

## Chapter 2

### The Tradition-Historical Aspect of Ps 118

#### 2.1. Introduction

The *tradition-historical* approach provides a background for the interpretation of Ps 118 by the early Christian writers. This chapter studies the analysis of Ps 118 exegetically, discusses its position in the main Jewish festivals, and investigates its use in the early Jewish and Christian literature.

#### 2.2. Exegetical analysis of Ps 118

##### 2.2.1. Translations of MT and LXX

V	MT	LXX (Ps 117)
1	Praise Yahweh, for he is good, for his kindness endures for ever.	<Alleluia> Praise Yahweh, for he is good, for his kindness endures for ever.
2	Let <b>Israel</b> say: 'Yes, his kindness endures for ever.'	Let the house of Israel say, <b>that he is good</b> : 'Yes, his kindness endures for ever.'
3	Let the house of Aaron say: 'Yes, his kindness endures for ever.'	Let the house of Aaron say, <b>that he is good</b> : 'Yes, his kindness endures for ever.'
4	Let <b>those</b> who have respect for Yahweh say: 'Yes, his kindness endures for ever.'	Let <b>all</b> who have respect for Yahweh say, <b>that he is good</b> : for 'Yes, his kindness endures for ever.'
5	From distress I called on Yah. Yah answered me in open space.	From distress I called on Yah. Yah answered me in open space.
6	Yahweh is <b>for me</b> ; I will not fear. What can men do to me?	Yahweh is <b>my help</b> ; I will not fear. What can men do to me?

7	Yahweh is <b>for me</b> among those who help me; and I will look down on my haters.	Yahweh is <b>my help</b> ; and I will look down on my haters.
8	It is better to take refuge in Yahweh than to rely on men.	It is better to trust in Yahweh than to rely on men.
9	It is better to take refuge in Yahweh than to rely on princes.	It is better to hope in Yahweh than to rely on princes.
10	All nations surrounded me; in the name of Yahweh I warded them off.	All nations surrounded me; in the name of Yahweh I warded them off.
11	They completely surrounded me; in the name of Yahweh I warded them off.	They completely surrounded me; in the name of Yahweh I warded them off.
12	They surrounded me like <b>bees</b> ; they <b>were extinguished</b> like a fire of thorns; in the name of Yahweh I warded them off.	They surrounded me like <b>a honeycomb</b> ; they <b>were inflamed</b> like a fire of thorns but in the name of Yahweh I warded them off.
13	<b>You pushed me</b> hard so that I would fall, but Yahweh helped me.	<b>I was pushed</b> hard so that I would fall, but Yahweh helped me.
14	Yah is my power and my song; and he became my deliverance.	Yah is my power and my song; and he became my deliverance.
15	There are triumphant shouts in the tents of the righteous: 'Yahweh's right hand does mighty things.'	There are triumphant shouts in the tents of the righteous: 'Yahweh's right hand does mighty things.'
16	'Yahweh's <b>right hand is exalted.</b> ' 'Yahweh's right hand does mighty things.'	'Yahweh's <b>right hand exalts me.</b> ' 'Yahweh's right hand does mighty things.'
17	I will not die, but I will live, and I will proclaim the works of Yah.	I will not die, but I will live, and I will proclaim the works of Yah.
18	Yah has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death.	Yah has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death.
19	Open for me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and praise Yah.	Open for me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and praise Yah.

20	This is the gate of Yahweh; the righteous may enter through it.	This is the gate of Yahweh; the righteous may enter through it.
21	I praise you for you have answered me and you became my deliverance.	I praise you for you have answered me and you became my deliverance.
22	The stone which the builders rejected became the capstone.	The stone which the builders rejected became the capstone.
23	This came about through Yahweh; it is a wonder in our eyes.	This came about through Yahweh; it is a wonder in our eyes.
24	This is the day on which Yahweh did it; let us exalt and rejoice him.	This is the day on which Yahweh did it; let us exalt and rejoice him.
25	O Yahweh, please do save! O Yahweh, please give success!	O Yahweh, please do save! O Yahweh, please give success!
26	Blessed is he who comes in the name of Yahweh! We have blessed you from the house of Yahweh.	Blessed is he who comes in the name of Yahweh! We have blessed you from the house of Yahweh.
27	Yahweh is God; he let his light shine on us. Bind the feast with cords up to the horns of the altar!	Yahweh is God; he let his light shine on us. Bind the feast with cords up to the horns of the altar!
28	You are my God, I will exalt you; my God, I will exalt you.	You are my God, I will exalt you; my God, I will exalt you.
29	Praise Yahweh, for he is good, for his kindness endures for ever!	Praise Yahweh, for he is good, for his kindness endures for ever!

### 2.2.2. Several textcritical notes

Based on the differences in translation between the MT and the Septuagint, text criticism will be investigated.

V	Note	Meaning	Evaluation
2 <sup>a</sup>	© + οἶκος	The Septuagint adds οἶκος.	The Septuagint follows Ps 115:9a and 135:19.
4 <sup>a</sup>	© + πάντες	The Septuagint adds πάντες.	The addition makes the meaning of the text more clear.
12 <sup>c</sup>	© κηρίον καὶ	The Septuagint has the	The Hebrew text says

	ἐξεκαύθησαν	wording “a honeycomb; they were inflamed” instead of the phrase “bees; they were extinguished” of the Hebrew text.	“extinguished,” which probably emphasizes that a fire of thorns, although it burns fiercely, soon dies away. In context this is less likely, since both similes seem to refer to the aggressive ferocity of those who surrounded the king (Davidson, 1998:384).
13 <sup>a</sup>	Ⓢ Hier 1 sg pass	Here the Septuagint and the Peshitta imply a first person singular passive mode.	The Hebrew text reads דָּהִיתָנִי (“you pushed me”), as if an accusation were directed against the Yahweh, but the Septuagint and Peshitta suggest the same verb in the passive form, “I was pushed,” so as to make me stumble and fall (Terrien, 2003:784). דָּהִיתָנִי of MT is hardly possible. It cannot refer to Yahweh, because he essentially is not called in the second person singular until v 21.
16 <sup>a</sup>	Ⓢ + suff 1 Sg	The Septuagint and the Peshitta adds first person singular	The Septuagint is more likely, since its 16a is corresponsant to 16b.

