֲחַדֵּשׁ כַּנָּשָׂר נַעֲוִיכִי
- 6 עֲשֵׂה צְדָקוֹת יְהוָה וּמִשְׁפָּטִים לְכָל־עֲשׂוּקִים
- 7 יוֹדִיעַ דְּרָכָיו לַמָּשָׁה לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־לוֹתָיו
- 8 רַחֲמִים וְחַנוּן יְהוָה אַרְךָ אַפִּים וּרְב־חֶסֶד
- 9 לֹא־לִגְצַח יִרִיב וְלֹא לְעוֹלָם יִטּוֹר
- 10 לֹא כַחֲטָאֵינוּ עֲשֵׂה לָנוּ וְלֹא כְעֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ גָּמַל עָלֵינוּ
- 11 כִּי כִגְבַהַ שָׁמַיִם עַל־הָאָרֶץ גָּבַר חֶסְדּוֹ עַל־יִרְאָיו
- 12 כִּרְחֹק מִזְרַח מִמַּעַרְב הִרְחִיק מִמֶּנּוּ אֶת־פְּשָׁעֵינוּ
- 13 כִּרְחֹם אָב עַל־בָּנִים רַחֵם יְהוָה עַל־יִרְאָיו
- 14 כִּי־הוּא יָדַע יִצְרָנוּ זָכוֹר כִּי־עָפָר אָנֹחֵנוּ
- 15 אָנוּשׁ כַּחֲצִיר יָמָיו כַּצִּיץ הַשָּׂדֶה כֵּן יִצִּיץ
- 16 כִּי רִיחַ עֲבָרָה־בּוֹ וְאֵינֵנוּ וְלֹא־יִכִּירֵנוּ עוֹד מִקוֹמוֹ
- 17 וְחֶסֶד יְהוָה מֵעוֹלָם וְעַד־עוֹלָם עַל־יִרְאָיו וְצַדִּיקָתוֹ לִבְנֵי בָנִים
- 18 לְשִׁמְרֵי בְרִיתוֹ וְלִזְכָּרֵי מִקְדָּוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹתָם
- 19 יְהוָה בְּשָׁמַיִם הִכִּין כִּסְאוֹ וּמִלְכוּתוֹ בְּכֹל מְשָׁלָה
- 20 בְּרַכּוֹ יְהוָה מִלְּאֲכוּיֹ גִבּוֹרֵי כַח עֹשֵׂי דְבָרוֹ לְשִׁמְעַ בְּקוֹל דְּבָרוֹ
- 21 בְּרַכּוֹ יְהוָה כָּל־צַבָּאוֹ מִשְׁרָתָיו עֹשֵׂי רְצוֹנוֹ
- 22 בְּרַכּוֹ יְהוָה כָּל־מַעֲשָׂיו בְּכָל־מְקוֹמוֹת מְמַשְׁלָהוּ בְּרַכִּי נַפְשִׁי אֶת־יְהוָה

Psalm 103 consists of three stanzas (vv. 1-5, 6-18, and 19-22). Of the three, the first and last stanzas comprise two strophes each (vv. 1-2, 3-5, and v. 19, 21-22 respectively), while the second forms five strophes (vv. 6-8, 9-10, 11-14, 15-16 and 17-18).

The first strophe of the first stanza, vv. 1-2, is marked by the use of imperative verb forms (בְּרַכִּי, בְּרַכִּי), and both verses have the identical

expression אָחַד־יְהוָה בָּרַכְי נַפְשִׁי (“Bless Yahweh, O my soul”), constituting the call to praise Yahweh. The expression also occurs in the last verse of the psalm, v. 22b, and at the beginning of vv. 20-22 have the formula בָּרַכְי יְהוָה (“Bless Yahweh”) that also forms the summons to praise. Thus, vv. 1-2 and v. 22, along with vv. 20-21, constitute the call to worship Yahweh, by which the whole psalm is framed.

At the beginning of the psalm the psalmist strongly accentuates the praise of Yahweh, not only by repeating the expression “Bless Yahweh, O my soul,” but also by employing the expression “all that is within me” (כָּל־קִרְבִּי), which denotes the totality of praise (cf. Anderson. 1972:712). In addition, at the introduction and the concluding section of the psalm the repetition of the word כָּל (five instances in vv. 1-2 and 20-22 out of nine in the whole psalm) and the frequent use of the divine name יְהוָה (six instances in vv. 1-2 and 20-22 out of eleven in the whole psalm) further reinforce the tone of praise. The reason for the praise is based on the fact that Yahweh has given the psalmist all his benefits (כָּל־גְּמוּלָיו). After this introduction, the body of the psalm begins by enumerating all the benefits Yahweh has bestowed. God’s benevolent deeds are attested to from the personal perspective of an individual (vv. 3-5), while the rest of the body (vv. 6-18) deals with God’s benefits as revealed in relation to the people of Israel.

Vv. 3-5 constitute the second strophe in which the psalmist explains the reason for the imperatives used in vv. 1-2. These verses are distinguished from the previous verses in that the former verses are linked together by means of five participles (הַמְעַשְׂרֵי הַגּוֹאֵל, הַרְפָּא, הַפֹּלֵחַ, הַמְשַׁבֵּיעַ, הַמְשַׁבֵּיעַ) which are not found in vv. 1-2. However, in spite of the division, vv. 3-5 show a close connection with the preceding verses,

since a series of the participles is syntactically subordinated to v. 2. Besides, Allen (1983:18) notes that the כִּי form of the suffixes (עֲוֹנֵיכִי, חַטֹּאתֶיךָ, חַטֹּאתֶיךָ, חַטֹּאתֶיךָ, חַטֹּאתֶיךָ) in vv. 3-5 may represent assonance with the word בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ in vv. 1-2. In this case, vv. 1-2 and 3-5 are linked together by means of this assonance. A further connection between both strophes is also denoted by a stylistic feature, since an alliteration with ל (לְכֹל-חַטֹּאתֶיךָ, לְכֹל-עֲוֹנֵיךָ, הַפֶּלֶחַ, קָל-גְּמוּלָיו, אֶל-תִּשְׁכַּחֲנִי) is found in vv. 2a and v. 3, and also since the frequent use of the כֹּל in vv. 1-2 and v. 3 marks a close link between both strophes.

As indicated, vv. 3-5 are linked by means of five participles and by the use of constant end-rhyme created by the כִּי form of the pronominal suffixes. In content, these verses provide the reasons for the praise with different perspectives. Vv. 3a-4a deal with direct healing by Yahweh (Yahweh forgives, heals, and redeems), while vv. 4b-5 refer to the psalmist's satisfaction with his interventions (Yahweh crowns, satisfies, and renews). V. 3a and 3b form a synonymous parallelism in which the psalmist juxtaposes God's forgiveness and healing.²⁶ On the other hand, vv. 4 and 5 stand in a chiasmic relation with the pattern AB//B'A' to each other (Dion 1990:22-23), as the following shows:

v. 4a: הַ גּוֹאֵל מִשְׁחַת חַיֹּתֶיךָ : "who redeems from the pit of your life"

v. 4b: הַמְעֲטֵרְכִי חֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים : "who crowns you with grace and mercy"

v. 5a: הַמְשַׁבֵּיעַ בְּטוֹב עַדְיֶךָ : "who fills your lifetime with goodness"

v.5b: הַתְּחַדְּשׁ כַּנְּשֹׂר נְעוּרֵיכִי : "your youthfulness renews itself as the eagle's."

²⁶ Illness in the Old Testament is thought of as the result of some offence. The association of sin and sickness is found in both the Old Testament and the New Testament (Pss 32: 3-5; 107: 17; John 9; James 5: 14-16). See Anderson (1972:713) and Kraus (1989:292).

V. 4a is paralleled with v. 5b in that the notion of rejuvenation described in the latter complements that of deliverance from the pit in v. 4a, while v. 4b and v. 5a form a parallel structure, centred on the words “crowning” and “filling.”

Vv. 6-18 form the second stanza, the first strophe of which consists of vv. 6-8. The beginning of a new section in v. 6 is indicated by the appearance of the divine name יהוה, just as vv. 1-2 began with it, and also by the use of a nominal predicative (עֲשֵׂה צְדָקוֹת) at the beginning of v. 6a which is not found in the previous verses (Dion 1990:19). Moreover, the contents of vv. 6-8, which deals with Yahweh’s acts towards his people (corporate Israel), as found in the expressions “those who are oppressed” (v. 6, לְכָל-עֲשׂוּקִים) and “the people of Israel” (v. 7), distinguish this strophe from the previous verses where Yahweh’s acts towards an individual are dealt with.

In v. 6 the reference to the divine name יהוה indicates that the Lord as the basis of praise is still the main focus in this verse and the word “righteousness” (צְדָקָה) referring to the salvation-history (cf. Anderson 1972:714; Kraus 1989:292) seems to function as a preface to v. 7 where it is reminiscent of Exod 33: 12-13.²⁷ As noted, v. 6 has a nominal predicative at the beginning, and interestingly enough, v. 8 also has (וְיִתְּנֵם יְהוָה). In both verses, the divine name יהוה is placed at the centre and owing to the absence of the subject in the second hemistich of each of the verses, the divine name functions as a double duty modifier serving both hemistichs of vv. 6 and 8. This feature implies that vv. 6-8 form a unity.

²⁷ It is likely that vv. 6-8 reflect the passages in Exod 33:12-34:7. With regard to this, see Dion (1990:25-27) and Willis (1991:525-537).

V. 7 contains an ellipsis, since there is no verb in v. 7b. The verb יִרְיַע in v. 7a serves both v. 7a and 7b, thus functioning as a double duty modifier. V. 7a and 7b constitute a chiasmic structure as follows:

C	B	A
לְמוֹשֶׁה	דָּרְכָיו	יִרְיַע
B'	C'	
לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	עַל לִוְתָיו	

As indicated, v. 8 is reminiscent of Exodus 34:6. Both stichs, v. 8a and 8b, form a synonymous parallelism and the name יְהוָה is positioned at the centre, as noted. Through the placement of the name at the centre of the verse, the psalmist strongly emphasizes Yahweh's benevolent attributes expressed in v. 8. It seems that the formula expressed in the whole sentence of v. 8 reflects the assurance of Yahweh's forgiveness (Sakenfeld 1978:126).

Vv. 9-10 comprise the second strophe. These verses syntactically display a close unity, because each stich begins in the same order with a negative, an adverbial phrase, and a verb (see Berlin [1979:20] for the syntactical structure of v. 10). Both verses provide a commentary on the statement made in v. 8 with negative expressions. In v. 9 the expression "he will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever" may be regarded as "a restatement of forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin..." (Sakenfeld 1978:227) and the terms "sins" (חַטֹּאתַי) and "iniquities" (עֲוֹנוֹתַי) found in v. 10 are reminiscent of Exod 34: 7 where the same terms are also found. In these verses the forgiving mercy of the Lord is described by means of four hemistichs which are structured in parallel.

Vv. 9-10 not only form a unity, but are also linked with the first strophe, vv. 6-8, by the word עֲשׂוּ occurring in vv. 6 and 10. Both strophes deal with the Sinai tradition reminiscent of Exodus 34: 6-7 (Sakenfeld 1978:227). Of vv. 6-10, v. 8, placed in the centre of both strophes, cites an almost *verbatim* sentence from Exod 34: 6, and the surrounding verses (vv. 6-7 and 9-10) before and after it state the evidence of Yahweh's mercy and grace mentioned in v. 8 in terms of positive (vv. 6-7) and negative expressions (vv. 9-10) (Willis 1991:535). Thus, these verses (vv. 6-10) constitute a close connection, even though they consist of different units.

Vv. 11-14, comprising the third strophe, form a structural unity in their stylistic features. The conjunction וְ at the beginning of v. 11a signals the beginning of a new section and forms an *inclusio* with the one וְ in v. 14. Thus, the first and last verses of this strophe start with the וְ (“for”). In contrast to this, the middle verses, 12 and 13, begin with the preposition כִּי (“like”). Thus, these verses, vv. 11-14, form a chiasmic structure of “for, like, like, for” sentences, each beginning with a כ sound. The chiasmic structure of the AB//B'A' pattern shows that vv. 11-14 form a close unity.

