

Old Testament Worship – A Case Study of Psalm 24

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1. Introduction

It is generally assumed that worship in the temple in Jerusalem was dialogical in character. The Psalter contains clear examples of instances where the audience (often referred to as “Israel”) is urged to respond to or to repeat what has been said by an individual speaker or a group of speakers. It is therefore no wonder that sequences of questions and answers in a psalm would also be interpreted as evidence that it was used in a dialogical liturgy. Psalm 24 provides a good example: verses 7-10 of this psalm are commonly accepted to have been part of an “entrance liturgy” in which the Ark of the Covenant played a role. Hans-Joachim Kraus writes on these verses:

A group of cultic participants is standing at the gates of the sanctuary. It wants to usher in the ‘king of glory,’ Yahweh Sebaoth. This group—obviously gathered for a procession—is twice addressed with the question: ‘Who is the king of glory?’ This involves a cultic antiphonal song, a liturgical ceremonial, which doubtlessly is connected with an entrance of the holy ark to the temple in Jerusalem.
(Kraus 1988:312)

Kraus thinks that the psalm is constituted from individual pieces of liturgy that all together accompanied the cultic act of bringing in the ark at the sanctuary (Kraus 1988:312). Hossfeld (Hossfeld & Zenger 1993:156-157) also accepts that Ps 24:7-10 once formed part of a gate liturgy, but he argues convincingly that the psalm in its present form is a compilation of heterogeneous elements. According to him, it consists of four separate parts: A hymnic-sounding introduction (1-2), a so-called entrance torah (3-5), an appropriation of the blessing (6), and the already mentioned liturgy at the gates (7-10). He (Hossfeld 1993:157) cites the repetition of the verb *nšā* (to lift up, raise, carry) in verses 4, 5, 7(x2) and 9(x2), and the unusual constructions in which it occurs in verses 4 and 5, as indications that the “entrance torah” (3-5) was formulated to comply with the (already existing) “entrance liturgy” (7-10).

The “entrance torah” in verses 3-5 displays similarities with Ps 15 and Isaiah 33 and as such it would seem to reflect another liturgy (or a different part of the same liturgy, according to some), one which would have served to regulate the entrance of worshippers to the sacred precinct. But, as was already mentioned, Kraus (1988:312) has no problem in seeing this section as part of the same liturgy which is reflected in verses 7-10. Prior to the entrance to the sacred area, the priests would ask about the conditions for admittance to the temple and would then provide the answer themselves.

Other investigators also think of a dialogical liturgical setting for verses 3-5, but would assign the roles to other speakers: A priest asks the questions, and the prospective worshipper needs to provide the answer before being admitted. James L. Crenshaw (2001:158) notes on such an interpretation:

This remarkable unit has been viewed as an entrance liturgy specifying conditions for participating in cultic activities at Jerusalem. According to this interpretation, a priest asks the question in verse three and a prospective worshipper answers in the following verse. A satisfactory response then evokes a priestly permission to proceed, together with a prayer paving the way for admission into the holy place (vv. 5-6).

But Crenshaw himself is sceptic about such an interpretation where permission to enter would be the focus of verses 3-5. He (Crenshaw 2001:158) says that, if the purpose of such liturgies was to determine who could participate in the Yahwistic cult, this one would fail miserably, since its stipulations for conduct cover matters which cannot be evaluated objectively. As a liturgy, these verses would rather have served as a warning to the worshipper that standing before the Lord should not be taken lightly (Crenshaw 2001:159).

I think Crenshaw is right. What is more, we should perhaps also reconsider the function of the two parallel questions in the "entrance liturgy" in verses 7-10 of the psalm. Psalm 24 contains four questions, two in the so-called "entrance torah," and two in the "entrance liturgy," and answers are provided to all the questions. We should be careful not to interpret questions and answers automatically as indications of an antiphonal or dialogical liturgical setting. Even if the questions were meant to be real questions, requiring a response, they could still serve a rhetorical purpose rather than a regulatory one. In its present form, Psalm 24 is a literary text, and questions and answers often constitute a literary technique of emphasis. Authors could and often would say something by formulating a statement in the form of a question. In this short article I propose to argue that, whether they were originally supposed to be used antiphonally or not, the questions in Psalm 24 should be understood primarily as rhetorical devices which were used for the purpose of emphasis. They serve to define who the true believer is and to emphasize the honour of Yahweh, the Lord who is coming to his temple in Jerusalem.