### 2.2.3. The structure of Ps 118

#### 2.2.3.1. Syntactical Analysis

Text	V	Clause
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הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה	1a	Command
כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ	1b	Causal
יֹאמְרוּנָא יִשְׂרָאֵל	2a	Optative
כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ	2b	Statement
יֹאמְרוּנָא בֵּית־אֱהֲרֹן	3a	Optative
כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ	3b	Statement
יֹאמְרוּנָא יְרֵאֵי יְהוָה	4a	Optative
כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ	4b	Statement
מִן־הַמִּצַּר קָרָאתִי יְהוָה	5a	Statement
עֲנֵנִי בַמִּרְחֵב יְהוָה	5b	Statement
יְהוָה לִי	6a	Statement
לִי אָדָם	6b	Negative Statement
מִה־יַעֲשֶׂה לִי אָדָם	6c	Question
יְהוָה לִי בַעֲזָרִי	7a	Statement
וְאֲנִי אֶרְאֶה בְשֵׁנָאִי	7b	Statement
טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בַּיהוָה	8a	Statement
מִבֶּטֶחַ בָּאָדָם	8b	Comparative
טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בַּיהוָה	9a	Statement
מִבֶּטֶחַ בַּנְדִּיבִים	9b	Comparative
כָּל־גּוֹיִם סַבְבוּנִי	10a	Statement
יְהוָה כִּי אֲמִילֵם	10b	Statement
סַבּוּנִי גַם־סַבְבוּנִי	11a	Statement
כִּי אֲמִילֵם	11b	Statement
סַבּוּנִי כְדַבּוּרִים	12a	Statement
הֲעֵכוּ כְּאֵשׁ קוֹצִים	12b	Statement
בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי אֲמִילֵם	12c	Statement
דַּחַה דַּחִיתַנִּי	13a	Statement
לִנְפֹל	13b	Causal
וַיְהוּהָ עֲזָרַנִּי	13c	Statement
עֵינַי וַזְמַרְתָּ יְהוָה	14a	Statement
וַיִּתְּלֵנִי לַיְשׁוּעָה	14b	Statement
קוֹל רִנָּה וַיִּשׁוּעַה בְּאֶהְלֵי צַדִּיקִים	15a	Statement
יִמְיִן יְהוָה עָשָׂה חֵיל	15b	Statement
יִמְיִן יְהוָה רִוַּמְמָה	16a	Statement
יִמְיִן יְהוָה עָשָׂה חֵיל	16b	Statement

לֹא אֱמוּנָה	17a	Negative Statement
כִּי־אֲחִיהָ	17b	Statement
וְאִסְפָּר מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה	17c	Statement
יִסַּר יִסְרָנִי יְהוָה	18a	Statement
וְלִמּוֹת לֹא נִתְּנִי	18b	Negative Statement
פִּתְחוּ־לִי שַׁעַר־צֶדֶק	19a	Command
אֲבֹאֲבֶם	19b	Statement
אֹדְדָה יְהוָה	19c	Statement
זֶה־הַשַּׁעַר לַיהוָה	20a	Statement
צְדִיקִים יָבֹאוּ בּוֹ	20b	Statement
אֹדְדָךְ	21a	Statement
כִּי עָנִיתִנִי	21b	Causal
וַתְּהִי־לִי לִישׁוּעָה	21c	Causal
אֲבֵן מֵאֲסוֹ הַבּוֹנִים	22a	Subjective
הִיְתָה לְרֹאשׁ פֶּנֶה	22b	Statement
מֵאֵת יְהוָה הִיְתָה	23a	Statement
זֹאת הִיא נִפְלְאוֹת	23b	Statement
זֶה הַיּוֹם	24a	Statement
עֲשֵׂה יְהוָה	24b	Adjective
נְגִילָה	24c	Command
וּנְשַׂמְחָה בּוֹ	24d	Command
אֲנִי יְהוָה	25a	Exclamation
הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא	25b	Exclamation
אֲנִי יְהוָה	25c	Exclamation
הַצְּלִיחָה נָא	25d	Exclamation
בְּרוּךְ הַבֹּא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה	26a	Statement
בְּרַכְנוּכֶם מִבֵּית	26b	Statement
אֵל יְהוָה	27a	Statement
וַיֵּאָר לָנוּ	27b	Statement
אֲסִרוּ־חַג בַּעֲבַתִּים עַד־קָרְנֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ	27c	Command
אֵלַי אֲתָה	28a	Statement
וְאֹדְדָךְ	28b	Statement
אֱלֹהֵי	28c	Statement
אֲרוּמְךָ	28d	Statement
הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה	29a	Command

כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ	29b	Causal
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### 2.2.3.2. Meter