In addition to the features noted above, there are certain stylistic characteristics which show that vv. 11-14 are closely linked. Vv. 11-12 are tied together in that their use of similes are drawn from the created world, while vv. 12-13 are joined by the use of the same preposition כִּי at the beginning, as noted, and by the wordplay made by the roots רחם and רחם (כִּי רָחַם, הִרְחִיק, כִּי רָחַם) (Dion 1990:24). Besides, a parallelism in vv. 12 and 13 further reinforces a close relation between them. The strongest tie is shown in the relation between vv. 13 and 11. The twice

repeated preposition על in v. 11 occurs exactly twice in v. 13 and the expression על-יְרֵאֵיוֹ also occurs in both verses. In addition, both verses have the third person singular suffixes (*his* steadfast love, *him*, in v.11; *his* children, *him*, in v. 13) referring to Yahweh and the word חסד in v. 11 is paralleled with the word חמ in v. 13, just as they are structured in parallel in vv. 4b and 8. As indicated, the connection of v. 11 with v. 13 is stronger than any other connections within vv. 11-13. This feature has certain implications when searching for the meaning of the structural division. Both verses, vv. 11 and 13, describing God's חסד and חמ, surround v. 12 where the reference to "transgressions" (פְּשָׁעֵינוּ) is found. This stylistic feature reveals that the forgiveness of sin stated in v. 12 is due to God's love and mercy which are described in vv. 11 and 13.

In v. 14 the conjunction כִּי functions to introduce the reason for the statement made in the previous verses. The love and the forgiveness from the Lord is given to "us," because he knows and remembers that "we are dust" (עָפָר אֲנֵנוּ). V. 14 especially has a close link with v. 12, because both have the first-person plural suffixes (us, our, our, we) and the imagery drawn in the expression "we are dust" (עָפָר אֲנֵנוּ) in v. 14 is reminiscent of the word "our transgressions" (פְּשָׁעֵינוּ) in v. 12.²⁸

Vv. 11-14 not only form a unity but exhibit a certain tie with the previous verses. The occurrence of the word חסד (parallel with חמ) in v. 11, which is placed in an important position in each section (vv. 3,

²⁸ Fishbane (1989:348-349) notes that v. 14 functions as an interpretation of God's activities outlined in vv. 10-13 and has its theological background taken from Gen 2:7 in order to invoke Yahweh to refrain from repaying sin with punishment.

8, 11 and 17), creates a certain relation with v. 8 where the two words סָדַק and חַסְדֵּי are found. Moreover, the use of the conjunction וְ at the beginning (v. 11) of the strophe links this strophe with the previous verse, and thus the thought expressed in v. 10 is expanded in vv. 11-14 where the psalmist illustrates the reason for the forgiveness mentioned in v. 10, saying that the forgiveness is “the concrete manifestation of the Lord’s love and mercy” (Willis 1991:535).

Vv. 15-16 constitute the fourth strophe, while vv. 17-18 form the fifth strophe. The former strophe deals with the theme of human transitoriness and the latter with God’s eternity. Thematically, they do not seem to be dependent on each other, but they are bound together by the contrast between the transience of man and the eternity of God. This is confirmed by the conjunctive *waw* וְ (“but”) at the beginning of v. 17 which serves to contrast the contents of vv. 15-16 to those of vv. 17-18. Thus, in content both are antithetical.

It has often been argued that v. 14 should be united with the following verses, vv. 15ff, rather than with the preceding verses (Weiser 1979:662; Kraus 1989:293; Westermann 1989:241). However, it is likely that v. 14 should be regarded as a nexus verse concluding the preceding verses and introducing the following. In fact, v. 14 satisfies these two functions. As noted above, the occurrence of the first person plural suffix and the first person plural pronoun (“*our* frame,” “*we* are”) in v. 14 marks a close tie with v. 12 where the first person plural suffixes (“*us*,” “*our* transgressions”) are also found. Thus, in v. 14 the psalmist identifies himself as “we” which implies a member of the community. However, vv. 15-16 describe a human being in general while calling him a man (אִישׁ). This observation sets apart v. 14 from v. 15. V. 14 is also linked with v. 15, since the former introduces the theme of human

transitoriness²⁹, as the expression עָפָר אֲנַחְנוּ (“we are dust”) implies, and which is elaborated in the following verses.

The theme of human transitoriness, introduced in v. 14, is expanded in vv. 15-16 and the specific word for man (אָנוּשׁ), which is placed at the beginning of v. 15 for the purpose of emphasis (Briggs & Briggs 1969:326), points out the characteristic of human transitoriness. The following two comparative prepositions כּ (בְּצִיץ, בְּהַצִּיר) significantly deepen this characteristic by comparing human beings with grass and flowers which wither easily. Vv. 15-16 are closely linked by means of the alliteration with the כּ sound (כּ, בְּצִיץ, בְּהַצִּיר), and the conjunction וְ at the beginning of v. 16 is used to complement the thought of v. 15.

Vv. 17-18 stand in sharp contrast to the preceding verses which deal with the theme of human temporariness. While the word “man,” foregrounded in v. 15a, is underlined in the previous verse, here Yahweh’s love (חַסֵּד), positioned foremost in v. 17, is strongly emphasized. At the beginning of v. 17 the expression “Yahweh’s love is from everlasting to everlasting” is also contrasted to “his [human’s] days are like grass and a flower of the field” at the beginning of v. 15. The effect of this contrast lies in emphasizing the everlasting nature of the Lord’s love.

Vv. 17-18 are linked by the use of three participle sentences (לְעֹלָם וָעֹלָם, לְעֹלָם וָעֹלָם, לְעֹלָם וָעֹלָם) which are paralleled by the alliteration in ל (לְעֹשֶׂתָם וְלִזְכָּרִי, לְעֹשֶׂתָם וְלִזְכָּרִי, לְעֹשֶׂתָם וְלִזְכָּרִי), and by end-rhyme in *-am* (לְעֹשֶׂתָם, עֹלָם, מְעֹלָם) in the first stich of v. 7 and in the last

²⁹ See Urbrock (1974:1-33, esp. 20-25) for the close connection between the theme of human transitoriness and the imagery of the human being derived from the word “dust.”

stich of v. 8, as well as by the occurrence of the preposition לְ (לְבָנִי), (לְעֲשׂוֹתָם וְלִזְכָּרִי, לְשִׁמְרִי). Besides, both constitute verbless sentences and in both, the third person singular suffixes (him, his, his, his) refer to Yahweh, mentioned at the beginning of v. 17.

In content, both verses, vv. 17-18, are also closely linked. V. 17 forms two stichs which are syntactically structured in parallel and here the psalmist emphasizes the lasting nature of Yahweh's love (יְהוָה יִקְוֶה) and righteousness (יִצְדַּק תָּרוּ). V. 18, which is linked with v. 17 through stylistic features, picks up the statement made in v. 17 and emphasizes that those who benefit from Yahweh's love and who experience his righteousness (v. 17), should not only keep his covenant, but also remember his commandments (v. 18) (Clark 1993:158-159). Thus, Yahweh's love stated in v. 17a is expanded to the end of v. 18 and accordingly the psalmist states that Yahweh's love is for those "who fear him" (v. 17b) / "who keep his covenant" (v. 18a) / "who remember his commandments" (v. 18b).

Vv. 19-22 form the final stanza. These verses, excluding v. 19, contain the formula "bless Yahweh" (בְּרַכּוּ יְהוָה), which is found at the beginning of each verse, a feature that distinguishes this unit from the previous one. The root מָשַׁל in vv. 19 and 22 forms an inclusio around the strophe (Allen 1983:21) and the word "all" (כָּל) occurs in all these verses except v. 20. Of vv. 19-22, v. 19 serves as an introduction to vv. 20-22 and describes Yahweh as a heavenly king who extends his dominion over the whole world. This kingly metaphor is expanded to the following verses and is used to demonstrate the praise of Yahweh. By placing the divine name יְהוָה at the beginning of the sentence in v. 19, the psalmist effectively emphasizes the kingship of Yahweh. The

following verses, vv. 20-21, are closely linked by an imperative + an object + a vocative pattern, followed by a participle phrase. All three verses, vv. 20-22, contain terms related to the household of Yahweh as king. They are centred in each verse, namely, “his messengers and mighty ones” (מְלָאכָיו וְגִבְרֵי כֹחַ) in v. 20, “all his hosts and his ministers” (כָּל-צְבָאָיו מִשְׁרָתָיו) in v. 21, “all his works in all places of his dominion” (כָּל-מַעֲשָׂיו בְּכָל-מְקוֹמוֹת מְמֹשְׁלָתוֹ) in v. 22 (Dion 1990:22-23). All these entities are called upon to praise Yahweh, and especially v. 22 emphasizes the cosmic dimension of praise through the repetition of the word “all” embracing all spheres of Yahweh’s sovereignty.

It has been indicated earlier that vv. 19-22 are paralleled to vv. 1-2. Both refer to the praise of Yahweh, but some difference is noticed. The latter is focused on the individual aspect of praise, while the former is concerned with the cosmic nature of the praise.

To summarize, Psalm 103 consists of three stanzas (vv. 1-5, 6-18, and 19-22). The first strophe (vv. 1-2) of the first stanza parallels the third stanza, vv. 20-22, with the formula “bless you” by which the whole psalm is framed. The call “do not forget all his benefits,” introduced at the beginning of the psalm (v. 2), is answered in the following verses by enumerating Yahweh’s benevolent deeds from individual (vv. 3-5) and historical perspectives (vv. 6-10) and by demonstrating the depth and width of Yahweh’s love (vv. 11-17) as well as the everlasting character of his love (vv. 15-18). Each part of the psalm not only forms its own unity, but also displays certain ties with other parts of the psalm. As noted, the self-exhortation of vv. 1-2 (בָּרְכֵי יְהוָה אֱתֵי הַנְּהָה) finds its echo in v. 22b, thus functioning as an inclusio, and the fourfold repetition of כָּל in vv. 1-5 matches that of vv. 19-22. The word חֶסֶד, which is a key-word for the understanding of the psalm, is distributed to important

positions in each stanza throughout the psalm (vv. 4, 8, 11, 17) and the divine name יהוה, playing a dominant role, occurs eleven times in the psalm (vv. 1, 2, 6, 8, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22a, 22b). In addition, the root עשה occurs six times (vv. 6, 10, 18, 20, 21, 22) and the words עשה and צדקה in v. 6 form an inclusio with צדקה in v. 17 and עשה in v. 18, thereby surrounding vv. 6-18. The characteristics we have noted thus show us that the psalm forms a coherent structure.

The psalm can be regarded as an hymn. The beginning and end of the psalm contain the self-exhortation for praising Yahweh and vv. 3-5 have a series of hymnic participles.



Psalm 104:1-35

- 1 בָּרַכְי נַפְשִׁי אֶת־יְהוָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי גְדֹלְתָּ מְאֹד הוֹד וְתִדְר לְבָשֶׁת
- 2 עֹטֶה־אֹר כִּשְׁלֵמָה נוֹטָה שָׁמַיִם כִּי־רִיעָה
- 3 תִּמְקְרָה בַּמַּיִם עַל־יִדְתּוֹ הַשָּׁמַיִם־עֹבִיִּים רְכוּבוֹ תִּמְהַלֵּךְ עַל־כַּנְפֵי־רוּחַ
- 4 עֹשֶׂה מִלְּאֲכִיו רִוְחוֹת מְשַׁרְתּוֹ אֵשׁ לֶהֱט
- 5 יִסַּד־אָרֶץ עַל־מְכוּנֶיהָ בַּל־תִּמְוֹט עוֹלָם וְעַד
- 6 תִּהְיוּם כָּל־בֹּשֶׂת כִּסִּיֹּתוֹ עַל־הַרִים יַעֲמִדוּ־מַיִם
- 7 מִן־גְּעֵרְתָּךְ יְנוּסוּן מִן־קוֹל רַעַמְךָ יִחְפְּזוּן
- 8 יַעֲלוּ הַרִים יִרְדּוּ בְקַעֲוֹת אֶל־מְקוֹם זֶה יִסְדֹּף לָהֶם
- 9 גְּבוּל־שִׁמְתָּ בַל־יַעֲבְרוּן בַּל־יִשׁוּבוּן לְכַסּוֹת הָאָרֶץ
- 10 תִּמְשַׁלַּח מַעֲיָנִים בְּנְחָלִים בֵּין הַרִים יִהְלֹכוּן
- 11 יִשְׁקוּ כָּל־חַיֹּתוֹ שְׂדֵי יִשְׁבְּרוּ פְּרָאִים צִמְאֹם
- 12 עַל־יָהֶם עוֹפֵי־הַשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׁכּוּן מִבֵּין עֲפָאִים יִתְנוּ־קוֹל
- 13 מִשְׁקָה הַרִים מַעֲלִיִּדְתּוֹ מִפְּרֵי מַעֲשֵׂיֶךָ תִּשְׁבַּע הָאָרֶץ
- 14 מִצְמִיחַ חֲצִיר לְבַהֲמָה וְעֵשֶׂב לְעֹבְדֵת הָאָדָם לְהוֹצִיא לָחֶם מִן־הָאָרֶץ
- 15 וַיִּנְן יִשְׁמַח לְבַב־אֲנוּשׁ לְהַצְהִיל פָּנִים מִשָּׁמֶן וְלָחֶם לְבַב־אֲנוּשׁ יִסְעַד
- 16 יִשְׁבַּעוּ עֲצֵי יְהוָה אֲרָזֵי לְבָנוֹן אֲשֶׁר נָטַע
- 17 אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם צִפְרִים יִקְנְנוּ חֲסִידָה בְּרוּשִׁים בֵּיתָה
- 18 הַרִים תִּגְבְּהִים לִיַּעֲלִים סְלַעִים מַחֲסָה לְשֹׁפְנִים
- 19 עֹשֶׂה יָרֵחַ לְמוֹעֲדִים שֶׁמֶשׁ יָדַע מְבוֹאוֹ
- 20 תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶיךָ וַיְהִי לִיְלֹה בּוֹ־תִרְמַשׁ כָּל־חַיֹּת־יַעַר
- 21 תִּכְפִּירוּם שְׂאֲגִים לְטָרְף וּלְבִקֵּשׁ מֵאֵל אֲכָלִם
- 22 תִּזְרַח הַשָּׁמֶשׁ יֵאֱסָפוּן וְאֶל־מְעוֹנֹתָם יִרְבְּצוּן
- 23 יֵצֵא אָדָם לְפַעֲלוֹ וְלַעֲבֹדְתוֹ עַד־יַעֲרֹב
- 24 מִה־רִבּוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיֶךָ יְהוָה כָּל־מַחֲמָה עֲשִׂיתָ מִלְּאָה הָאָרֶץ קִנְיָנְךָ
- 25 זֶה הַיָּם גְּדוֹל וְרַחֵב יַדַּיִם שָׁמַרְמַשׁ וְאִין מִסְפָּר חַיֹּת קַטְנוֹת עַמ־גְּדֹלוֹת
- 26 שָׁם אֲנִיּוֹת יִהְלֹכוּן לְוַיְתֵן זֶה־יִצְרָתָּ לְשֹׁחֲק־בּוֹ
- 27 כָּל־מַיִם אֲלֵיךָ יִשְׁבְּרוּן לְחַת אֲכָלִם בְּעֵתוֹ
- 28 תִּתֵּן לָהֶם יִלְקֻטוּן תִּפְתַּח יָדְךָ יִשְׁבַּעוּן טוֹב
- 29 תִּסְתִּיר פְּנֵיֶךָ יִבְהַלּוּן תִּסְפֵּי רִוְחָם יִגְוַעוּן וְאֶל־עַפְרָם יִשׁוּבוּן
- 30 תִּשְׁלַח רִוְחְךָ יִבְרָאוּן וְתִחַדֵּשׁ פְּנֵי אֲדָמָה
- 31 יְהִי כְבוֹד יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם יִשְׁמַח יְהוָה בְּמַעֲשָׂיו
- 32 תִּמְבִּיט לְאָרֶץ וְתִרְעַד יִגַּע בְּהַרִים וַיַּעֲשֶׂנוּ