2. Psalm 24 as a Literary Composition.

The following translation of Psalm 24 is offered for the sake of the ensuing discussion:

			Of David. A psalm.
I	A	1	The Lord's is the earth and her fullness, the world and all who dwell in her;
		2	for he has founded her upon the seas, and on the rivers he has established her.
	B	3	Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord, and who shall rise in his holy place?
		4	He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not long for worthless idols,

			and does not swear deceitfully.
	C	5	He will carry a blessing from the Lord
			and justice from the God of his help.
		6	This is the generation of those who seek him,
			who search your face, namely Jacob. Selah.
II	D	7	Lift up, gates, your heads,
			and be raised, eternal doors,
			so that he can come, the king of splendour.
		8	Who is this king of splendour?
			The Lord, powerful and mighty,
			the Lord, mighty in battle.
	E	9	Lift up, gates, your heads,
			yes, lift up, eternal doors,
			so that he can come, the king of splendour.
		10	Who is he, this king of splendour?
			The Lord of armies,
			he is the king of splendour. Selah.

In the stichometric layout of the psalm above, the first column demarcates the stanzas (I and II), the second the strophes (A to E), and the third the verse lines (1 to 10). In this psalm the verse lines coincide with the verse numbers, with the exception of the heading which falls outside the poetic structure.

The psalm seems to contain two or three unrelated themes: The Lord is depicted as the creator and possessor of the world (strophe A), questions are asked about the conditions for entry into the temple (strophes B and C), and the imminent entry of the Lord into the city or temple is announced (strophes D and E). Continuity is provided by repetition of the name of the Lord, "Yahweh," and by the theme of ascent/entry to the temple. Strophe A can be seen as the reason for the introduction of the theme of a visit to the temple, therefore strophes B and C are included with A to form stanza I.

The name "Yahweh," "the Lord," indeed formed an important structuring element for the poet who composed the psalm, or who brought diverse pieces of poetry together to create the end result. In stanza I the divine name is found in the *first* colon of each of the strophes (A, B, and C). It therefore serves a segmenting as well as a connecting function. In stanza II, the divine name is also found in each of the strophes, but here it is encountered in the *last* verse line of each strophe (D and E). In this stanza, the repetition of the command to the gates to "lift up" their "heads," and the parallel structure of the two strophes in general serve

to demarcate them as strophes, since repetition is primarily a structuring device in Hebrew poetry (cf. Watson 1986:279).

The two questions of stanza I further occur in an internal parallelism in the middle strophe and therefore seem to form the focus of the stanza: Who is the person who has the privilege of standing in a close relationship with the Lord, creator-possessor of the whole world? The process of defining the characteristics of such a person is brought to a climax with the help of the demonstrative pronoun "this" in verse 6. Here the acceptable individual worshipper is finally identified as the representative of a group of people, the "generation of those who seek" the Lord (see also Auffret 1990:103; Van der Lugt 2006:261).

The two questions of stanza II, in contrast, occur in an external parallel between strophes D and E, in both instances towards the end of the strophe, where they serve to enhance the technique of delayed identification. The name Yahweh appears as the answer to these questions, and this name is consequently found at the end of strophe D (twice) and also at the end of strophe E. Its occurrence at the beginning of strophe A and at the end of strophe E simultaneously constitutes a framing of the psalm, forming an "inclusion," thereby emphasizing the importance of "the Lord" in the composition.

In the case of stanza II, identification thus also reaches a climax at the end of the stanza, similar to stanza I. Compare "This is ..." in verse 6a with "he is ..." in verse 10c. The poet further makes use of *Steigerung* (intensification): the question "Who is this king of splendour" (v. 8) is expanded into "Who is *he*, this king of splendour" (with repeated use of the demonstrative pronoun, v. 10); while the answer "the Lord, powerful and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle" (v. 8) is expanded into "the Lord of armies, *he* is the king of splendour" (with repetition of a part of the question and emphatic use of the personal pronoun "he" in the very last colon). The focus of stanza II thus seems to be explicit identification of Yahweh, the Lord, as the king of splendour. A similar conclusion is reached by Van der Lugt (2006:261).

If what has been said above is represented graphically, the following scheme appears:

I	A	1	The Lord
		2	for he ...
	B	3	<u>Who</u> shall ... the Lord ... and <u>who</u> shall ...?
		4	He who has ... and ..., who does not ... and does not ...
	C	5	He will ... from the Lord
		6	<i>This</i> is ...
II	D	7	Lift up ... and be raised ... the king of splendour.
		8	<u>Who</u> is <i>this</i> king of splendour? The Lord ... the

			Lord ...
	E	9	Lift up ... and lift up ... the king of splendour.
		10	Who is he, <i>this</i> king of splendour? The Lord ... he is the king of splendour.