V	Hebrew Text	Meter
1	הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
2	יֹאמְרוּ־נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
3	יֹאמְרוּ־נָא בֵּית־אֱהֲרֹן כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
4	יֹאמְרוּ־נָא יְרֵאֵי יְהוָה כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
5	מִן־הַמִּצֵּר קִרְאתִי יְהוָה עֲנֵנִי בַמִּרְחֹב יְהוָה	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
6	יְהוָה לִי לֹא אִירָא מִה־יַעֲשֶׂה לִי אָדָם	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
7	יְהוָה לִי בַעֲזָרִי וְאֲנִי אֶרְאֶה בִשְׂנֵאֵי	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
8	טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בִּיהוָה מִבְּטַח בְּאָדָם	<i>mtr</i> 3+2
9	טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בִּיהוָה מִבְּטַח בַּנְּדִיבִים	<i>mtr</i> 3+2
10	פְּלִגְוִים סִבְבוּנִי בְשֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי אֲמִילֵם	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
11	סִבְבוּנִי גַם־סִבְבוּנִי בְשֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי אֲמִילֵם	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
12	סִבְבוּנִי כְּדַבּוּרִים דַּעְכוּ כֹּאֵשׁ קוֹצִים בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי אֲמִילֵם	<i>mtr</i> 3+3+3
13	דַּחַה דַּחִיתַנִּי לִנְפֹל וַיהוָה עֲזָרַנִּי	<i>mtr</i> 3+2
14	עָזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה וַיהוָה לִי לִישׁוּעָה	<i>mtr</i> 3+2
15a	קוֹל רְנָה וַיִּשְׁוַעַה בְּאֱהֲלֵי צְדִיקִים	<i>mtr</i> 3+2
15b- 16	יָמִין יְהוָה רֹמְמָה יָמִין יְהוָה עֲשֵׂה חֵיל יָמִין יְהוָה רֹמְמָה יָמִין יְהוָה עֲשֵׂה חֵיל	<i>mtr</i> 3+3+3
17	לֹא אֲמוֹת כִּי־אֲחִיהָ וְאֶסְפֵּר מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
18	יִסֵּר יִסְרֵנִי יְהוָה וְלִפְנוֹת לֹא נִתְּנִי	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
19	יִסֵּר יִסְרֵנִי יְהוָה וְלִפְנוֹת לֹא נִתְּנִי	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
20	זֶה־הַשַּׁעַר לַיהוָה צְדִיקִים יִבְאוּ בּוֹ	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
21	אוֹדֶךָ כִּי עֲנִיתַנִּי וַתְּהִילֵנִי לִישׁוּעָה	<i>mtr</i> 3+2
22	אֲבֹן מֵאֶסוּ הַבּוֹנִים הִיתָה לְרֹאשׁ פְּנֵה	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
23	מֵאֵת יְהוָה הִיתָה זֹאת הִיא נִפְלְאוֹת בְּעֵינֵינוּ	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
24	זֶה־הַיּוֹם עֲשֵׂה יְהוָה נְגִילָה וְנִשְׂמַחַה בּוֹ	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
25	אֲנָא יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא אֲנָא יְהוָה הַצְּלִיחָה נָא	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
26	בְּרוּךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה בְּרַכְנוּכֶם מִבֵּית יְהוָה	<i>mtr</i> 3+3
27	אֵל יְהוָה וַיֵּאָר לָנוּ אֶסְרוּ־חַג בְּעֵבְתֵיכֶם עַד־קְרִנּוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ:	<i>mtr</i> 2+2, 3+2
28	אֵלֵי אַתָּה וְאוֹדֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ	<i>mtr</i> 3+2
29	הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ	<i>mtr</i> 3+3

As the above table reveals, the meter 3+3 is dominative in vv 1-7, 10, 11, 17-20, 22-26, 29. The 3+2 pattern is seen in vv 8-9, 13-15a, 21, 27b-28. V 12 and vv

15b-16 have a three-member meter (3+3+3).

### 2.2.3.3. Segmentation

Although opinions diverge on the segmentation of Ps 118,<sup>16</sup> based on the above analysis, the psalm can be divided into four strophes, namely 1-4, 5-18, 19-21(22), and 22(23)-29 (Dahood, 1970:155-156; Clifford, 2003:205-208; Eaton, 2003:405).<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, the segstructure of Ps 118 can be tabulated:

Strophe	Text	V
I	הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה	1a
	כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ	1b
	יֹאמְרוּ־נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל	2a
	כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ	2b
	יֹאמְרוּ־נָא בֵּית־אֱהֲרֹן	3a
	כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ	3b
	יֹאמְרוּ־נָא יְהוָה	4a
	כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ	4b
II	מִן־הַמִּצֵּר קָרָאתִי יְהוָה	5a
	עֲנֵנִי בַמִּרְחֵב יְהוָה	5b
	יְהוָה לִי	6a

<sup>16</sup> For example, Leupold argues that the poem should be divided into two strophes (1972:811): “the thanksgiving of the assembly as it approaches the Temple (vv 1-18) and the blessing that is bestowed upon the worshipping throng (vv 19-28).” Kraus sees three strophes in it: “a song of thanksgiving that was performed antiphonally (vv 1-4), the large midsection which contains an individual song of thanksgiving (vv 5-21), and the concluding section (vv 22-29)” (1989:394). Wagner’s structure is more detailed: “call to thanksgiving (vv 1-4), description of divine rescue (vv 5-18), entrance into the Temple (vv 19-20), celebration of rescue (vv 21-28), and closing call to thanksgiving (v 29)” (1997:157).

<sup>17</sup> There are some variations among scholars on the four strophes. Weiser divides it in this way: “introduction (vv 1-4), individual thanksgiving (vv 5-21), the testimony of the congregation (vv 22-25), and conclusion (vv 26-29)” (1965:725-729). Davidson’s structure corresponds with that of Weiser. According to Schaefer (2001:288), “it has two movements (vv 5-18, 19-28), framed within choral praise of God’s *hesed* (vv 1-4, 29)” (1998:383-87).