33 אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה בְּחַיֵּי אֲזַמְרָה לֵאלֹהֵי בְעוֹרֵי
34 יַעֲרֹב עָלָיו שִׁיחֵי אֲנֹכִי אֲשַׁמַּח בַּיהוָה
35 יִתְמַר תַּשְׂאִים מִן־הָאָרֶץ וּרְשָׁעִים עוֹד אֵינָם בְּרַכִּי נַפְשִׁי אַחֲיָהוּהָ הַלְלוּ־יָהּ

Psalm 104 can be divided into five stanzas (vv. 1-9, 10-18, 19-23, 24-30 and 31-35). The first stanza consists of three strophes (vv. 1, 2-4 and 5-9), the second of two strophes (vv. 10-12 and 13-18), the third of one strophe (vv. 19-23), the fourth again of two strophes (vv. 24-27 and 28-30), and the fifth of three strophes (vv. 31-32, 33-34 and 35).

The first strophe of the first stanza, v. 1, presents Yahweh as the object of praise, describing his greatness and majesty. In v. 1a the imperative formula, “Bless the Lord, O my soul” (בְּרַכִּי נַפְשִׁי אַחֲיָהוּהָ), found in Psalm 103:1-2 and 22, forms an inclusio with the same expression in Psalm 104:35a. Thus, the body of the psalm is framed by the imperatives to praise Yahweh and the whole psalm can be read as a hymn. Dahood (1970:33) isolates the formula from the body of the psalm. However, it is more likely to be linked with the body of the psalm because of the repetition of the divine name יְהוָה in the formula and at the body of the psalm.

V. 1b-c describe the greatness and royal majesty of Yahweh. The terms הוֹרֵר and נִהַרְרֵר are reminiscent of Yahweh’s royal nature, as illustrated in other kingship psalms (e.g. Ps 96 where honour and majesty precede him [v. 6] and where greatness is attributed to him [v.4]; cf. Job 37:22; 40:10). The root לָבַשׁ is also used in Psalm 93:1 where it is associated with the kingship of Yahweh. This royal imagery is further developed by the following verses, vv. 2-4, where Yahweh is portrayed as Creator of the heavens. Thus, vv. 1-4 depict Yahweh as a

creator-king.

V. 1b and 1c have two perfect verbs (לָבַשׁ, לָגַד לְךָ) which are paralleled, as well as the second person masculine suffix (“you”) referring to Yahweh, while vv. 2-4 have six participles (נֹרְטָה, עֹטָה, הַמְקַרְהָ, הַמְשַׁמֵּה, הַמְלַלְךָ, עֹשֶׂה) and the third person suffixes (*his* chambers, *his* chariot, *his* messengers, *his* ministers) also alluding to Yahweh. These characteristic differences between vv. 1 and 2-4 naturally make a distinction between them. Thus, v. 1 forms the first strophe, while vv. 2-4 constitute the second strophe.

Stylistically, vv. 2-4 are closely linked. As noted, these verses are related by a series of participle verbs and each verse in vv. 2-4 starts with a participle verb ending in ה. Moreover, a synonymous parallelism found in each verse (namely, v. 2a and 2b, v. 3a, b, c, and v. 4a and 4b) further strengthens the unity; and the assonance, occurring between vv. 2 and 3 (הַשְּׁמַעְעִים בְּמַיִם, שְׁמַיִם), also between vv. 3 and 4 (רֵיחַ רְכוּבוֹ, רֵיחוֹ), provides another indication of the unity. The expression נֹרְטָה שְׁמַיִם כִּיְרִיעָה (“stretching out the heavens like a tent”) in v. 2 is paralleled with the הַמְקַרְהָ בְּמַיִם עַל־יַדָּיו (“building beams for his chambers on the waters”) in v. 3, while in v. 4 the phrase “a flaming fire” (לֹהֵט אֵשׁ) recalls a vivid description of the light (אֹר) in v. 2a. In addition, as indicated, the frequent use of third-person suffixes (*his* chambers, *his* chariot, *his* messengers, *his* ministers) in vv. 3-4 further strengthens the relationship existing between them.

In vv. 2-4 the psalmist depicts Yahweh’s theophany from heaven. In v. 2a the אֹר (“light”) is “the theophanic mode of Yahweh’s self-manifestation which both reveals his presence and veils his holiness” (Habel 1972a:422) and in v. 2b the expression נֹרְטָה שְׁמַיִם כִּיְרִיעָה (“he

who stretches out the heavens like a tent”) refers to “Yahweh as the creator who pitches the heavens to be an overarching tent within which he appears in luminous splendour” (1972a:423). In v. 3 Yahweh is portrayed as the one who lays beams on the waters, who makes clouds to be chariots, who walks on wings of wind, while v. 4 refers to fire, lightning, and heavenly winds which are regarded as a description of the coming of Yahweh (Ps 18:9; 77:18; Exod 19:16, 18, Ez 1:14; Nah 1:3). Allen (1983:26) rightly points out that the descriptions of theophany in v. 3 “were doubtless used for polemical purposes originally.”

Vv. 5-9 are distinct from the previous verses in content and style. Vv. 2-4 are dominated by the participle verbs, as already noted, while vv. 5-9 are featured by the use of four perfect verb forms (כָּפִיחֹו, יָסַדְתָּ, שָׁמַתָּ, יָסַדְתָּ) and of eight imperfect verb forms (יָנוּסוּן, יַעֲמִדוּ, תִּמְרוּט, יִשְׁבְּחוּן, יַעֲבִרוּן, יִרְדּוּ, יַעֲלוּ). Besides, in vv. 2-4 the majesty of Yahweh is described with the third person suffixes, as noted above, while in vv. 5-9 Yahweh is addressed in the second person (“*You*,” v. 6; “*your* rebuke” and “*your* thunder,” v. 7; “*You*,” v. 8; “*You*,” v. 9) in narrative mode. A spatial progression between vv. 2-4 and 5-9 is also clearly discernible. The former strophe describes the heavenly realms (“light,” “heavens,” “clouds,” “fire,” and “flame”) where Yahweh appears in theophany, while the latter deals with the earthly realms (“earth,” “mountains,” “valleys”). It is clear that vv. 5-9 are closed off from vv. 2-4. Despite this division, however, vv. 5-9 show a close tie with the previous verses. The word מַיִם (“waters”) occurs in vv. 3 and 6, while in vv. 6-9 the “waters” symbolize chaos power (Hermisson 1978:49-51; Clifford 1981:88f; Allen 1983:26; Jeremias 1987:45-50; Kraus 1989:300) take a conspicuous position by becoming the major theme of the verses. In addition, as Habel (1972a:417-430) notes, the expression “stretching out

the heavens” (נֹטְתָה שָׁמַיִם, v. 2) forms a parallel with “establishing the earth” (יָסַד אֲרֶזֶץ, v. 5), as other texts in the Old Testament also illustrate (e.g., Isa 51:13, 16 and Zech 12:1).

Within vv. 5-9 internal links are observed. The suffix ו of the verb כִּסִּיתָהּ (“You covered it”) in v. 6 refers to the אֲרֶזֶץ in 5a and thus the connection between vv. 5 and 6 is established. The third masculine plural forms of the verbs יִנְהַמְּתוּן and יִקְפְּזוּן in v. 7 also refer to the word מַיִם (“waters”) in v. 6. It is also likely that “waters,” mentioned in v. 6b, should be regarded as the subject of the verbs יִעַלְוּ and יִרְדּוּ in v. 8a (Sutcliffe 1952:177-179). In this case vv. 6b-9 are linked, since vv. 6-9 take the waters as subject for their verbs. In addition to the observations noted above, vv. 5-9 exhibit a concentric structure which indicates a close unit. The word אֲרֶזֶץ occurring in vv. 5a and 9b, forms an inclusio in this strophe. The negative בִּלְ of v. 5 twice appears in v. 9 and both verses are concerned with restriction (“He has established the earth upon its foundations,” v. 5a; “You established a border that they should not pass,” v. 9a) and limitation (“so that it cannot move for ever and ever,” v. 5b; “so that they could not cover the earth again,” v. 9). On the other hand, the occurrence of the word מַיִם in vv. 6 and 8 links these verses and “the waters above the mountains” (v. 6) are contrasted with “the waters below the mountains” (v. 8). V. 7 stands as a centre of vv. 5-9. Thus, on the whole vv. 5-9 are structured into a concentric parallelism of the pattern A-B-C-B'-A' (cf. Jeremiah 1987:48), as the following indicates:

A: he established the earth upon its foundation (v. 5)

B: waters above mountains (v. 6b)

C: the Lord puts the waters to flight (v. 7)

B': waters below mountains (v. 8)

A': You established a border that they could not pass (v. 9)

Vv. 10-18 constitute the second stanza. The sudden introduction of the participle (הַמְשַׁלֵּחַ) with definite article הַ at the beginning of v. 10 indicates the beginning of a new section. Within this stanza there are two strophes (vv. 10-12 and 13-18). The use of the participle הַמְשַׁקֵּה at the beginning of v. 13, after five imperfect verbs in vv. 10-12, indicates a natural division between vv. 10-12 and 13-18. The fact that the word הַרְיָה ("mountains") also occurs in vv. 10, 13 and 18 gives a further indication of the division between vv. 10-12 and 13-18. It is likely that the term הַרְיָה forms an inclusio around vv. 13 to 18. This division is further confirmed by content. The beginning of each strophe describes the action of Yahweh. V. 10 describes Yahweh's releasing the springs in the valleys from which the animals can drink, while v. 13 refers to Yahweh's watering the mountains (הַרְיָה הַמְשַׁקֵּה) from his lofty abode (מִעַל לְיַרְתִּיר) so that the plants drink. In this description we can see the spatial movement from the waters in the valleys to the waters from the lofty abode, i.e. from a lower place in vv. 10-12 to an upper place in vv. 13-18 (Harrelson 1975:19-20; Krüger 1993:55-56).

Vv. 10-12 show a close tie. In vv. 10b and 11a-b, the third plural verb forms (יְהַלְכוּן, יִשְׁקוּ, יִשְׁבְּרוּ) and the suffix of the preposition הֵם in 12a refer to the springs (מַעְיָנִים) in v. 10a, and the preposition בֵּין in v. 10b is balanced by the preposition מִבֵּין in v. 12. Watson (1984:345) calls the use of the prepositions "ballast preposition." V. 10 describes Yahweh's causing the springs to flow, while vv. 11-12 refer to the effect of the springs.