The first stanza thus centres on “identification” of the true believer, while the second stanza centres on “identification” of the true “king of splendour.” Identification does not, however, imply that the identities of these persons are unknown. It rather implies that their profiles should be delineated and their characteristics highlighted. Juxtaposing the two stanzas then serves to establish a close connection between the Lord and his worshippers; especially since strophe A has already identified the Lord as the possessor of the whole earth and all who dwell in it. He is shown to be the rightful owner of the earth because he is the creator and sustainer of all creation. This hymnic praise of the Lord in verses 1 and 2 is later echoed in stanza II in the title “king of splendour.”

The structure of each stanza in Psalm 24 and the parallels between the two stanzas thus suggest that the function of the questions in both main segments is that of emphasis, and not enquiry for regulatory purposes. Questions which serve to emphasise can be described as rhetorical devices, and it is on the pragmatics of such techniques that I would like to focus subsequently.

3. The Questions in Psalm 24 as a Rhetorical Technique.

Strictly speaking, a rhetorical question is “the posing of a question which requires no answer since either the speaker or the listener (or even both of them) already knows the answer” (Watson 1986:338). In a typical rhetorical question, the implied answer would often simply be “yes” or “no,” so that the question would be tantamount to an emphatic affirmation (if the answer is “yes”) or an emphatic denial (if the answer is “no”). A broader definition of a rhetorical question would be, however, that it is any question asked not for information but to produce effect (Allen 1984:641). While a question is usually employed to extract information, a rhetorical question is used to convey or call attention to information, expressing the speaker’s attitudes and opinions (cf. De Regt 1996:52). The pragmatic effect of a rhetorical question is thus the same as that of an emphatic statement.

The fact that the questions in Psalm 24 all have answers would seem to suggest that they are real questions and not rhetorical questions. Psalm 24:3 would have contained real rhetorical questions, one might argue, if the stanza ended at verse 3: “Who can ascend the mountain of the Lord, and who can rise in his holy place?” This would then have had the implied answer: “No one.” The description “holy place” would have implied that no one could hope to have the right to ascend to this place. Isaiah 33:14 provides an example of exactly such rhetorical questions:

The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling has seized the godless: “Who among us can dwell (‘gwr) with the consuming fire? Who among us can dwell (‘gwr) with everlasting burnings?”

In this case, the implied answer clearly is “no one.” This is made clear by the de-

scription of those who ask these questions as being "afraid" and seized by "trembling." And yet, Is 33:15 then proceeds to describe someone with a very similar code of conduct than the person who is described in Psalm 24, and concludes in verse 16 that such a person will "dwell (yškn) on the heights":

He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, who despises the gain of oppressions, who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed and shuts his eyes from looking on evil, ¹⁶ he will dwell on the heights; his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks; his bread will be given him; his water will be sure.

In the case of Is 33 it is not perfectly clear that verses 15-16 form an answer to the rhetorical questions of verse 14, but the wordplay involving the verbs ('gwr) ("to dwell as a sojourner") and (yškn) ("to dwell as an inhabitant") does suggest that this is the case. It thus seems that rhetorical questions are indeed sometimes answered!

Because of the way in which the two stanzas of Psalm 24 are constructed, and in view of the parallel to the first stanza of Psalm 24 found in Isaiah 33:14-16, it seems reasonable to conclude that the questions in Psalm 24:3 constitute a rhetorical technique which draws attention to the high ethical standards required from the worshipper who intends to visit the temple. According to Lausberg (1998:339), a question is used as a figure "when it discards its proper dialogue function and is included in the speech as a device of pathos or as a means of sharpening the line of thought." The questions in verse 3 serve to call attention to the definition of the true believer, climaxing in the "appropriation" of the blessing in verse 6. The author could have used a statement to introduce the description of the religious profile of a believer, such as: "The following characteristics describe the ethical conduct of the true worshipper of the Lord." But he chose to introduce the description with a set of two questions. Why would he/she do this? Because questions and answers are more dramatic than straightforward statements. They are a more lively form of communication and they force the audience to think about possible answers even as an answer is being formulated for them.