	לִי אָדָם	6b
	מִה־יַעֲשֶׂה לִי אָדָם	6c
	יְהוָה לִי בְעֻזִי	7a
	וְאֲנִי אֶרְאֶה בְשָׁנָי	7b
	טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בַּיהוָה	8a
	מִבֶּטֶחַ בָּאָדָם	8b
	טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בַּיהוָה	9a
	מִבֶּטֶחַ בַּנְדִיבִים	9b
	כָּל־גּוֹיִם סִבְבוּנִי	10a
	יְהוָה כִּי אֲמִילֵם	10b
	סִבּוּנִי גַם־סִבְבוּנִי	11a
	כִּי אֲמִילֵם	11b
	סִבּוּנִי כְדַבּוּרִים	12a
	דַּעֲכוּ כְּאֵשׁ קוֹצִים	12b
	בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי אֲמִילֵם	12c
	דַּחַה דַּחִיתָנִי	13a
	לִנְפֹל	13b
	וַיְהוּנָה עֲזָרָנִי	13c
	עָזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה	14a
	וַיְהִי־לִי לִישׁוּעָה	14b
	קוֹל רִנָּה וַיִּשׁוּעָה בְּאֶהְלִי צַדִּיקִים	15a
	יָמִין יְהוָה עָשָׂה חֵיל	15b
	יָמִין יְהוָה רוֹמְמָה	16a
	יָמִין יְהוָה עָשָׂה חֵיל	16b
	לֹא אָמוֹת	17a
	כִּי־אֲחִיָּה	17b
	וְאֶסְפֹּר מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה	17c
	יִסֹּר יִסְרֵנִי יְהוָה	18a
	וְלִפְנוֹת לֹא נִתְּנִי	18b
III	פְּתַחוּ־לִי שַׁעֲרֵי־צַדִּיק	19a
	אֲבֹא־כֶם	19b
	אֹדְדֶה יְהוָה	19c
	זֶה־הַשַּׁעַר לַיהוָה	20a
	צַדִּיקִים יָבֹאוּ בּוֹ	20b
	אוֹדֶךָ	21a

	כִּי עֲנִיתָנִי	21b
	וַתְּהִי־לִי לִישׁוּעָה	21c
IV	אֲבֶן מַאֲסוֹ הַבּוֹנִים	22a
	הִיְתָה לְרֵאשׁ פְּנֵה	22b
	מֵאֵת יְהוָה הִיְתָה	23a
	זֹאת הִיא נִפְלְאוֹת	23b
	זֶה־הַיּוֹם	24a
	עָשָׂה יְהוָה	24b
	נִגִּילָה	24c
	וְנִשְׂמַחָה בּוֹ	24d
	אֲנֵא יְהוָה	25a
	הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא	25b
	אֲנֵא יְהוָה	25c
	הַצְּלִיחָה נָא	25d
	בְּרוּךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה	26a
	בְּרִכְנוֹכֶם מִבַּיִת	26b
	אֵל יְהוָה	27a
	וַיֵּאָר לָנוּ	27b
	אֲסֻרוּ־חַג בְּעֵבְתֵימָּם עַד־קְרִנּוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ	27c
	אֵלֵי אַתָּה	28a
	וְאוֹדֶךָ	28b
	אֱלֹהֵי	28c
	אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ	28d
	הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה	29a
	כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ	29b

As the above table shows, above all, the poetic analysis reveals repetition of some expressions.<sup>18</sup> Firstly, the introduction (vv 1–4)<sup>19</sup> and the conclusion (v 29) form an inclusio. Especially, the psalm begins in v 1 and ends in v 29 with the same distichic line: “Praise Yahweh, for he is good, for his kindness endures

<sup>18</sup> According to Potgieter (2003:397), the most noticeable poetic characteristic of Ps 118 is that of repetition. The repetitions are: 1b = 2b = 3b = 4b; v 6aa = 7aa; 8a = 9a; 8ba = 9ba; 10b = 11b = 12c; 15c = 16b; 25aa = 25ba; and v 1 = v 29.

<sup>19</sup> The repeating theme of the opening section is that of God’s love (Curtis, 2004:227).

for ever.” The epiphoric wording “his kindness endure for ever’ is repeated in each of the four verses of this strophe. The sole change exists in the opening hemistich that provides a reason for the praise of Yahweh, namely that “he is good.” With the same anaphoric phrase, “let so and so say”, three different groups are called on to reiterate this confession in verse lines 2 to 4. The repetitive nature of the elements in these verses has led to a nearly general consensus among scholars that vv 2-4 should be seen to form a separate unit (Potgieter, 2003:393-94). There are also a lot of repetitions in the second strophe: 1) the body part is linked together by the sixfold use of  $\text{יָדָי}$  in vv 5, 14 and vv 17–19; 2) impressive too are the repetition of  $\text{לִי}$  (vv 6-7, 14, 19) and  $\text{עָשָׂה}$  (vv 15-17) (Allen, 1983:164-165); 3) vv 8 and 9 contain two perfectly matched  $\text{טֹב טֹב}$  sayings; 4) vv 10-14 have a threefold repetition of the phrase “in the name of Yahweh I warded them off.” This wording is encountered in the semistich of each of the three verse lines of vv 10-14. On top of that, the term ‘to surround’ is repeated four times in these verses; 5) verse lines 10 and 11 have the same form of the verb at the end of the first hemistich; 6) verse lines 11 and 12 have a similar but shorter form of the verb at the beginning of the first hemistich; and 7) the repetition of wordings “Yahweh is for me” and “Yahweh is for me to help me” from vv 6-7 are in more or less the same words in vv 13-14. Thus vv 6-7 form a kind of inclusion with vv 13-14 (Potgieter, 2003:394-95). Lastly, frequent use of the proper name of Israel’s God is noticeable. According to Clifford, “it occurs twenty-eight times ( $\text{יְהוָה}$  22,  $\text{יָה}$  6). The number is symbolic, seven (perfection) times four (universality), suggesting that the Lord rules heaven and earth” (2003:204).