Vv. 13-18 form a close connection in content and style. The occurrence of the word יְרֵאָה in vv. 13 and 14 links both verses. V. 14 has three hemistichs, and the participle מִצְמִיחַ in the first hemistich functions as a double duty modifier serving both the first and the second hemistich, since there is no verb in the second hemistich. Vv. 14c-15c form two stichs, each consisting of two hemistichs (vv. 14c-15a, 15b-15c). These two stichs (vv. 14c-15a and 15b-c) display a close tie. First of all, the first hemistich (v. 14c and 15b) of each stich forms a parallelism with the following elements: לְ plus hiphil infinitive construct ($\text{לְהוֹצִיא} / \text{לְהַצְהִיל}$), the object ($\text{לֶחֶם} / \text{יַיִן}$), and the prepositional phrase with מִן ($\text{מִן־הָאָרֶץ} / \text{מִשֶּׁמֶן}$), and the second hemistich (v. 15a and 15c) of each stich is also structured in parallel by the repetition of the phrase (לְבַב־אָנוּשׁ) and by the use of the imperfect third male single verb form (יִשְׁמַח , יִסְעַד) each time occurring in the second hemistich. In addition, each stich is arranged into a chiasmic parallelism of an AB//BA pattern, if we consider only food items (לֶחֶם , יַיִן , מִשֶּׁמֶן , לֶחֶם). The same word לֶחֶם (“bread”) occurs in v. 14c and v. 15c, and the word יַיִן (“wine”) in v. 15a corresponds to the מִשֶּׁמֶן (“oil”) in v. 15b in that both refer to liquids. All these considerations show us that vv. 14c-15c form a close link. To this close linkage of vv. 14c-15c can be added v. 14a-b, since the preposition לְ occurs in both parts, vv. 14a-b (לְבַהֲמֹה , לְעֵבֶרָה) and 14c-15c (לְהוֹצִיא , לְהַצְהִיל), and the word אָדָם (“the man”) in v. 14b semantically corresponds to the לְבַב־אָנוּשׁ (“the heart of man”) in v. 15a and 15c. In addition, vv. 14-15 are also linked with v. 13, since the latter verse refers to the fact that Yahweh allows the waters to fall upon the mountains from his upper chamber ($\text{מִשְׁקֵה הַרִים מֵעֲלִיּוֹתָיו}$), while vv. 14a (also v. 13b)-15c

mention the effect of Yahweh's watering the mountains that causes the grass and plants to grow, so that man may enjoy the product.

V. 16 continues the thought of vv. 13-15 by again picking up the word שָׂבַע ("satisfied") that occurred in v. 13, at the beginning of this verse. V. 13 refers to the satisfaction of the earth (הַשָּׂבַע הָאָרֶץ) that brings forth the growth of plants (vv. 14-15), while v. 16 deals with the satisfaction of Yahweh's trees (יְשַׂבְּעוּ עֵצֵי יְהוָה) which causes birds to be provided with their home (v. 17). In addition, v. 17 is linked with v. 16, since the expression אֲשֶׁר-בְּאֵן in v. 17 refers to the אֲרָזֵי לְבָנוֹן ("the cedars of Lebanon") in v. 16. The word בַּיְתָהּ ("house") in v. 17 semantically corresponds to מְחֻטָּה ("refuge") in v. 18 in that the former refers to the dwelling place of birds, while the latter alludes to the dwelling place of wild animals. Thus, vv. 17 and 18 are closely joined. As indicated, vv. 13 and 18 constitute an inclusio with the word הָרִים ("mountains").

Though vv. 10-18 are closed off from the preceding stanza, they exhibit a certain relationship with it. The occurrence of the word עֲלֵיוֹתָיו ("his chambers") in vv. 3 and 13 ties two verses together and both stanzas deal with the waters (vv. 3, 5-9 and 13-13) as a main subject. In addition, the occurrence of the words אֶרֶץ ("earth," vv. 5, 6, 13, 14) and הָרִים ("mountains," vv. 8, 10, 13, 18) in both stanzas strengthens the relationship still further.

Vv. 19-23 comprise the third stanza. The use of the perfectum verb (עָשָׂה) in v. 19, after two non-verbal clauses in v. 18, indicates the beginning of a new unit. This stanza differs from the previous stanza in content. In the previous stanza the focus is spatial on mountains (vv. 10, 13, and 18), while here the focus is temporal. The stanza starts with

the reference to the creation of the moon and the sun by Yahweh and the last verse of the stanza ends with the description of day and evening which respectively correspond to the sun and the moon in v. 19. In this stanza Yahweh is portrayed as the one who looks after all living creatures as well as time.

Vv. 19-23 are closely tied by content. V. 19a refers to the making of Yahweh's moon, while v. 19b is concerned with the making of Yahweh's sun. In keeping with this time arrangement, vv. 20-23 elaborate the statements of v. 19 in more detail. Vv. 20-21 refer to the animals acting in darkness, namely, the night, and vv. 22a-23a deal with human activities under the sun. V. 23b again returns to the night. The expression *כָּל-חַיֵּי הַיַּעַר* ("all the beasts of the forest") in v. 20b points ahead to the "young lions" (*הַכִּפְיָרִים*) in v. 21 which function as *pars pro toto*, and in v. 22 the subjects of the verbs *יִרְבְּצוּן* and *יִאָּסְפוּן* in the third plural forms and the third male plural suffix of the word *מְעֹרְנָהֶם* in v. 22 all refer to the young lions in v. 21a.

Vv. 24-30 form the fourth stanza composed of two strophes (vv. 24-26 and 27-30). This stanza is distinguished from the previous stanza, since here the subjects of the psalmist are no longer the moon, sun, lions and humans, but Yahweh's marvellous works. The opening verse starts with an exclamation (*מָה־רַבּוּ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְהוָה*) at the completed works of Yahweh and the words *הָאָרֶץ* ('the earth') in v. 24 and *אֲדָמָה* ('the ground') in v. 30 frame this stanza as a unity.

In v. 24 Yahweh's marvellous works are described by using the phrases *מָה־רַבּוּ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ* ("how many are thy works"), *כֻּלָּם* ("all of them"), and *מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ* ("full of the earth") which may express the totality of Yahweh's works, and vv. 25-26 specify the statements of v. 24 by taking

some instances from the sea. Vv. 24-27 are closely linked by a chiasmic structure with the following terms:

- A: כָּלֵם (v. 24)
 B: נָחַ (v. 25a)
 C: שָׁם (v. 25b)
 C': שָׁם (v. 26a)
 B': נָחַ (v. 26b)
 A': כָּלֵם (v. 27a)

The term כָּלֵם in vv. 24 and 27 may serve as an inclusio within the first strophe, vv. 24-27. However, the rest of v. 27 also shows a close link with the following verses in the repetition of the word נָחַ occurring in vv. 27 and 28 and in the use of the word “food” (אֹכֶלֶה) in v. 27 which is semantically related to the expression יִשְׂבְּעוּן טוֹב (“they are satisfied with good things”) in v. 28. Owing to this, it is likely that v. 27 should be regarded as a hinge verse serving both the preceding and the following verses.

V. 27 describes in general terms all creatures’ dependence upon Yahweh for their existence and vv. 28-30 exemplify in more concrete terms the statements made in v. 27. As noted, v. 27 has a link with v. 28 and the latter also shows a close tie with v. 29 by the use of the imperfect second masculine suffix (תִּתֵּן, תִּפְתַּח, תִּסְתִּיר, תִּסְרֵךְ) referring to Yahweh, and of the imperfect third masculine suffix (יִשְׂבְּעוּן, יִלְקֻטוּן) referring to the creatures. In addition, the occurrence of the second masculine suffix (יִרְדֵּךְ, יִפְגִּיעֵךְ) and of the third masculine suffix (יִלְקֻטוּם, יִרְחֻם, יִעַרְכֻם), used in order to refer to Yahweh and the creatures respectively, further strengthens the link. The link between vv. 29 and 30 is also noticeable, since both verses are structured into a chiasm,

with the position of v. 29c being centred in the middle of the structure, as follows:

- A: (“when you hide thy *face*,” v. 29a)
 B: (“when you take away their *breath*,” v. 29b)
 C: (“they return to their dust,” v. 29c)
 B’: (“when you send forth thy *breath*,” v. 30a)
 A’: (“you renew the *face* of the ground,” v. 30b)

Vv. 31-35 constitute the final stanza, the fifth, which can be divided into three strophes (vv. 31-32, 33-34, and 35). This stanza consists of a series of supplicatory prayers (vv. 31-32, 35) and vows (vv. 33-34). Here the divine name יהוה occurs five times (v. 31x2, v. 33, 34, 35; cf. לאלהי in v. 33; יהללוך in v. 35) and thus, through the frequent occurrence of the name, it is emphasized that praise should be given to Yahweh. In this stanza the shift from Yahweh’s taking care of animals to the praise of Yahweh marks vv. 31-35 off from the preceding stanza.

The beginning of this stanza (v. 31) again picks up the word מעשה (“works”), just as the beginning of the fourth stanza (v. 24) did (cf. v. 13). In v. 31 the phrase קבורת יהוה (“the glory of Yahweh”) is paralleled with the word מעשיו (“his works”) and the language (“tremble,” “he touches the mountains,” “smoke”) used in v. 32 is reminiscent of the description of Yahweh’s theophany. As Cook (1992:88-90, 93-94) notes, it is likely that v. 32 depicts the cosmic tumult which can be regarded as a part of theophanic description. This is supported by v. 35 where the destruction of the wicked on the last day is mentioned. Cook (1992:94) describes the notion of cosmic tumult as follows: “The belief is thus expressed that the Creator can make creation conform to his will through direct and cosmic inbreaking. Such

a belief, expressed using the cosmic tumult motifs common to apocalyptic literature, is most probably indicative of an apocalyptic *Weltanschauung*.”

The first strophe, vv. 31-32, forms a link by taking Yahweh or the elements (e.g. the glory of Yahweh) relative to him as subject, while the second strophe, vv. 33-34, takes the first-person singular pronoun (“I”) as subject in expressing the psalmist’s vow. In contrast to vv. 33-34, v. 35 is concerned with the elimination of the wicked (רְשָׁעִים) and the sinners (חַטָּאִים), taking them as subject. In v. 35 the abrupt reference to “the wicked” and “the sinners” seems inconsistent with the thought of the psalm, but it should be read in the light of the whole psalm (Kraus 1989:304). For the psalmist the wicked has no place to live in the world of joy, order, and dependence upon Yahweh, which is described in the previous verses.

Vv. 31-35 display certain ties with other parts of the psalm. As noted, vv. 1a and 35b have the same self-exhortation for praising Yahweh, and the occurrence of the first person (“I,” “my”) in v. 1 matches vv. 33-35 where it is found nine times. Throughout the psalm, only these two sections display the first person. Moreover, the word אֱלֹהֵי (my God) in v. 1 parallels אֱלֹהֵי in v. 33 and the term “glory” in v. 31 is synonymous with “majesty and splendour” in v. 1. In addition, the description of theophany in v. 32 corresponds to that of vv. 2-4 and the stem עָשָׂה (“make”) also occurs in vv. 4 and 31. All these observations indicate that the first two sections of the first stanza form a close tie with the last stanza of the psalm partly in the form of an *inclusio*.

To summarize: the psalm constitutes five stanzas (vv. 1-9, 10-18, 19-23, 24-30 and 31-35) and all parts of the psalm are divided by the

natural flow of thought. As noted, vv. 1-4 form a close tie with vv. 31-35 and the stem נָשַׁע occurs in each section of the psalm (vv. 4, 13, 19, 24, 31), thus playing an important role. Some of the linking words are “earth” (vv. 5, 9, 13, 14, 24, 32, 35), “mountains” (vv. 6, 8, 10, 13, 18, 32), “satisfied” (vv. 16, 13, 28), and the divine name “Yahweh” (vv. 1[x2], 16, 24, 31[x2], 33, 34, 35; cf. my God [vv. 1, 33]; אֱלֹהִים [v. 21]), “wind/spirit/breath” (vv. 3, 29, 30), “send” (vv. 10, 30), “chamber” (vv. 3, 13)... etc. On the whole, each stanza of the psalm exhibits close ties with other parts through the natural flow of thought between respective divisions of the structure and through the repetition of words and of the same theme, namely Yahweh’s creation. The unity of the psalm is defended by all these considerations.

The psalm belongs to the Gattung of the individual hymn. Its individual character is clearly found, as noted above, at the beginning and end of the psalm in the use of self-exhortation and the first person.



