

The Reception of Psalm 118 in the New Testament:

Application of a “New Exodus Motif”?

by

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SUMMARY

Ps 118 represents a “Dankfestliturgie” and is the climax of the so-called “Egyptian Hallel” (Pss 113-118). In the Jewish tradition, Ps 118 was used liturgically and eschatologically. Ps 118 is also found in the NT (the Synoptic Gospels, John, Acts, the Pauline Epistles, the General Epistles and Revelation), as well as in the Gospel of Thomas and the Church Fathers (Barnabas and 1 Clement).

The Synoptic writers concentrate their attention on Ps 118:22-23 and Ps 118:25-26. The Ps 118:22-23 citation follows the Greek text of Ps 117 (LXX) word by word and is applied christologically in its new context. By means of the Psalm quotation, Jesus is identified as Isaiah’s Suffering Servant who brings the New Exodus to his people and the κεφαλὴν γωνίας which will build Isaiah’s eschatological New Temple, the messianic Israel, through his suffering and vindication (Mk 12:10-11 par.). Unlike Ps 118 (117 LXX):22-23, the citation from Ps 118 (117 LXX):25-26 gets various twists, but is also reinterpreted christologically (Mk 11:9 par.). Here, Jesus is described as the messianic king who comes to lead Isaiah’s New Exodus.

Compared with the Synoptics, which focus on a few verses of Ps 118 (117 LXX) (vv 22-23, 25-26), the fourth Gospel employs Ps 118 (117 LXX) on a broader scale (vv 5, 10-12, 19-20, 21, 24, 25-26). John cites Ps 118 (117 LXX) only once in Jn 12:13 and gives his own theological colouring by inserting the phrase, “the king of Israel” into the original context. Through the title which forms an inclusio with Nathanael’s confession (Jn 1:49) at the introduction of the Gospel, the phrase “the coming one” and the quotation from Zch 9:9, here, John describes Jesus as the messianic king who enters Jerusalem to bring the New Exodus to his people.

Since the Pauline literature does not quote Ps 118 explicitly, but it alludes to the

stone text of Ps 118 (117 LXX):22 at least twice (Rm 9:31-32 and Eph 2:20), and applies “the stone” to “Christ,” it seems that there is an underlying possibility of the New Exodus Motif in Paul’s use of Ps 118.

In Hebrews, Ps 118(117 LXX) is quoted in relation with the Jewish feasts, i.e. the Sabbatical Year, the Tabernacles and the Passover which all are closely associated with the Exodus and New Exodus Motifs. Here the writer applies the words quoted from Ps 118 (117 LXX):6 to the new context. Originally Ps 118:6 expressed Yahweh’s faithfulness in defeating Israel’s enemies in war, but now Hebrews uses it to urge trust in God’s financial and material providence.

As many references from Is 53 in 1 Peter show, its focus is on Jesus Christ as the archetypal righteous sufferer who is both the Christians’ Saviour and Example. Accordingly, by using Ps 118 (117 LXX):22, which is sandwiched between two Isaianic quotations, 1 Peter seems to describe Jesus as Isaiah’s righteous servant whose task was to bring about the New Exodus to his church through his suffering and death.

It, therefore, became clear during the course of this study that there is a close link between the quotations of Ps 118 (117 LXX) in the NT and the “New Exodus Motif.”

KEY WORDS

- Psalm 118 (117 LXX)
- Quotation
- Allusion
- Cornerstone
- Hosanna
- Exodus Motif
- New Exodus Motif
- Exile
- Restoration
- The Coming One

ABBREVIATIONS

1. General abbreviations

ca.	circa, about (with dates)
cf.	<i>confer</i> , compare
diss.	dissertation
ed(s)	edition; edited by, editor(s)
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> , for example
ET	English translation
etc.	<i>et cetera</i>
i.e.	<i>id est</i> , that is
LXX	Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament)
MT	Masoretic Text (standard Hebrew text of the Old Testament)
NA	Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
par. or =	parallel
Pss	Psalms
v or vv	verse or verses
vol(s)	volume(s)
§	section or paragraph number