As a result of these repetitions, there are a lot of close parallelisms. Vv 2, 3 and 4 form external parallels, as do vv 6 and 7; 8 and 9; 10, 11, and 12; 15 and 16; and 17 and 18. This last instance forms a chiasm of the pattern ABBA (die – Yahweh – Yah – death). There are also quite a number of internal parallelisms, some of them chiastically arranged. Examples are the ABBA type of the preposition ל and the particle כי in v 1; the ABC-ABC pattern of nouns and verbs in v 5; the ABBA pattern of prepositions and verbs in vv 6, 8 and 9; similar parallels and chiastic arrangements in verses 12 (parallelism); 15 (chiasmus of the gender of nouns); 16; 17 (parallel arrangement of particles and verbs); 19; 23 (prepositions and verbs form a chiasmus); 25; 26 (verbs and prepositions parallel); 28 (nouns, verbs and suffixes are parallel); and 29 (the same chiasmus as that mentioned in v 1) (Potgieter, 2003:398).

#### **2.2.4. The Background regarding Ps 118**

As with many of the psalms, when and under what circumstances Ps 118 was composed remain matters of scholarly controversy. The majority view today is that it was composed in the post-exilic era and represents a liturgy for a festival of thanksgiving (Kraus, 1989:395).

Ps 118 belongs to one of the Hallel<sup>20</sup> Psalms<sup>21</sup>, i.e. those specifically designed

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<sup>20</sup> The word comes from the Hebrew verb הָלַל (“to praise”) since many of the psalms contain the phrase הַלְלוּ יְהוָה (“Praise the Lord!”).

<sup>21</sup> The name “Hallel Psalms” has been variously used to describe the following psalm

for festivals and pilgrimages (West, 1981:440). Especially Hallel Psalms 113-118 as a unit is called the so-called “Egyptian Hallel” since they recount the saving deeds of Yahweh during the Exodus from Egypt under the leadership of Moses (to whom the authorship of these psalms was traditionally attributed) (Swanson, 1992:30). And so they were customarily related to the Passover (Schaefer, 2001:288). The Hallel was first sung at the Feast of the Lights (or, Hanukkah) – particularly relating to the addition of v 27 in Ps 118 which states *Yahweh is God, he is our light*. The liturgical use of Ps 118 was later extended to the three great festivals of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles (De Vaux, 1980:512). Ps 118 is a bridge psalm. It not only forms the conclusion of the Egyptian Hallel group of Psalms, but also belongs to the opening of the Great Hallel, consisting of Ps 118-136.

### **2.2.5. The interpretation of Ps 118**

In order to understand the modified meaning of Ps 118 in early Christianity, it is important to examine the original significance of Ps 118. As the study will show below, since Ps 118:22, 25, 26 are among the most quoted verses in the NT, attention will be paid to the interpretation of those phrases.

#### **2.2.5.1. Strophe I (vv 1-4): Introduction**

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groups: 104-106, 111-118, 120-136, and 146-150 (Swanson, 1992:30).

### 2.2.5.1.1. The contents of Strophe I

The poem begins with a speaker's call for thanksgiving for Yahweh's everlasting love (v 1). It contains three groups: "Israel" (v 2), "the house of Aaron" (v 3), and "those who fear Yahweh" (v 4). The same three groups already appeared in 115:9-11.

### 2.2.5.1.2. verse by verse exegesis

#### 1) V 1

##### *a. Texts and Translations*

הַיְהוָה לִיהוָה כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ׃ (MT Ps 118:1)

*(Praise Yahweh, for he is good; for his kindness endures for ever.)*

(LXX Ps 117:1) ἀλληλουϊά ἐξομολογείσθε τῷ κυρίῳ ὅτι ἀγαθός ὅτι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ

*(Alleluia! Praise Yahweh, for he is good; for his kindness endures for ever.)*

##### *b. exegesis*

There is a difference between the Hebrew Text and the Septuagint in the line. Ps 118 is introduced by ἀλληλουϊά in the LXX, which means Ps 118 is a Hallel. The Psalm is introduced and concluded by the liturgical formula: *Praise Yahweh; for he is good; for his kindness endures for ever* (Briggs, 1969:404).

In view of the previous imperative phrase, the כִּי in the second hemistich of v is translated causal. V 1 reveals the theme of the psalm: the abiding goodness (רַחֲמִים) and grace of God (Weiser, 1965:725). The term רַחֲמִים (LXX ἔλεος) is found 240 times in the OT<sup>22</sup> and it is used *of man or of God*. *Of man*, it means *kindness* of men towards men, in doing favours and benefits, and *of God*, *kindness, lovingkindness* in condescending to the needs of his creatures (BDB, 338.2).

## 1) V 2

### *a. Texts and Translations*

יֹאמְרוּנָא יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ׃ (MT Ps 118:2)

(*Let Israel say: ‘Yes, his kindness endures for ever.’*)

(LXX Ps 117:2) εἰπάτω δὴ οἶκος Ἰσραηλ ὅτι ἀγαθός ὅτι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ

(*Let the house of Israel say, that he is good: ‘Yes, his kindness endures for ever.’*)

### *b. exegesis*

There are two differences between the MT and the Septuagint in the verse. Firstly, the LXX has “*the house of Israel*” instead of “*Israel*” of the Hebrew Text.