33 וַיִּזְכֹּר וַיִּשְׁבַּח וַיִּשְׁבַּח עַץ גְּבוּלָם
34 אָמַר וַיִּבֹא אֲרֶבֶה וַיִּלַּק וַאֲיוֹן מִסֹּפֶר
35 וַיֵּאכַל כָּל-עֵשֶׂב בְּאַרְצָם וַיֵּאכַל פְּרֵי אֲדָמָתָם
36 וַיִּזְכֹּר כָּל-בְּכוֹר בְּאַרְצָם רֵאשִׁית לְכָל-אוֹנָם
37 וַיּוֹצִיאֵם בְּכֶסֶף וְזָהָב וַאֲיוֹן בְּשִׁבְטָיו כּוֹשֵׁל
38 שָׂמַח מִצְרַיִם בְּצִאֲתָם כִּי-נִפְלַ פָּתְחָם עֲלֵיהֶם
39 פָּרַשׁ עַנְן לְמִסְךְ וְאֵשׁ לְהָאִיר לְיֵלֶה
40 שָׂאֵל וַיִּבֹא שָׁלוֹ וְלָחֵם שָׁמַיִם יִשְׁבִּיעֵם
41 פָּתַח צֹר וַיִּזְוֹבוּ מַיִם הִלְכוּ בְּצִיּוֹת נֹהָר
42 כִּי-זָכַר אֶת-דָּבָר קָדְשׁוֹ אֶת-אַבְרָהָם עֲבָדָיו
43 וַיּוֹצֵא עִמּוֹ בְּשִׁשּׁוֹן בְּרִנָּה אֶת-בְּחִירָיו
44 וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם אֲרָצוֹת גְּוִיִּם וַעֲמַל לְאֻמִּים יִירָשׁוּ
45 בְּעִבּוֹר יִשְׁמְרוּ חֻקָּיו וְחֹרְתֵי יִנְצְרוּ הִלְלוּ-יָהּ

Psalm 105 consists of three stanzas (vv. 1-11, 12-22, 24-45) of which the first and the second has two strophes respectively (vv. 1-6, 7-11; 12-15, 16-22) while the last stanza has three strophes (24-38, 39-41; 42-45). V. 23 serves as a hinge verse connecting both what precedes and what follows.

The first strophe of the first stanza forms the call to praise Yahweh, while the second introduces the theme of the call which functions as the motive for the statement of the passages that follow. The summons to praise is composed of ten imperative verbs in vv. 1-5 and the use of each different verb effectively accentuates the praise for Yahweh with its own connotation. The repetition of the divine name יְהוָה (vv. 1, 3, 4, also “him” or “his”) further strengthens the praise of Yahweh.

Vv. 1-6 are linked not only by content, but also by style. A repetition of words is noteworthy: “Yahweh” (vv. 2, 3, 4) “name” (vv. 1,

3); “wonderful works” (vv. 2, 5); “seek” (vv. 3, 4). In addition, Ceresko (1978:2; 1983:30) points out a close tie within vv. 1-6 by indicating a chiasmic structure, as follows:

בְּעַמִּים (v. 1, “among the people”)

נִפְלְאוֹתָיו (v. 2, “his wonderful works”)

מִבְּקָשִׁי (v. 3, “seek”)

יְהוָה (v. 3, “Yahweh”)

יְהוָה (v. 4, “Yahweh”)

בְּקָשִׁי (v. 4, “seek”)

נִפְלְאוֹתָיו (v. 5, “his wonderful works”)

זֶרַע אַבְרָהָם.. בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹב (v. 6, “seed of Abraham... children of Jacob”)

The above structure reveals that Yahweh is placed in the centre of the structure. By placing him in the centre, the psalmist stresses the praise of Yahweh, enumerating what he has done. The phrase “among the people” in v. 1 corresponds to the expression “seed of Abraham...sons of Jacob” in v. 6, and the former implies a universal dimension, while the latter refers to a particular dimension. According to Ceresko (1978:2-3; 1983:30-31) this perspective is also found in vv. 7-11 where the words “all the earth” are used in v. 7 (universal) and “the land of Canaan” in v. 11 (particular). Thus, the two strophes of the first stanza, vv. 1-6 and 7-11, show a similar movement from the universal to the particular. Besides these features noted above, vv. 1-6 reveal other stylistic characteristics which serve to support the unity of the verses. First of all, vv. 1-3 can be structured into a chiasm of the pattern ABCD//D’C’B’A’: A: Yahweh, v. 1a; B: his name, v. 1b; C: his deeds, v. 1c; D: sing to him, v. 2 // D’: praise to him, v. 2; C’: his

wonderful works, v. 2; B': his name, v. 3; A': Yahweh, v. 3. Moreover, as Dahood (1970:52) has noted (also, Ceresko 1983:30; Watson 1984:337), there is “delayed identification” by which the subject of vv. 1-3 and 4-6 is hidden until the end of the sentence, namely, v. 3 and v. 6. In this case, the “those” of the expression “those who seek Yahweh” (מְבַקְשֵׁי יְהוָה) at the end of v. 3 serves as the subject of the verbs in vv. 1-3, while the persons responding to the call “seed of Abraham, his servant, children of Jacob, his chosen one” in v. 6 are taken as the subject of the three imperative verbs (זָכְרוּ, בְּקִשׁוּ, דְּרָשׁוּ) in vv. 4-5. These features serve to link vv. 1-6.

Vv. 7-11 state the covenant theme which serves as the motive for the sequence of God’s actions in vv. 12-45 and the following historical recitations found in vv. 12-45 are given as an illustration of how God remembered the covenant promise to Abraham (vv. 8-11, 42). Of the three-fold promises to Abraham, “land, progeny, and fame,” only the promise of the land is focused upon in this psalm and the entire psalm can be regarded as an exploration of the patriarchal promise of the land (Clifford 1979:422-423). The protection of his people which God has demonstrated through their history is linked to the land as the fulfilment of the promise. Thus, the motif “land” plays an important role with ten-fold repetition (vv. 7, 11, 16, 23, 27, 30, 32, 35, 36, 44) across the psalm.

Vv. 7-11 form a close unity. Yahweh (“he” in vv. 7-10 and “I” in v. 11) is taken as the subject of all verses in vv. 7-11 and these verses are linked by a chiasmic parallelism with the following words: A: אֶרֶץ (“land,” v. 7); B: לְעוֹלָם (“for ever,” v. 8); C: בְּרִיתוֹ (“covenant,” v. 8)// C': בְּרִיתִי (“covenant,” v. 10); B': עוֹלָם (“for ever,” v. 10); C': אֶרֶץ (“land,” v. 11). In addition to this link within vv. 7-11, they

display a close tie with the previous verses by the chiasmic arrangement of the following words: זָכַר (‘‘remember,’’ v. 5)- מִשְׁפָּטִי (‘‘judgement,’’ v. 5)// מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ (‘‘judgement,’’ v. 7)- זָכַר (‘‘remember,’’ v. 8). In addition, of the five-fold occurrence of the divine name יהוה, throughout the psalm, four occur in vv. 1-11 (vv. 1, 3, 4, 7, 9), thus serving to link both strophes (vv. 1-6 and 7-11).

The second stanza, consisting of vv. 12-22, can be divided into two strophes (vv. 12-15 and 16-22).

The first strophe deals with the patriarchs in Canaan. The use of the third-person plural ‘‘they’’ (הֵם) as subject at the beginning of v. 12 distinguishes this strophe from the previous strophe where Yahweh as subject dominates the verses throughout. Another means of distinguishing vv. 12-15 from vv. 7-11 is the fact that while the relation between Yahweh and his people is focused upon in the latter, the former mainly concerns the relation between Israel and other nations. However, despite this distinction, there are certain links with the previous verses. The third-person feminine pronoun suffix of the prepositional phrase בָּהּ (‘‘in it’’) at the end of v. 12 refers back to the אֶרֶץ-כְּנָעַן (‘‘the land of Canaan’’) in v. 11 and the theme developed in the preceding verses, a promise of the land, continues in vv. 12-15 in order to show the fulfilment of God’s promise.

These verses, vv. 12-15, are closely linked by style. The *waw* consecutive ׀ at the beginning of v. 13 serves to connect this verse with v. 12. Vv. 12-13 function as an adverbial subordinate clause, while a main clause begins with v. 14. Thus, vv. 12-14 are syntactically closely tied. Moreover, v. 14 forms a link with v. 15 in the use of the negatives (לֹא, אֵל) occurring in both verses. In addition, there is the

repetition of the root מלך in vv. 13-14, and the alliteration with the *m* sound (מלכים, עליהם, לעשקם, אדם, עם, מממלכה) in vv. 13-14 also links them together.

Vv. 12-13 describe the undefendable situation of the patriarchs through the threat of enemies, by referring to a small member in number (מח' מספר כמעט) and to the wandering from one place to another (v. 13). In contrast to this, vv. 14-15 describe God's protection of the patriarchs, as the phrases "he rebuked", "do not touch", and "do not harm" imply. The use of the merismus (i.e. אדם... מלכים "no man... kings") in v. 14 which represents totality by expressing the two extremes (i.e. no man...kings, Dahood 1970:55; Ceresko 1983:32), reveals the strong intention of God's protection for the patriarchs.³⁰ Furthermore, by adding the first pronoun suffix "my" to the words "anointed" and "prophets", the psalmist emphasizes the close relationship between Yahweh and the patriarchs which was already implied in the previous section (vv. 7-11).

The second strophe, vv. 16-22, deals with the story of Joseph,³¹ which forms a thematic unit in this strophe. As vv. 12-13 describe the patriarchs' being threatened by hostile kings and vv. 14-15 mention God's protection which removes the threat to the patriarch, so in this strophe two processes are described. V. 16 refers to the famine which had caused a threat to Israel, while the rest of the verses describe the solution to the danger which is achieved through Joseph. In this strophe, Joseph's story dominates, but Yahweh's sovereignty is strongly

³⁰ Holm-Nielsen (1978:24) suggests that the word לעשקם ("to oppress them") in v. 14 can be interpreted in association with the subjugation of the people of Israel in exile by foreign powers (Isa 52:4; 54:14; Jer 50:33).

³¹ Holm-Nielsen notes that "the Babylonian exile lies behind the description of Joseph's fate in this psalm ..." (1978:25).

emphasized by referring to Yahweh's causing famine at the beginning of the strophe which shows that he is the protagonist of the event. A further emphasis on Yahweh's sovereignty is also found in the subsequent verses. V. 18 uses a sort of merismus ("his feet were forced into fetters, his neck was put in irons") by which the complete bondage of Joseph (Ceresko 1983:32) is effectively emphasized and the use of the merismus in this verse serves to emphasize Yahweh's power, as the sole agent through which Joseph was liberated from prison.

Vv. 16-22 show a certain structural unity. An end-rhyme (לָהֶם, לְפָנֵיהֶם) in vv. 16-17 ties both verses, and the assonance with an *e* sound (לָהֶם, לְעַבְדוֹ, בְּכַבְדּוֹ) in vv. 16, 17, and 18 links these verses by means of the assonance. Moreover, vv. 18-22 are structured in a chiasmic parallelism with the following words: נַפְשׁוֹ (v. 18, "his neck"): מַשָּׁל (v. 20, "ruler") // וּמַשָּׁל (v. 21, "ruler"): בְּנַפְשׁוֹ (v. 22, "personally"). Furthermore, there is "delayed identification" in vv. 17 and 19, by which the subject is withheld until the end of the sentence (Dahood 1970:52; Ceresko 1983:32; Watson 1984:337). This marks a link with the previous sections (vv. 1-3 and 4-6) where the same literary device is also used, as noted. In addition, the repetition of the word בּוֹא in vv. 18-19 and the wordplay made between the words קָנְיָנוּ in v. 21 and וְזִקְנֵינוּ in v. 22 still further reinforce the unity of the strophe.

This strophe holds not only its own unity, but also shows the links with the previous strophe. The word אֶרֶץ ("land") in the opening verse (v.16) of this strophe refers back to the country "Canaan" which is also mentioned at the beginning of the first strophe, v. 12 (see, above), and the word מֶלֶךְ ("king") also occurs in vv. 14 and 20 (cf. v. 13). In addition, both strophes have the same poetic device, namely merismus,

in vv. 14 and 18, which marks a possible connection between them (Ceresko 1983:32).

V. 23 can be regarded as a hinge verse in linking vv. 12-22 and the following verses. Ceresko (1983:36) notes that it serves to summarize the content of vv. 1-22 and to introduce what follows. This verse is placed between the 22 verses of the first half of the psalm and the 22 verses of the second half, and the word **יִשְׂרָאֵל** (“Israel”) in parallel with the word **יַעֲקֹב** (“Jacob”) echoes v. 10 where both are also found, while the phrase **בְּאֶרֶץ-חַם** (“the land of Ham”) in v. 23b is also found in v. 27 (cf., also vv. 30, 32, 35, 36). Thus, v. 23 completes the narrative movement from Canaan to Egypt (vv. 12-22) and the following verses (vv. 24-44) start with the story from Egypt to Canaan.