As it turns out, the answer given to the questions in verse 3 imply a process of self-evaluation, one which is based on the conscience of the believer rather than on an objective evaluation by a priest. Figurative language is used (the expressions "clean hands" and a "pure heart" are not to be understood literally), and this demonstrates the intention of the author to express an abstract idea more "tangible." This strengthens the notion that the questions did not seek a verbal response from the audience or another speaker, but an inner response of self-evaluation against the standard which is held up for the audience. It is in this sense that one can describe the questions in verse 3 as rhetorical devices.

The questions in stanza II similarly function as a strategy of emphasis. They form part of the device of delayed identification which serves here to focus the attention of the audience on the honour of the Lord. The two parallel strophes of the stanza each begins with two imperatives addressed to the gates of the city or the doors of the temple to "lift up" their "heads" and to "lift" themselves up. The "heads" could possibly refer to the lintels, so that the command would imply that

an object which is physically too large for the opening has to enter. The parallel description of the "gates" as "eternal doors" which have to lift *themselves* up (while doors and gates all turned on sockets above and below) implies that the problem encountered at the entry is not the result of a fault in the design of the gates, but is the result of the extraordinary size or importance of the object that has to enter. This "object" is referred to as the "king of splendour" or the "king of glory." The venerable "eternal" gates, which by implication have proved to be sufficient during a span of hundreds of years, are not large (or worthy) enough for the entry of the glorious king.

The command to such inanimate objects is not to be understood as a real command. It constitutes anthropomorphism, and this is employed for the sake of emphasis. The audience is forced to reflect on the reason for the command to the gates. The words "heads," "eternal," and "splendour" all provide clues as to why the command is given – the gates are not sufficient to accommodate the magnificence of the approaching entourage. The gates could also "lift" their heads as a sign of respect and recognition of the honour of the person who approaches. Whichever way it is interpreted, a metaphor is formed. This is once again figurative language, suggesting that the author wants to explain something rather than repeat a real command to a gate to "open itself." By now the audience has no doubt about whom the approaching king might be. A real question about his identity could perhaps be expected from the least knowledgeable member of the audience, but definitely not from a gatekeeper who controls access to the holy city or the temple. The question merely serves to express in an emphatic way the fact which has been anticipated since the first command to the gates was given: it is the Lord himself who is coming.

The answers given to the questions about the identity of the approaching king thus strengthen the notion that it is not physical limits that hinders the entry of the king, but his extraordinary splendour that renders them unworthy, however venerable and honourable they may be. Notably, the answers have a strong military ring to them. The approaching king is the Lord, "powerful and mighty," "mighty in battle," and "the Lord of armies." These titles imply that the approaching king has earned his splendour through that which he has achieved on the battlefield. The title "Yahweh of armies" is associated with the Lord's acts of saving in the past, but in the Psalms it sometimes also expresses the desire that the Lord will once again save Israel from her enemies (cf. Ps 59:6 and 80:20). Put in other words, the Lord is described in Psalm 24 as the warrior who has defeated his enemies and deserves so much praise that the magnificent gates of Jerusalem or the large doors of the temple seem inadequate to accommodate him. The message that is emphasised with the help of the sequence of commands, questions, and emphatic answers given to the questions, is that the Lord is about to meet with the congregation of worshippers, and that they should realise what a privilege it is to stand face to face with the king of glory.

4. The Liturgical Setting of Psalm 24.

It is doubtful whether the liturgical setting of Psalm 24 in its present form, or that

of any of its two main sections, was at the gates of the temple or the city. The answer to the question about who may go up to the holy mountain of the Lord is probably too long to have been required from a prospective worshipper at the doors of the temple or the gate of the temple court before entrance is allowed. Psalm 15:1 is often quoted as a parallel to Psalm 24:3. There, the similar questions about who may visit and stay at the temple are directed to the Lord. If such a question is put to the Lord – and it is understood as a real question rather than a rhetorical technique – the answer would certainly not come from a worshipper, but from an official speaking on behalf of the Lord.

I think that a one-sided approach which has laid too much stress on the importance of feasts and rituals in the cult of Ancient Israel has led us to confuse the rhetorical devices in Psalm 24 with remnants of dramatic. The liturgical setting of the psalm is probably to be sought within the temple or another place of worship, where the same speaker asks questions and answers them for the sake of strengthening the consensus of the community about what it is that characterises them and distinguishes them from others. This function of the questions in verse 3 was strengthened when the editors of the Psalter in post-exilic times inserted an “appropriation” after the blessing contained in verse 5. The generic worshipper with a high moral standard is consequently now identified in verse 6 as the representative of a group of people, the “seekers” of the Lord. The ethical requirements for a visit to the temple now serve as the defining characteristics of those who “seek the face” of the Lord. This designation is known to be a self-description of the “humble” or “meek” (a religious category of people) who played an important role in the final editing of the Psalter (cf. Ps 22:27 and 69:33 for examples). The addition of verse 6 thus contextualises the questions in verse 3 as an implicit call to comply with the moral standard set out in verse 4.