<sup>22</sup> The form of חַסְדּוֹ לְעוֹלָם in v 1 is found 26 times in the OT v 1, i.e., Jr 33:11; 1 Ch 16:34, 41; 2 Ch 5:13; 7:3, 6; 20:21; Ezr 3:11; Ps 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 118:1, 2, 3, 4, 29; 136:1–26.

The Greek Text corresponds to Ps 115:9a (*cf.* 135:19) and Krause (1989:801) also follows the LXX. This, however, seems to be too adventurous in view of the poor textual evidence. Dahood (1970:156) also agrees with the MT version, saying “the proposal to insert, with LXX, ‘house,’ before ‘Israel’ is not compelling, especially since the present syllable count is perfectly balanced at 6:6. The different groups of those who participate in the offering of thanksgiving are called on in turn to join in singing the refrain attached to the testimony: first of all **יִשְׂרָאֵל**. Here, “Israel” refers to not so much “people of the Covenant” (Weiser, 1965:725) as “the laity” (Eaton, 2003:405; Dahood, 1970:155) because of the phrase *the house of Aaron* in v 3. Secondly, the Septuagint adds the unnecessary phrase “that he is good” in the middle. Unlike the **כִּי** of v 1, that of v 2-4 has emphatic function, because of the absence of the imperative (Potgieter, 2003:390).

## 1) V 3

### *a. Texts and Translations*

**יֹאמְרוּנָא בֵּית־אַהֲרֹן כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:** (MT Ps 118:3)

*(Let the house of Aaron say: ‘his kindness endures for ever.’)*

**(LXX Ps 117:3)** εἰπάτω δὴ οἶκος Ααρων ὅτι ἀγαθός ὅτι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ

*(Let the house of Aaron say, that he is good: for ‘his kindness endures for ever.’)*



*b. exegesis*

Apart from the addition of ὅτι ἀγαθός in the Greek text, both versions agree with one another. The term בֵּית־אֱהֲרֹן (οἶκος Ααρων in the LXX), which means the priestly orders, is found four times in the OT (Ps 115:10, 12; 118:3; 135:19) (Eaton, 2003::405; Weiser, 1965:725).

**1) V 4**

*a. Texts and Translations*

יְאִמְרוּ־נָא יְרֵאִי יְהוָה כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ: (MT Ps 118:4)

*(Let those who have respect for Yahweh say: ‘his kindness endures for ever.’)*

(LXX Ps 117:4) εἰπάτωσαν δὴ πάντες οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν κύριον ὅτι ἀγαθός ὅτι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ

*(Let all who have respect for Yahweh say, that he is good: for ‘his kindness endures for ever.’)*

*b. exegesis*

*The final group who takes part in the offering of thanksgiving is identified as*

יְרֵאִי יְהוָה: (πάντες οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν κύριον in the LXX). Weiser (1965:725)

sees them as the proselytes of non-Israelite origin, but they refer to “all

together,”<sup>23</sup> that is, the laity and the priestly orders. First each, then all together gives the thanksgiving of praise and testimony (Eaton, 2003:405).

## 2.2.5.2. Strophe II (vv 5-18): Individual thanksgiving

### 2.2.5.2.1. The contents of Strophe II

The introduction is followed by the speaker’s own thanksgiving. V 5 is an introductory summary, reporting the speaker’s previous hardship, Yahweh’s answer and salvation. Vv 6-9 are a general affirmation to praise to Yahweh. Vv 10-18 describe the speaker’s rescue from the nations’ encircling and assailing by Yahweh’s intervention, which extracts thankful praise.

### 2.2.5.2.2. Verse by verse exegesis

#### 1) V 5

##### *a. Texts and Translations*

מִן־הַמִּצַּר קָרָאתִי יְהוָה עֲנֵנִי בַמְרוֹחַב יְהוָה׃ (MT Ps 118:5)

*(From distress I called on Yah. Yah heard me and made room for me.)*

(LXX Ps 117:5) ἐν θλίψει ἐπεκαλεσάμην τὸν κύριον καὶ ἐπήκουσέν μου εἰς πλατυσμόν

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<sup>23</sup> Thus the Greek text adds the adjective πάντες to the MT.

(From distress I called on Yah. Yah heard me and made room for me.)

**b. exegesis**

The מִצָּר (θλιψις in the LXX) in the first hemistich is found in Ps 116:3; 118:5; Lm 1:3, and means *distress, hardship, i.e., a state or condition of having trouble and hardship* (Swanson, 1997: HGK5210). Who was the main speaker, “I”?<sup>24</sup> He seems to act in some representative capacity, as leader of an associated group, in view of the changes from singular to plural in vv 19-20 and 26a, 26b (Allen, 1987:167). The second hemistich עֲנֵנִי בְּמִרְחֵב יְהוָה (ἐπήκουσέν μου εἰς πλατυσμόν) is literally translated “he answered me in open space Yah.” This is a case of *Breviloquenz*, a contracted utterance, which can be solved in the sense of translation given above (Kraus, 1989:393).

**2) Vv 6-7**

**a. Texts and Translations**

יְהוָה לִי לֹא אִירָא מִהַיֵּשֶׁה לִי אָדָם: (MT Ps 118:6)

<sup>24</sup> For the “I,” three interpretations have been raised. Some (Delitzsch, 1889:223-24; Bittenwieser, 1938:666) interpret the “I” in Ps 118 *collectively* as a reference to Israel. The poem describes the deliverance of Israel from grave danger and a festive occasion commemorating it. Others (Eaton, 1976:129-30; Sanders, 1987:180; VanGemeren, 1991:729) interpret the “I” as *an individual*, especially *the Davidic king*. Still, the other exegetes (Deissler, 1964:464; Westermann, 1989:273-74) combine *a collective and individual interpretation* by regarding Ps 118 as an anthology of diverse backgrounds that grew in phases.