2. Abbreviations for books of the Bible with Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Rabbinics

Gn	Genesis	Lk	Luke
Ex	Exodus	Jn	John
Lv	Leviticus	Ac	Acts
Nm	Numbers	Rm	Romans
Dt	Deuteronomy	1 Cor	1 Corinthians
Jos	Joshua	2 Cor	2 Corinthians
Jdg	Judges	Gl	Galatians
Ruth	Ruth	Eph	Ephesians
1 Sm	1 Samuel	Phlp	Philippians

2 Sm	2 Samuel	Col	Colossians
1 Ki	1 Kings	1 Th	1 Thessalonians
2 Ki	2 Kings	2 Th	2 Thessalonians
1 Chr	1 Chronicles	1 Tm	1 Timothy
2 Chr	2 Chronicles	2 Tm	2 Timothy
Ezr	Ezra	Tt	Titus
Nh	Nehemiah	Phlm	Philemon
Es	Esther	Hb	Hebrews
Job	Job	Ja	James
Ps	Psalms	1 Pt	1 Peter
Pr	Proverbs	2 Pt	2 Peter
Ec	Ecclesiastes	1 Jn	1 John
Ss	Song Of Songs	2 Jn	2 John
Is	Isaiah	3 Jn	3 John
Jr	Jeremiah	Jude	Jude
Lm	Lamentations	Rv	Revelation
Ezk	Ezekiel	1 En	1 Enoch
Dn	Daniel	1 Macc	1 Maccabees
Hs	Hosea	2 Macc	2 Maccabees
Jl	Joel	2 Bar	2 Baruch
Am	Amos	4 Ezr	4 Ezra
Ob	Obadiah	Bar	The Book of Baruch
Jnh	Jonah	Ezk.Trag	Ezekiel the Tragedian
Mi	Micah	Jub	The Book of Jubilees
Nah	Nahum	Pss.Sol	Psalms of Solomon
Hab	Habakkuk	Tob	Tobit
Zph	Zephaniah	Midr. Ps	The Midrash on Psalms
Hg	Haggai		
Zch	Zechariah		
Ml	Malachi		
Mt	Matthew		
Mk	Mark		

3. Writings of Church Fathers

Barn

Epistula Barnabae

1 Cle *Epistula Clementis ad Corinthios*

4. Dead sea scrolls

1Q, 4Q etc.	Numbered caves of Qumran, followed by abbreviation or number of document
4QFlor	4Q florilegium
4QPs ^a	First copy of Psalm from Qumran Cave 4
4QPs ^b	Second copy of Psalm from Qumran Cave 4
11QPs ^a	First copy of Psalm from Qumran Cave 11
1QS	28/ Serek hayyaad or Rule of the Community, Manual of Discipline
CD	Cairo (Genizah text of the) Damascus Document / Rule

5. Abbreviations of commonly used periodicals and reference works

AJJS	Australian Journal of Jewish Studies
Ang	<i>Angelos</i>
Apeb	<i>Acta patristica et byzantina</i>
ATJ	<i>Ashland Theological Journal</i>
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDB	<i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (F. Brown, S.R. Driver, and C.A. Briggs)</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BS	<i>Bibliotheca-sacra</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CTM	<i>Concordia Theological Monthly</i>
Eter	<i>Etudes theologiques et religieuses</i>
EvQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
ExpT	<i>Expository Times</i>
GNS	Good News Studies

<i>HeyJ</i>	<i>The Heythrop Journal</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>IVP</i>	InterVarsity Press
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JEPTA</i>	<i>Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSOTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>Jud</i>	<i>Judaism</i>
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
<i>NICNT</i>	The New International Commentary on the New Testament
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NovTSup</i>	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essay</i>
<i>QR</i>	<i>Quarterly Review</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
<i>SBT</i>	Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>SE</i>	<i>Studia Evangelica</i>
<i>SEA</i>	<i>Svensk Exegetisk Arsbok</i>
<i>Sem</i>	<i>Semeia</i>
<i>STDJ</i>	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
<i>SWJT</i>	<i>Southwestern Journal of Theology</i>
<i>Tex</i>	<i>Textus</i>
<i>Th</i>	<i>Theology</i>
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TSK</i>	<i>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</i>
<i>TynB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>UBS</i>	United Bible Societies
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminister Theological Journal</i>
<i>WUNT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

ZNW

Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft

ZTK

Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

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