The need for complying with such a high moral standard was already hinted at in the hymnic introduction to the psalm. Strophe A describes the Lord as the creator-possessor of the whole earth. In accordance with the ancient world view, and in line with the account of creation in Genesis 1, the Lord’s act of creation is seen to have consisted of a separation of dry land from bodies of surface water, as well as the subjection and containment of the sinister waters under the flat disc of earth. To meet the Creator of the cosmos in his temple requires high ethical standards.

The need for complying with such high moral standards as are described in verse 4 is then emphasised greatly by the juxtaposing of strophe II. With the help of imperatives directed to the gates of Jerusalem and/or the doors of the temple, the expectation is created that the Lord, the highest king of the whole world, is about to return to the holy city. He is referred to in an anticipatory manner as the “king of splendour.” The expectation expressed in Psalm 24 is thus comparable to Isaiah 52:7-9 where an announcement is made to Jerusalem that the Lord is king and that he is about to return to Zion. The title “king of splendour” in Psalm 24 sharpens the interest of the audience to know why the Lord is called by this name and how he has earned this title. Through a process of delayed identification, in which a question is twice asked about the identity of the “king of splendour,” he is

emphatically identified as the Lord who has saved his people from their enemies through military intervention (cf. Isaiah 52:10, "the Lord has bared his holy arm in the sight of all the nations"). The questions do not serve as a means of control over who may enter the holy city, but rather to announce in an emphatic way that the Lord is about to return to Jerusalem to meet with those who have accepted and remained true to his code of conduct, and to grant them the blessing promised in verse 5.

In exilic and post-exilic worship, Psalm 24 was used as part of a small collection of psalms which thus formed its primary literary and liturgical context. Psalm 24 was namely selected during the exile (at that time it did not yet include the appropriation of the "seekers of the Lord" in v. 6) as one of the "cornerstones" of an arrangement of psalms running from Psalm 15 to Psalm 24 (Hossfeld & Zenger 1993:12-13). The psalms in this collection form a concentric pattern (15 corresponds to 24, 16 to 23, 17 to 22, and 18 to 21 together with 20), so that Psalm 19 assumes the middle position of this collection. From the centrality of Psalm 19, as well as the similarities between Psalms 15 and 24, it becomes clear that the collection as a whole was designed to define the ideal righteous person who receives help and salvation from the Lord (Hossfeld & Zenger 1993:13). Such a person would be one who lives in recognition of the Lord's principles for ordering the world and human life as these principles are revealed in creation and Torah (cf. Ps 19, with links to both Ps 15 and Ps 24). Psalm 24 forms the climax of this collection, since it ends with the promise that the Lord will come to the congregation of those who comply with the code spelled out in Psalms 15, 19, and 24.

5. Conclusion

The questions and answers in Psalm 24 have probably been misconstrued as real questions which supposedly had the function of regulating the access of worshippers to the temple and of establishing the identity of would-be entrants into the holy city. Apart from the fact that these two scenes can hardly be envisaged as two parts of the same ceremony, the structure of both stanzas of the psalm strongly suggests that the function of the questions was that of emphasis rather than control over access. The four questions in Psalm 24 are consequently to be interpreted as rhetorical devices which served the function of emphasis in a reflective service of worship rather than screening instruments in a hypothetical liturgy at the doors of the temple. Together the questions served to confirm the moral requirements of a dedicated worshipper and the reasons for maintaining such a high standard of ethical conduct. It is because the God whom the faithful worship is the Lord, the creator-sustainer of the earth. He is also the warrior God who will vanquish the enemies of Israel and will return triumphantly to the temple to distribute his blessings to the faithful, and to hand down the justice which he has promised.

Rhetorical and other questions are a neglected technique of emphasis which could be put to good use in modern Christian worship. As is demonstrated by Psalm 24, questions and answers could be used to sharpen the attentiveness of the audience. It could serve to emphasize the responsibility of believers to com-

ply with an ethical code of conduct by reminding them of the requirements for a meeting with the Almighty Creator and Saviour God. It could also be used to emphasize the awe and wonder believers should experience when they consider the privilege of meeting with God in a liturgical context.