<sup>25</sup> The term מִרְחֵב (πλατυσμός in the LXX) is found in 2 Sm 22:20; Ps 18:20; 31:9; 118:5 and refers to *roomy place, i.e., a broad and relatively vast place as an indefinite space*, with the associative meaning of *comfort or possibly safety and freedom* (Swanson, 1997: HGK5303).

*(Yahweh is for me; I will not fear. What can men do to me?)*

יְהוָה לִי בְעֲזָרִי וְאֲנִי אֶרְאֶה בְּשֹׂנְאָי: (MT Ps 118:7)

*(Yahweh is for me among those who help me; and I will look down on my haters.)*

(LXX Ps 117:6) κύριος ἔμοι βοηθός οὐ φοβηθήσομαι τί ποιήσει μοι ἄνθρωπος

*(Yahweh is my help; I will not fear. What can men do to me?)*

(LXX Ps 117:7) κύριος ἔμοι βοηθός καὶ ἐπόψομαι τοὺς ἐχθρούς μου

*(Yahweh is my help; and I will look down on my haters.)*

#### *b. exegesis*

Through the comparison between the two versions, one major difference can be found. In the MT, the opening words read simply “the LORD [is] for me.” Βοηθός<sup>26</sup> is added in the LXX. The LXX addition was explained in various ways. According to Ellingworth (2000:701), this word is inserted probably “to bring out the force of the personal pronoun.” Gheorghita (2003:51) asserts that this term is added “to clarify the Hebrew idiom לִי יְהוָה or as a result of dittography caused by the homoioarcton of vv 6 and 7 [117:6 and 7 LXX].” The phrase אֶרְאֶה

בְּשֹׂנְאָי (τί ποιήσει μοι ἄνθρωπος in the LXX) in the second hemistich of v 6 was quoted from Ps 56:12. In V 7a the psalmist repeats what he said in V 6a about Yahweh being his helper. Certain of this, the psalmist is able to say *I shall look in triumph on those who hate me*. This means not only that the psalmist’s

<sup>26</sup> In the LXX, the term is used of God in Ex 18:4; Dt 33:29; Jdg 5:23; Job 22:25; and frequently throughout the Psalter (Attridge, 1989:389).

enemies will be defeated by Yahweh, but that he, the psalmist, will see this happen (Bratcher and Reyburn, 1991:988).

### 3) V 8-9

#### a. Texts and Translations

:טוֹב לְחַסוֹת בַּיהוָה מִבְּטַח בְּאָדָם: (MT Ps 118:8)

*(It is better to take refuge in Yahweh than to rely on men.)*

:טוֹב לְחַסוֹת בַּיהוָה מִבְּטַח בְּנְדִיבִים: (MT Ps 118:9)

*(It is better to take refuge in Yahweh than to rely on princes.)*

(LXX Ps 117:8) ἀγαθὸν πεποιθέναι ἐπὶ κύριον ἢ πεποιθέναι ἐπ’ ἄνθρωπον

*(It is better to hope in Yahweh than to rely on men.)*

(Ps 117:9) ἀγαθὸν ἐλπίζειν ἐπὶ κύριον ἢ ἐλπίζειν ἐπ’ ἄρχοντας

*(It is better to trust in Yahweh than to rely on princes.)*

#### b. exegesis

Vv 8–9 both say the same truth: Yahweh offers greater security and protection than any human being. The sequence in vv 8–9 emphasizes the polarity between Yahweh and human beings by indicating that no humans, not even leaders, are reliable (Allen, 1987:175). The verbal phrase **לְחַסוֹת** (πεποιθέναι ἐπί [to trust in]; ἐλπίζειν ἐπί [to hope in] in the LXX) in the first hemistiches of vv 8-9 means to seek *protection, safety, security* (Bratcher and Reyburn, 1991:988). In

v 9b the נְדִיב (ἄρχων in the LXX) translated *princes* does not necessarily imply royalty, but means people who are powerful and influential.

*a. Texts and Translations*

**4) V 10-12**

*a. Texts and Translations*

כָּל־גּוֹיִם סָבְבוּנִי בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי אֲמִילֵם: (MT Ps 118:10)

*(All nations surrounded me; in the name of Yahweh I warded them off.)*

סָבְבוּנִי גַם־סָבְבוּנִי בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי אֲמִילֵם: (MT Ps 118:11)

*(They completely surrounded me; in the name of Yahweh I warded them off.)*

סָבְבוּנִי גַם־סָבְבוּנִי בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי אֲמִילֵם: (MT Ps 118:12)

*(They surrounded me like bees; they were extinguished like a fire of thorns; in the name of Yahweh I warded them off.)*

(LXX Ps 117:10) πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐκύκλωσάν με καὶ τῷ ὀνόματι κυρίου ἤμυνάμην αὐτούς

*(All nations surrounded me; in the name of Yahweh I warded them off.)*

(LXX Ps 117:11) κυκλώσαντες ἐκύκλωσάν με καὶ τῷ ὀνόματι κυρίου ἤμυνάμην αὐτούς

*(They completely surrounded me; in the name of Yahweh I warded them off.)*

(LXX Ps 117:12) ἐκύκλωσάν με ὡσεὶ μέλισσαι κηρίον καὶ ἐξεκαύθησαν ὡσεὶ πῦρ ἐν ἀκάνθαις καὶ τῷ ὀνόματι κυρίου ἤμυνάμην αὐτούς

*(They surrounded me like a honeycomb; they were inflamed like a fire of thorns  
but in the name of Yahweh I warded them off.)*