Vv. 24-38, comprising the first strophe of the third stanza, are bound together by the story of the Exodus from Egypt which can be regarded as a thematic unit. These verses are framed by the occurrence of the word **מִצְרַיִם** (“Egypt”) in vv. 23 and 38 and by the “distant parallelism” between **וַיָּבֹא** (“came”) in v. 23 and **בָּצְאוּהֶם/וַיֵּצְאוּ** (“departed”) in vv. 37-38.

Vv. 24-38 reveal a close tie in content and style. Vv. 24-25 are linked through the repetition of the word **עַמּוֹ** (“his people”) and by an instance of end-rhyme (**וַיֵּצְאוּ, מִצְרַיִם**) occurring at the end of each verse. V. 25 is also linked with v. 26, because the word **עַבְדּוֹ** (“his servant”) occurs in both. In vv. 29-33, end-rhyme (**מִצְרַיִם, אֶרֶץ, וְיָגֵד, לְךָ, מִצְרַיִם**, **וְיָגֵד, לְךָ, מִצְרַיִם, וְיָגֵד, לְךָ, מִצְרַיִם**) in the *m* sound occurs and vv. 35-36 are closely connected by the use of the preposition **כֹּל** (“all”). Furthermore, vv. 37-38 are tied together by the use of the verb root **יָצָא** (“departed”). In addition to these features, vv.

24-30 display a chiasmic structure with the first verb of each verse, as follows.

- A: וַיַּפְרֵם “He made fruitful” (v. 24)
 B: וַיַּפְתֵּהוּ “He changed” (v. 25)
 C: וַיִּשְׁלַח “He sent” (v. 26)
 D: וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ “They worked” (v. 27)
 C’: וַיִּשְׁלַח “He sent” (v. 28)
 B’: וַיַּפְתֵּהוּ “He changed” (v. 29)
 A’: וַיַּרְבֵּם “He made swarm” (v. 30)

The above structure shows us that Yahweh’s acts and wonders described in v. 27 are spotlighted, for emphasis’ sake. In this regard it is worth noting that vv. 26-27.28 exhibit a close tie with vv. 17, 20-22. As Clifford (1979:425) rightly remarks, the verbs וַיִּשְׁלַח (“sent”), וַיִּשְׁלַח (“sent”), וַיַּמְרֵם (“made”) in vv. 17 and 20-21 closely match the ones in vv. 26-27 and 28, וַיִּשְׁלַח (“sent”), וַיִּמְרוּ (“made”), וַיִּשְׁלַח (“sent”).

Apart from the stylistic features in vv. 24-30 indicated above, vv. 31-38 show a close structural unity when considering several verbs, as follows:

- v. 31 he spoke and brought
 v. 33 he struck the vine and figtree
 v. 34 he spoke and brought
 v. 36 he struck the first-born
 v. 37 then he led them forth.

The above structure shows Yahweh’s mighty power which controls everything that happens. Each sentence emphasizes Yahweh’s deeds by stating that Yahweh did this and that. The threefold repeated word “all” in vv. 35-36 strongly emphasizes Yahweh’s complete power (Burden

1990:150) and vv. 37-38, joined together by the repetition of the root **נצ**, depict the divine deliverance from Egypt as a joyful and benevolent event.

Vv. 39-41, comprising the second strophe of the third stanza, deal with the miracles that occurred during the wilderness period. Unlike in other psalms of this type (e.g. Pss 78 and 106), here the psalmist omits the sins of the people (Oesterley 1939:448; Westermann 1981:241) in the wilderness period, and only the way in which God cared for his people is dealt with as comprising the whole story of the desert experience. Instead of mentioning the negative experiences in the wilderness, the psalmist is more concerned with the positive aspects of the wilderness traditions (Burden 1994:200-202). This characteristic therefore emphasizes “God’s goodness to Israel, not Israel’s sinfulness” (Kissane 1954:164; cf. Kirkpatrick 1903:623).

Vv. 39-41 form a link by dealing with the same motif, the wilderness tradition, and the repetition of the third person singular “he” as subject (“he spread a cloud,” “he brought quails and bread from heaven,” “he gave them in abundance,” “he opened the rock”) emphasizes God’s sovereignty over the events in the wilderness period and his gracious guidance of the Israelites. The spreading of the cloud (**פָּרַשׂ עֶנָן**) in v. 39 implies God’s protective aspect for them (Kirkpatrick 1903:623) and the food narrative in v. 40 is stated without mentioning the murmuring of the people in order to emphasize God’s gracious guidance (Anderson 1972:734; Burden 1994:200). The expressions “he gave them in abundance” (**נָשַׁבְּ בָּיָעַם**, v. 40) and “it [water] flowed through the desert like a river” (**הִלְכוּ בַּצִּיּוֹת נְהָר**, v. 41) still further emphasize God’s gracious provision, implying the intimate relationship between Yahweh and his people.

This strophe exhibits close, but contrastive links with the preceding verses. In v. 32 the שָׁרָף (“fire”) is used as the fifth plague against the Egyptians, but in v. 39 it is used as the purpose of lighting the night for Israel. Another contrast is observed between the darkness plague in v. 28 and the darkness in v. 39. Clifford (1979:426) sees the contrast as one between Egypt and the desert, saying the following: “God’s first act against Egypt is the plague of darkness (v. 28). The first act for Israel in the desert is lighting of the night, ‘He spread a cloud for cover, and a fire to light the night (v. 39)’.” In addition, the life-giving water in v. 41 can be compared to the waters in Egypt which caused living creatures to die (v. 29), while the abundant food in the desert (v. 40) also compares to the famine (v. 16, cf. אֶלֶף in both verses).

Vv. 42-44, comprising the third strophe, serve as a concluding summary to the historical events stated in the previous verses. Clifford (1979:426) states the function of these verses as follows: “These verses (vv. 42-44) also reformulate vv. 37-38, the exodus from Egypt, so that the exodus and (divinely sustained) existence in the desert are seen as the result of the patriarchal promise of the land.” In this case, the particle כִּי (“because) at the beginning of v. 42 functions to introduce the reason not only for Yahweh’s acts in the wilderness period in vv. 39-41, but also for his beneficent deeds to support Israel in the exodus event (vv. 24-38). V. 42 states that the reason why Yahweh brought Israel out of Egypt and led her through the desert is because he remembered his holy promise to Abraham, and the final verse of the psalm, v. 45, states that Yahweh’s beneficent and mighty deeds, which have been demonstrated throughout the history of Israel, were given in order that Yahweh’s people should keep and observe his divine statutes

and laws. Thus, v. 45 concludes the whole psalm on a didactic note.

Vv. 42-45 exhibit certain links with the previous strophes. The root יצא (“leading forth”) occurs in vv. 37-38 and 43, and in v. 43 the expression בְּשִׂשׂוֹן בְּרִנָּה (“with joy with singing”) corresponds to the שָׂמַח (“was glad”) in v. 38. Clifford (1979:426) notes that “Israel’s inheriting the wealth of the nations in v. 44 picks up the *spoliare Aegyptios* theme in v. 37.” In addition to the link with the preceding strophe, vv. 42-45 form an *inclusio* with vv. 1-11 by repeating many words: זָכַר (“remember,” vv. 8, 42; also v. 5); דְּבָר (“word,” vv. 8, 42); קָדְשׁ (“holy,” vv. 3, 42); אַבְרָהָם (“Abraham,” vv. 9, 42); עַבְדָּיו (“Abraham his servant,” vv. 6, 42); בְּחֵירָיו (“his chosen ones,” vv. 6, 43); נָתַן (“give,” vv. 11, 44); חֵק (“statue,” vv. 10, 45); אֲרֶץ (“land,” vv. 11, 44); עַמִּים (“people,” vv. 1, 44). Apart from the list noted above, there is also the distant parallelism created by נָחֵל (“inherit,” v. 11) and יָרַשׁ (“possess,” v. 44).

To summarize, the psalm consists of three stanzas (vv. 1-11, 12-22 and 24-45), and the first and the second stanza form two strophes (vv. 1-6, 7-11, and 12-15, 16-22 respectively), while the last stanza has three strophes (vv. 24-38, 39-41, 42-45). V. 23 serves as a hinge verse linking the first stanza and the second, and vv. 1-11 and 42-45 surround the whole psalm with many repeated words. Throughout the psalm, some of the repeated words are “land,” “servant” and “word (of promise)” which indicate the unity and purpose of the psalm. The first of the words occurs ten times (see above) across the psalm and “the entire psalm is an exploration of the patriarchal promise of the land” (Clifford 1979:422-423). The second key word “servant” occurs five times (vv. 6, 17, 25, 26, 42), while the third word “word [of promise]” occurs four

times (vv. 8, 19, 28, 42). Clifford (1979:423-424) points out the importance of the second and the third key words, as follows:

With the words 'servant' and 'chosen ones' of v. 6, one meets the first of the three key words that will be repeated significantly in each section of the poem... In every time of danger, there are servants, offspring of Abraham and Jacob, in whom the promise appears.... Within vv. 7-11, 'covenant,' 'oath,' and 'statute' are in parallelism with 'word,' each term expressing the divine promise of land in v. 11. In each of the sections of the recital of sacred history (vv. 12-45), the divine word of promise is referred to.

As implied, the distribution of these key words across the psalm and its poetic narrative movement as well as the close links between stanzas support the overall unity of the psalm.

Psalm 105 is often called 'a historical psalm', because it contains historical motifs. However, as far as its genre is concerned, the psalm belongs to the genre of the hymn (Westermann 1981:140; Kraus 1989:308-309). Vv. 1-6 consist of the call to praise Yahweh, vv. 7-11 provide the ground for the praise, namely Yahweh's covenant whereby the land is promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while the body of the psalm (vv. 12-44) praises and illustrates Yahweh's faithfulness in remembering his covenant from historical perspectives of Israel. Since the last verse of the psalm, v. 45, also ends with an imperative to praise, there is no doubt that the psalm is a hymn.



Psalm 106:1-48

- 1 תִּלְלוּנָהּ הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי-טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ
- 2 מִי יִמְלַל גְּבוּרֹת יְהוָה וְשָׁמִיעַ כָּל-תְּהִלָּתוֹ
- 3 אֲשֶׁר־י שׁוֹמְרֵי מִשְׁפָּט עֲשֵׂה צְדָקָה בְּכָל-עֵת
- 4 זָכְרֵנִי יְהוָה בְּרָצוֹן עִמָּךְ פְּקֹדֵי בִישׁוּעָתְךָ
- 5 לְרֵאוֹת בְּטוֹבַת בְּחִירֶיךָ לְשִׂמְחָה בְּשִׂמְחַת גּוֹיְךָ לְהִתְהַלֵּל עַמְּ-נִתְּלַתְךָ
- 6 חָטְאוּנוּ עַמְּ-אַבוֹתֵינוּ הִעֲוִינוּ הִרְשָׁעֵנוּ
- 7 אַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּמִּצְוֹת לֹא-הִשְׁכִּילוּ נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ לֹא זָכְרוּ
אֶת-רֹב חַסְדֶיךָ וְיִמְרוּ עֲלֵיָם בַּיּוֹם-סוּף
- 8 וַיֹּשִׁיעֵם לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ לְהוֹדִיעַ אֶת-גְּבוּרָתוֹ
- 9 וַיַּגְעַר בַּיּוֹם-סוּף וַיַּחֲרַב וַיִּוְלִיכֵם בַּתְּהִמּוֹת פַּמְדָּבָר
- 10 וַיֹּשִׁיעֵם מִיַּד שׁוּגָא וַיַּגְאֵלֵם מִיַּד אוֹיֵב
- 11 וַיִּכְסּוּ-מַיִם צְרִיָּהֶם אֶחָד מֵהֶם לֹא נֹתַר
- 12 וַיֶּאֱמִינוּ בַּדְּבָרִיו יִשְׂרָאֵל תְּהִלָּתוֹ
- 13 מִהָרֹד שָׁכְחוּ מַעֲשָׂיו לֹא-חָפוּ לַעֲצוֹתוֹ
- 14 וַיִּתְּאוּ תַּאֲוָה בַּמְדָּבָר וַיִּנְסוּ-אֵל בִּישִׁימוֹן
- 15 וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם שְׁאֲלָתָם וַיִּשְׁלַח כּוֹזֵן בְּנִפְשָׁם
- 16 וַיִּקְנְאוּ לַמֶּשֶׁה בַּמִּתְנַהֵּל לְאַהֲרֹן קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה
- 17 תִּפְתַּח-אָרְץ וַתִּבְלַע דָּתָן וַתִּכַּסַּע עַל-עֲרֵד אֲבִיכֶם
- 18 וַתִּבְעַר-אֵשׁ בַּעֲדָתָם לְהַבִּיחַ תְּלַהֲט רִשְׁעִים
- 19 יַעֲשׂוּ-עֵגֶל בְּחָרֵב וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לַמַּסֵּכָה
- 20 וַיִּמְרוּ אֶת-כְּבוֹדֵם בַּתְּבִנִית שׁוֹר אֲכַל עֵשֶׂב
- 21 שָׁכְחוּ אֵל מוֹשִׁיעֵם עֲשֵׂה גְדֻלּוֹת בְּמִצְרָיִם
- 22 נִפְלְאוֹת בְּאָרְץ חָם נוֹרְאוֹת עַל-יַם-סוּף
- 23 וַיֹּאמֶר לְהַשְׁמִידֵם לוֹאִי מִשֶּׁה בְּחִירוֹ עַמֵּד בַּפָּרָץ לִפְנֵינוּ לְהַשִּׁיב חַמָּהּ מִהַשְׁחִית
- 24 וַיִּמָּאֲסוּ בְּאָרְץ חֲמֹדָה לֹא-הֶאֱמִינוּ לְדַבְּרוֹ
- 25 וַיִּכְרְמוּ בְּאֶהְלִיָּהֶם לֹא שָׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה
- 26 וַיִּשְׂא יְדוֹ לָהֶם לְהַפִּיל אוֹתָם בַּמְדָּבָר
- 27 וַלְהַפִּיל זֶרְעָם בַּגּוֹיִם וּלְזָרוֹתָם בְּאֶרְצוֹת
- 28 וַיִּצְמְדוּ לְבַעַל פְּעוֹר וַיִּאֲכְלוּ זִבְחֵי מֵתִים
- 29 וַיִּכְעִסוּ בְּמַעַלְלֵיהֶם וַתִּפְרָצֶבֶם מִגִּפְּהַ
- 30 וַיַּעֲמֵד פִּינְחָס וַיַּפְלִל וַתַּעֲצַר הַמַּגִּפָּה
- 31 וַתִּחַשְׁבַּע לוֹ לְצְדָקָה לְדָר וְדָר עַד-עוֹלָם