6. Notes

- 1 Examples are to be found in Psalm 106:48 (let all the people say, "Amen"), and Psalm 118:2 (let Israel say, "His loving-kindness is everlasting"). Psalms 124 and 129 are qualified as communal confessions by an introductory speaker who also asks "Israel" to "say" the words of the psalm. Refrains, such as the one which is repeated after each verse in Psalm 136 ("Truly his steadfast love endures for ever"), are also taken as proof that the audience joined in actively in worship (Watson 1986:78-79).

S. Mowinckel made a connection between the psalm and a supposed procession during the hypothetical ascension to the throne of the Lord. Gunkel accepted the idea of a procession, but thought of the relevant festival as the supposed New Year's Festival, cf. Loretz (1988:249-250). Loretz also accepts that vv. 7-10 originate from a song used during a procession and that its purpose was to gain entry into the sanctuary, but does not see a connection with the Ark of the Lord (Loretz 1988:268). He thinks of a procession with a throne or wagon, possibly with a statue on it (Loretz 1988:269). Alan Cooper proposes a mythological solution: The "eternal gates" are the gates of the netherworld which must open to allow God to emerge from the netherworld into his sanctuary after he descended there, and the gatekeepers seek to determine the identity of the conquering deity (Cooper 1983:44).

There are also those who understand the question about entry as coming from the prospective worshipper in a kind of entrance liturgy, with the priest then responding with a list of the requirements. Cf. Schneider (1995:175) who cites this interpretation, but does not support it.

Translations of the psalm almost invariably change the text of Codex Leningradensis from *yvpn* to *wvpn* and translate "who does not lift up his soul to falsehood." This reading is supported by the Cairo Geniza fragmentary codex, as well as many Hebrew manuscripts and ancient translations. The text of Codex Leningradensis would imply that a reference is made to the Decalogue. In both versions (Ex 20 and Dt 5), the expression *awvl ~v afn* is used to express the action of "taking the name of the Lord in vain." Ex 23:1 also forbids spreading a false report with the words "*awvl [mv aft al]*". Eckart Otto considers Psalm 24:4 a more original version of the prohibition found in the Decalogue, namely a prohibition against profanation of the person of the Lord in magical practices (cf. Otto 1986:165). It is probably best to understand this part of the verse as a reference to idols ("falsehood" often refers to idols in the Hebrew Bible), so that the pronouncement forms an antithesis to Psalm 25:1 where the suppliant says "to you I lift up my soul," expressing a longing and trust in the Lord.

The second person suffix attached to "face" could be understood as a reference to "Jacob" – thus as a vocative addressing "Jacob" or Israel. This is the way in which Hossfeld understands the form, taking the subject of "who search" as a reference to the proselytes who would join Israel in worship. The parallel between "seek" and "search" (two synonyms are used), however, seems to suggest rather that "your face" is parallel to "him," which means that it is a reference to the Lord. A switch from third person to second person forms where the Lord is involved is not that uncommon.

This is sometimes described as “*interrogatio*,” whereas a rhetorical question requiring a more special answer is described as “*quaesitum*.” Cf. Lausberg (1998:341).

Gitay similarly argues that the use of metaphor in Psalm 1 shows a tendency to demonstrate, “to make a certain abstract idea tangible.” Gitay (1996:233).

Although he describes the questions in vv. 7-10 as “ritual questions,” Wilson (2002:453) insists that the questions are not real questions of identity, but a technique to delay entrance “so that the claims of Yahweh can be repeated in ever more exalted form in the following verses.”

The doors of the temple are also sometimes referred to as “gates” (cf. Ps 100:4), although “gates” are more typically used for entrances into a city or encampment, or even to designate sluices.

According to Wilson (2002:454), the image of the venerable doors “lifting” their “heads” could also simply signify the hope and joy surrounding the return of the Lord. This possibility is less likely, however, since it seems that the command to the gates to lift their heads is a precondition for the coming. Joyful recognition of his coming would not be such a condition, while inadequacy would be.

Rhetorical questions of the same form (“Who is/can ...”) are often used in the Psalter for the same purposes as the questions found in Psalm 24. Instances where the purpose is to express the privilege or danger of human contact with God can be found in Psalm 15:1(x2), 76:8, 130:3, and 147:17. Rhetorical questions with *ym* which express the incomparable nature of the Lord are found in Psalm 18:32, 35:10, 71:19, 77:14, 89:7 and 9, and also 113:5.

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