32 וַיִּקְצִיפוּ עַל־מִי מְרִיבָה וַיִּרְעוּ לַמֶּשֶׁה בְּעַבּוּרָם
33 כִּי־הִמְרוּ אֶת־רוּחוֹ וַיִּבְטְאוּ בַשִּׁפְתָיו
34 לֹא־הִשְׁמִידוּ אֶת־הָעַמּוּם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר יְהוָה לָהֶם
35 וַיִּתְעַרְבוּ בִּגְוִיִּם וַיִּלְמְדוּ מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם
36 וַיַּעֲבְדוּ אֶת־עֲצָבֵיהֶם וַיִּהְיוּ לָהֶם לְמוֹקֵשׁ
37 וַיִּזְבְּחוּ אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם וְאֶת־בָּנוֹתֵיהֶם לְשָׂדִים
38 וַיִּשְׁפְּכוּ דָם נָקִי דַם־בְּנֵיהֶם וּבְנוֹתֵיהֶם
אֲשֶׁר זָבְחוּ לַעֲצָבֵי כְנָעַן וַתִּחַנֶּף הָאָרֶץ בְּדַמִּים
39 וַיִּטְמְאוּ בַמַּעֲשֵׂיהֶם וַיִּזְנוּ בַמַּעַלְלֵיהֶם
40 וַיִּחַר־אַף יְהוָה בְּעַמּוֹ וַיִּתְעַב אֶת־נַחְלָתוֹ
41 וַיִּתְּנֵם בְּיַד־גּוֹיִם וַיִּמְשְׁלוּ בָהֶם שׁוֹנְאֵיהֶם
42 וַיִּלְחָצוּם אוֹיְבֵיהֶם וַיִּכְנְעוּ תַחַת יָדָם
43 פְּעָמִים רַבּוֹת וַיִּצִלֵם וַהֲמָה יִמְרוּ בַעֲצָתָם וַיִּמְכּוּ בַעֲוֹנָם
44 וַיִּירָא בְּצַר לָהֶם בְּשָׂמְעוּ אֶת־הַנִּיחָם
45 וַיִּזְכֹּר לָהֶם בְּרִיתוֹ וַיִּנָּחֵם כְּלָב חֶסְדָּיו
46 וַיִּתֵּן אוֹחָם לְרַחֲמִים לִפְנֵי כָּל־שׂוֹבֵיהֶם
47 הוֹשִׁיעֵנו יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְקַבְּצֵנוּ
מִנַּגְיֵה גּוֹיִם לְהוֹדוֹת לְשֵׁם קְדוֹשְׁךָ לְהַשְׁתַּבַּח בַּתְּהִלָּתְךָ
48 בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־הָעוֹלָם
וְעַד הָעוֹלָם וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעַם אָמֵן הַלְלוּ־יְהוָה

Psalm 106 has three stanzas (vv. 1-5, 6-46 and 47-48). The first stanza can be divided into two strophes (vv. 1-3 and 4-5), the second stanza into ten strophes,³² and the third into two strophes (vv. 47 and 48).

The first strophe of the first stanza, vv. 1-2, constitutes a call to praise Yahweh. The imperative verb הַלְלוּ־יְהוָה (“praise the Lord”), which is an intensive form of praise (Anderson 1972:736), and the next

³² Vv. 6-7, 8-12, 13-15, 16-18, 19-23, 24-27, 28-31, 32-33, 34-42, and 43-46.

imperative verb *הֲרֹדוּ לַיהוָה* (“give thanks to Yahweh”), set a strong tone for the praise of Yahweh. The phrase *הַלְלֵנוּ יְהוָה* also occurs in the last verse of the psalm, v. 47, thus forming an inclusion surrounding the whole psalm. Though the body of the psalm consists of the history of Israel’s rebellion (vv. 13ff), the structural framework favours the hymnic genre because the history of Israel’s rebellion is set within theological contexts of praise, prayer, and a look at God as savior and judge.

Vv. 1-2 form a close link through the occurrence of the divine name *יְהוָה* and of the third-person singular suffix (“he is good,” “his love,” in v. 1; “all his praise,” in v. 2) referring to Yahweh. In addition, the expression *הֲרֹדוּ* (“give thanks”) in v. 1 corresponds to the one *כָּל-תְּהִלָּתוֹ* (“all his praise”) in v. 2, thus constituting another link.

V. 1b gives the reason for praise which is based on Yahweh’s goodness and love, and v. 2 starts with a rhetorical question *גְּבוּרֹת יְהוָה מִי יַמְלִל* (“who can tell the mighty doings of Yahweh”) which makes an emphatic statement. The question emphasizes that no one praises adequately the mighty doings of Yahweh. Weiser (1979:680) points out that “the guilty conscience of the community already casts on these verses a shadow which lies on the whole psalm.” V. 3 answers the question of v. 2 (Janzen 1965:215-26) by saying that those who are always just and righteous are qualified to praise Yahweh.

Vv. 4-5 form the second strophe of the first stanza. The use of the second person pronoun (“thy people,” “thy chosen ones,” “thy nations,” “thy heritage”) referring to Yahweh, and of the first-person singular pronoun (“I,” “me”) mentioning the speaker distinguishes this strophe from the previous verses, where the third-person singular and plural are used to describe Yahweh and his people. The close link

between vv. 4 and 5 is confirmed by the repetition of the second person suffix and of the end rhythm (נחלקך, גויך, בחיריך, בישועתך, עמך) which occurs at the end of each stich, and the correspondence of the phrase עמך (“your people”) in v. 4 to the one גויך (“your nation”) in v. 5 strengthens further this link. After summoning people to praise Yahweh in vv. 1-3, in vv. 4-5 the psalmist prays on his own account, identifying himself with a member of the covenant people, as found in the following phrases: “your people... your chosen ones... your nation... your inheritance.” In these verses the psalmist’s appeal to Yahweh for salvation is effectively delivered by the reference to the covenant relationship between Yahweh and his people (i.e., “thy people,” thy chosen ones,” “thy nations,” and “thy heritage”) and it is strongly emphasized by the repetition of the infinitives (להקח, לשמח, לראות) in v. 5 which functions to strengthen the hope for salvation by Yahweh.

Vv. 4-5 form a link with the previous verses. The word הלל (“praise”) occurs in vv. 1, 5, and the phrase טוב (“he is good”) in v. 1 corresponds to the word טובה (“prosperity”) in v. 5. In addition, the anticipation of salvation in v. 5 corresponds to the praise of the people in vv. 1-2 which expect Yahweh’s salvational acts.

Vv. 6-7 consist of the first strophe of the second stanza. These verses describe the sins of the fathers and of the people designated as “we”, while vv. 8-12 deal with the mighty acts of God which have been performed through the history of Israel. The former is distinguished from the latter by this feature.

V. 6a describes the people’s solidarity with the fathers in committing sins. The three verbs (הרשענו, הערינו, הטאנו) in v. 6 are synonymous and their use with similar meanings serves to reinforce the

depth and extent of the people's sins and also to emphasize how terribly they have sinned. V. 7 again emphasizes the sins of the fathers by the repetition of the negative לא and by means of the verb "rebelled" (וַיִּקְרָר) which is reminiscent of the disobedient act associated with the exodus event. These verses, vv. 6-7, are linked by the u-asonance occurring in both verses (וַיִּקְרָר, זָכָר, הַשְּׂפִיל, אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, הִרְשָׁעָנוּ, הָעֲוִינוּ, אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, הִטָּאָנוּ) and by means of a chiasmus in vv. 6a and 7a, as the following shows:

	B	A
V. 6a:	עַמ־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ	הִטָּאָנוּ
	A	B
V. 7a:	לֹא-הִשְׂפִילוּ	אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמַצְרַיִם

The fact that the fathers' sins are also those of the present generation is established by the close link of vv. 6-7 shown above, and the generation, listening to the fathers' disobedience in the following verses, "feels itself equally as responsible for the sins of the fathers as the fathers were" (Coats 1968:224).

Vv. 6-7 show a connection with the preceding verses, since 'we' as the subject of v. 6 recalls the people described in vv. 4-5 who are called "thy people" or "thy nation," and the use of the second person singular suffix in v. 7 ("thy wonderful works" and "thy steadfast love") referring to Yahweh is also found in vv. 4-5. In content, vv. 6-7 are tied to the previous verses, since in these verses the confession of sin signifies the prayer for the restoration and blessing described in vv. 4-5.

Vv. 8-12, consisting of the second strophe, review Yahweh's past benevolent intervention on behalf of his people, which has been the basis for the summons to praise in v. 1. Westermann (1981:55, 57) points out that these verses function as a confession of trust and an appeal for God's intervention.

The use of the waw consecutive at the beginning of v. 8 indicates a connection with the previous verse. The use of the third-person singular pronoun (“he”) referring to Yahweh as the subject of verbs in vv. 8-9 and of the third-person singular suffix (“his words” and “his praise”) in v. 12, also referring to him, bind these verses into a unity. In addition, there is alliteration in the following words (וַיִּזְכְּרוּם, וַיִּשְׁיַעֵם, in vv. 8-10; וַיִּגְאֹלֵם, וַיִּגְעַר, in vv. 9 and 10), which also serves to link vv. 8-12 together. The word יִשַׁע (“save”) in v. 8 is repeated in v. 10 and is also synonymous with the word גָּאֵל (“deliver”) in v. 10. In v. 9 the phrase בְּיַם־סוּף (“in the Red Sea”) parallel with תְּהוֹמוֹת (“depth”) corresponds to the word מַיִם (“water”) in v. 11, while in v. 10 the word שׁוֹנֵא (“foe”) parallel with אֹרֵיב (“enemy”) is in symmetry with the word צָרֵי־הֶם (“their adversaries”) in v. 11. Of vv. 8-12, v. 10 is placed at the centre, where the enemy and Yahweh’s saving acts (“save” and “deliver”) are mentioned twice. The repetition of these contents strongly emphasizes the acts of Yahweh’s salvation. Those who were saved from the hands of the foe in v. 10 are the ones whom Yahweh led through the depth in v. 9 (cf., -m suffix in v. 9 and v. 10), while the enemy described in v. 10 is the adversaries in v. 11. Thus, v. 10 is related to both verses 9 and 11, and v. 9 is linked with v. 11 by the occurrence of the words תְּהוֹמוֹת “the deep” (also, בְּיַם־סוּף) and מַיִם “waters,” which are paralleled. In contrast to this, v. 8 is related to v. 12, since in both verses the third-person pronoun suffix “his” (“his name’s sake” and “his mighty power” in v. 8; “his words” and “his praise” in v. 12) indicating Yahweh is found, and the acts in v. 8 whereby Yahweh saved the faithful for his name’s sake were praised in v. 12. In addition, as noted, v. 8 is tied to v. 10 by the occurrence of the word יִשַׁע “save” in

both verses. In sum, the following structure is drawn:

A: שמר למען שמו (“for his name’s sake,” v. 8)

B: תהום (“deep,” v. 9)

C: ישע (“save,” v. 10a)

C’: גאל (“deliver,” v. 10b)

B’: מים (“water,” v. 12)

A’: תהלחו (“his praise,” v. 12)

In light of the structure drawn above, the psalmist states that for his name’s sake Yahweh delivered the faithful from the hand of the enemy.

Vv. 13-15 are composed of the third strophe, which begins with the reference to the sins of the Israelites (vv. 13-14) and ends with a punishment (v. 15). Vv. 13-14 are linked by the occurrence of the third person plural pronoun “they” referring to the faithful, while v. 15 emphasizes Yahweh’s action because of their disobedience, taking the third person singular pronoun “he” in reference to Yahweh as a subject.

Vv. 16-18 consists of the fourth strophe. V. 16 refers to sin, while vv. 17-18 deal with punishment. These verses are reminiscent of the incidents recorded in Num 16.

In v. 16 the words “Moses” and “Aaron” are in parallel and the verb וַיִּקְנְאוּ (“when men were jealous”) functions as a double-duty serving both stichs. V. 17 b and c are linked with v. 17a by means of the waw consecutive ׀. In v. 17 an ellipse occurs, since the subject of the verbs וַתִּבְלַע (“swallowed”) and וַתִּכְסֶה (“covered”) is absent and instead the subject of the first verb, “earth” functions as that of the following two verbs. This is another way of binding the verse into a close sub-unit. V. 17 is linked with v. 18 by the occurrence of the word עִרְבָה (“company”) in both verses, and the latter verse complements the

thought of the former. V. 18a and b are structured in parallel, and the word רָשָׁעִים (“the wicked”) in v. 18b is paralleled with the יְהוָה קָדוֹשׁ (“the holy one of Yahweh”) in v. 16. These verses, vv. 16-18, form a close unit in dealing with the incidents narrated in Num 16.

Vv. 19-23 make up the fifth strophe. These verses are linked by content and style. In v. 19a the word עֵגֶל (“a calf”) parallel with מַסְכָּה (“a molten image”) in 19b, corresponds to the one שׁוֹר (“an ox”) in v. 20, and the word מַסְכָּה is also synonymous with the one תְּבַנִּית (“image”) in v. 20. The word כְּבוֹד (“glory”) in 20a forms an antithetical parallel with the words עֵגֶל (“a calf”) and מַסְכָּה (“a molten image”) in v. 19 as well as the phrase בְּתַבְנִית שׁוֹר אֹכֵל עֵשֶׂב (“the image of an ox that eats grass”) in v. 20b. In contrast to this, the word כְּבוֹד in v. 20 corresponds to the one גְּדֹלוֹת (“great thing”) in v. 21b which is also paralleled with the words נִפְלְאוֹת (“wonderous works”) in v. 22a and נִרְאָאוֹת (“terrible things”) in v. 22b. V. 22 has no verb, but the verb עָשָׂה in v. 21 functions as a double-duty serving both stichs of v. 22. The parallelism made by the synonymous phrases גְּדֹלוֹת בְּמִצְרַיִם (“great things in Egypt”) // נִפְלְאוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ חָם (“wondrous works in the land of Ham”) // נִרְאָאוֹת עַל-יַמ־סוּף (“terrible things by the Red Sea”) in vv. 21b-22 binds these verses together. In addition, vv. 19 and 20 share the word עָשָׂה (“make”), and vv. 19-22 all have the preposition בְּ, which links them together.

V. 23 refers to Moses’ intercession for the sins of the Israelites which are mentioned in vv. 19-22. The *waw* consecutive ׀ of the word וַיֹּאמֶר at the beginning of the verse, which could be interpreted as “so that” or “therefore,” serves to link this verse with the previous verse. The repetition of the words לְהַשְׁמִיךָ (“destroy”) and מִהִשְׁחִיתָ (“destroy”)

with the same meaning strongly emphasizes the idea of punishment, but Moses' special intervention is emphasized by the description of Moses as "his chosen one" (בְּחֵיבֵר) and as an intercessor in front of Yahweh, which is reminiscent of Exod 32:11-14 where he pleaded for Israel.

Vv. 24-27 constitute the sixth strophe. These verses deal with the sequence of sin-punishment and are linked together by content and style. The negative לֹא occurs in every second stich of vv. 24 and 25, and the word דְּבַרְוֹ ("his promise") in 24 corresponds to the phrase קוֹל יְהוָה ("voice of Yahweh") in v. 25. Vv. 24 and 25 both mention the sins of the disobedient people in the wilderness and are structured to form a synonymous parallelism. In vv. 24-25 the third-person plural suffix "they" is taken as a subject in order to refer to the disobedient people, whereas in vv. 26-27 the third-person singular suffix "he" indicating Yahweh is used as a subject. This feature distinguishes the former from the latter, but the use of the *waw* consecutive וַ at the beginning of v. 26, which can introduce the result of the previous verse with such meaning as "so that" or "therefore," indicates a close connection with the previous verse.

Vv. 26-27 have the same form as that found in vv. 21-22. The first stich of v. 26 is followed by three parallel stichs in vv. 26b-27, each of which begins with an infinitive. Vv. 26 and 27 share the word נֶפֶל and the word "wilderness" in 26 corresponds to "lands" in v. 27. The reference to place also occurs in vv. 24 and 25 where the "pleasant land" (בְּאֶרֶץ חֲמֻדָּה) and "tents" (אֹהֶל) are mentioned. The "tents" in v. 25 are those "in the wilderness" (בְּאֶרֶץ צוֹר) described in v. 27 and the "pleasant land" in 24 stands opposite to the "lands" in v. 27. The first two places ("pleasant land" and "tents") mean the places which Yahweh

protected, while the last two places (“wilderness” and “over the lands”) indicate Yahweh’s punishment (Auffret 1994:82). Thus, the reference to these places creates a certain relationship between these verses, vv. 24-27.

The seventh strophe is made up of vv. 28-31, which deal with the incidents at Baal-Peor alluded to in Num 25:1-8. This strophe is very loosely linked, but all four verses allude to the sins of the Israelites which brought out a plague and to the act of Phinehas which averted the plague. Vv. 28-29a are linked by taking the third-person plural suffix “they” as a subject and v. 29b takes the third-person feminine suffix as a subject which refers to the word “plague.” V. 30 is related to v. 29 by picking up the word “plague” from the latter verse as well as by stating the act of Phinehas which responds to the plague in v. 29. Just as Moses acted as an intercessor in v. 23, so Phinehas does in v. 30. V. 31 is also linked with v. 30 by evaluating the act of Phinehas described in the latter as “righteous” (יָדָוּתוֹ). Thus, vv. 28-31 are closely linked together by a certain thought pattern, though they lack a clear structural pattern.

Vv. 32-33 consist of the eighth strophe. This strophe is linked together by content. Both verses, vv. 32-33, deal with sin and punishment by alluding to the incident recorded in Exod 17:1-7 and Num 20:8-13. In this strophe the association of the Israelites’ sin with Moses is stated: the sin of the people caused that of Moses. However, here “the psalmist expresses his sympathy for Moses by stressing his provocation” (Allen 1983:49).

Vv. 34-42, composed of the ninth strophe, review a long history of Israel’s sins and their punishment which reflects the style in the Book of Judges. This strophe forms a close link by content and style. Vv. 34-

35 state the disobedience to Yahweh's command and the following verses refer to the results of this disobedience, namely, the worship of idols (vv. 36-39) - Yahweh's anger (v. 40) - the oppression by enemies (vv. 41-42). The occurrence of the *waw* consecutive ׀ at the beginning of each verse binds vv. 33-42 into a unity. In v. 34 the word הַעַמִּים ("the people") is synonymous with the word גּוֹיִם ("the nations") in v. 35, while the expression לֹא־הִשְׁמִידוּ ("they did not destroy") in v. 34 corresponds to the ones יִתְעַרְבוּ ("they mingled") in v. 35 and יָלְמְדוּ ("they learned") in v. 35. In v. 37 the expression יִזְבְּחוּ ("they sacrificed") echoes the one וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֱת־עֲצָבֵיהֶם ("they worshipped their idols") in v. 36, and vv. 38-39 exemplify the statements of vv. 36-37 in greater detail. In v. 38 an anadiplosis occurs, since the word דָּם ("blood") ends the first hemistich and the second hemistich starts with it. Through this poetic device the psalmist emphasizes the shedding of innocent blood, but this is further stressed, because the third hemistich ends with its plural form "bloods" (בְּדָמַיִם) which strongly intensifies its meaning. In v. 39 the phrases בְּמַעֲשֵׂיהֶם ("by their acts") and בְּמַעֲלָלֵיהֶם ("by their doings") are synonymous, while יִטְמְאוּ ("they became unclean") and יִזְנוּ ("played the harlot") are paralleled. Vv. 34-40 show a close unity by way of a chiasmic structure (Auffret 1994:84), as follows:

הַעַמִּים (v. 34)
 יְהוָה (v. 34)
 מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם (v. 35)
 עֲצָבֵיהֶם (v. 36)
 וַיַּזְבְּחוּ (v. 37)
 אֶת־בְּנוֹתֵיהֶם לְשָׂדִים (v. 37)
 דָּם (v. 38a)
 דָּם (v. 38b)
 בְּגִיהֶם וּבְנוֹתֵיהֶם (v. 38b)
 זָבָחוּ (v. 38)
 לְעֲצָבֵי (v. 38)

בְּמַעֲשֵׂיהֶם (v. 39)
יְהִיָּה (v. 40)
בְּעַמּוֹ (v. 40)

Vv. 41-42 refer to the oppression by the enemies which is followed by the consequences of the acts stated in the previous verses. The connection with the previous verses is established by the repetition of words: the word גּוֹיִם (“nations”) occurs in vv. 35 and 41 and the root of the verb יִכְנָעוּ in v. 42 echoes the word כָּנַעַן in v. 38. Vv. 41-42 form a link by the repetition of the word יָד (“hand”) and by a chiasmic structure, as the following shows:

A	B
V. 41: נִיחָנְסוּ בְיַד-גּוֹיִם	וַיִּמְשְׁלוּ בָהֶם שְׂנְאֵיהֶם
B	A
V. 42: נִילְחָצוּם אוֹיְבֵיהֶם	וַיִּכְנָעוּ תַּחַת יָדָם

The expression “those who hated them ruled over them” in the B of v. 41 forms a parallel with the one “their enemies oppressed them” in the B of v. 42, while גּוֹיִם בְּיַד- (“into the hand of the nations”) in the B of v. 42, while תַּחַת יָדָם (“under their power”) in the A of v. 41 parallels תַּחַת יָדָם (“under their power”) in the A of v. 42.

Vv. 43-46, constituting the tenth strophe, describe Yahweh’s forgiveness which binds them together into a thematic unity. The following expressions, which show Yahweh’s forgiveness and love, tie all these verses into a thematic unity: “he delivered them” (v. 43); “he regarded their distress” (v. 44); “he remembered...his covenant” (v. 45); “he showed them compassion” (v. 46). In addition, the use of the preposition ל in vv. 44a-46b serves to link all these verses together.

Vv. 47-48, which comprise the last stanza, conclude the whole

psalm. V. 47 ends with a prayer for Yahweh to save his people from the exile (Dahood 1970:76; Kraus 1989:322), while v. 48 ends with praise. The expression “our God” in v. 47 corresponds to “God of Israel” in v. 48, and the two verses share liturgical terminologies like הלה // הלל (“praise); ידה // ברך (“thank” and “bless”), which are paralleled.

To summarize, the psalm comprises three stanzas (vv. 1-5; 6-46 and 47-48). The first stanza, comprising two strophes, serves as an introduction to the whole psalm, while the second stanza containing ten strophes reviews the long history of apostasy and judgement. The final stanza contains prayer (v. 47) and praise (v. 48). The whole psalm is framed by vv. 1 and 48 which contain the calls to praise, and the section (vv. 13-39) describing the long history of disobedience are surrounded by the sections mentioning Yahweh’s acts (vv. 6-12 and 40-46).

Concerning the genre of the psalm, Allen (1983:50) regards it as “a communal complaint strongly marked by hymnic features”, while Kraus (1989:316-318) sees it as a hymn. Since vv. 1-2 begin with a summons to praise and the last verse of the psalm also ends with a hymnic introit, it is likely that the psalm can be regarded as a hymn.

As many scholars have noted, this psalm is closely associated with the exilic or post-exilic situation. The prayer “Save us, O Yahweh our God, and gather us from the nations” clearly reflects such a situation.

Psalms 105 and 106 can be regarded as a twin psalm and they present two views of history: the former presents history as divine acts of God, emphasizing what he has done for Israel, while the latter provides examples of rebellion as warnings to the contemporary generation (cf. Westermann 1981:238-242).