***b. exegesis***

In these verses the psalmist relates how Yahweh saved him in battle and gave him the victory. In v 10a he says that he was surrounded by כּל־גּוֹיִם (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in the LXX). This is not to be taken literally but is an exaggerated way of describing the danger he was in (Bratcher and Reyburn, 1991:989). The psalmist was about to defeat him; but in the name of the Lord he ward [or cut] them off. The verb כּוֹרֵךְ (ἀμύνω in the LXX) translated “cut or ward off” everywhere else in the Old Testament means “to circumcise.” Thus, Dahood (1970:157-58) refers to 1 Sm 18:25–27 and believes that the psalmist was referring to the Philistines, who, unlike other people in the region, were uncircumcised. The verb, however, may mean simply “ward or cut off,” in which case it gives us no clues as to the historical circumstances implied in this section (Davidson, 1998:384). The psalmist compares the enemies to a swarm of bees (v 12a). In line b the MT has the passive “they were extinguished.” This seems to indicate, by the figure used (Hebrew “like a thorn bush on fire”), the quickness with which their furious attack was stopped (Bratcher and Reyburn, 1991:989). However, the translation of the Greek text, “they blazed”, which describes the fury of their attack, seems to make better sense in the context.

**5) V 13-14**

*a. Texts and Translations*

וַיִּהְיוּ עֲזָרָנִי לְנַפְלֹתַי וַיִּהְיוּ עֲזָרָנִי: (MT Ps 118:13)

*(You pushed me hard so that I would fall, but Yahweh helped me.)*

עֲזָרָתִי וְזִמְרָתִי יְהוָה וַיְהִי־לִי לְיִשׁוּעָה: (MT Ps 118:14)

*(Yah is my power and my song; and he became my deliverance.)*

(LXX Ps 117:13) ὡσθεὶς ἀντρᾶπην τοῦ πεσεῖν καὶ ὁ κύριος ἀντελάβετό μου

*(I was pushed hard so that I would fall, but Yahweh helped me.)*

(LXX Ps 117:14) ἰσχύς μου καὶ ὕμνησίς μου ὁ κύριος καὶ ἐγένετό μοι εἰς σωτηρίαν

*(Yah is my power and my song; and he became my deliverance.)*

*b. exegesis*

V 13 the Hebrew text begins “You pushed me hard.” This can hardly be addressed to Yahweh, so most take it to be addressed to the enemy. Dahood (1970:158), who agrees with this view, takes the enemy to be death. However, the Septuagint and Peshitta, which have the passive, “I was pushed hard” seem to make better sense in the context. The psalmist refers to his near defeat, with the statement *I was falling*. This can be translated “I was about to be defeated” (Bratcher and Reyburn, 1991:990). In v 14a the MT seems to mean “the Yahweh is my strength and my song.” Some suggest, however, that the noun translated *song* means “strength” here and in the similar passages Ex 15:2; Is 12:2 (Bratcher and Reyburn, 1991:990). But Van der Ploeg (1974:298) points



out that all the ancient translations have taken this word as a synonym for “song” and not for “power.”

## 6) V 15-16

### a. Texts and Translations

קוֹל רִנָּה וַיִּשׁוּעָה בְּאַהֲלֵי צְדִיקִים יְמִין יְהוָה עֲשָׂה חֵיל: (MT Ps 118:15)

*(There are triumphant shouts in the tents of the righteous: ‘Yahweh’s right hand does mighty things.’)*

יְמִין יְהוָה רוֹמְמָה יְמִין יְהוָה עֲשָׂה חֵיל: (MT Ps 118:16)

*(‘Yahweh’s right hand is exalted.’ ‘Yahweh’s right hand does mighty things.’)*

(LXX Ps 117:15) φωνὴ ἀγαλλιᾶσεως καὶ σωτηρίας ἐν σκηναῖς δικαίων δεξιὰ κυρίου ἐποίησεν δύναμιν

*(There are triumphant shouts in the tents of the righteous: ‘Yahweh’s right hand does mighty things.’)*

(LXX Ps 117:16) δεξιὰ κυρίου ὑψώσεν με δεξιὰ κυρίου ἐποίησεν δύναμιν

*(‘Yahweh’s right hand exalts me.’ ‘Yahweh’s right hand does mighty things.’)*

### b. exegesis

In these verses Yahweh is praised for having won the victory for his people. In verse 15a the צְדִיקִים (δικαίος in the LXX) is apparently a reference to the victorious army, either in general terms as representing the people in covenant

relation with God or, more probably, particularly as those vindicated by Yahweh and conscious recipients of Yahweh's covenanted aid in the battle (Allen, 1987:175). "The tents" may refer in a general sense to houses or homes, but it is more likely that these are military tents, in which the men lived while on military campaigns; or else they are the temporary shelters which the people built and in which they lived during the week-long Festival of Shelters (Bratcher and Reyburn, 1991:990).

## 7) V 17-18

### *a. Texts and Translations*

לֹא אָמוֹת כִּי־אָחִיָּה וְאֶסְפֹּר מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה (MT Ps 118:17)

*(I will not die, but I will live, and I will proclaim the works of Yah.)*

יִסֵּר יְהוָה יִסְרָנִי יְהוָה וְלֹמוֹת לֹא נָתַנְנִי (MT Ps 118:18)

*(Yah has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death.)*

(LXX Ps 117:17) οὐκ ἀποθανοῦμαι ἀλλὰ ζήσομαι καὶ ἐκδιηγῆσομαι τὰ ἔργα κυρίου

*(I will not die, but I will live, and I will proclaim the works of Yah.)*

(Ps 117:18) παιδεύων ἐπαίδευσέν με ὁ κύριος καὶ τῷ θανάτῳ οὐ παρέδωκέν με

*(Yah has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death.)*

### *b. exegesis*

In v 17 the psalmist says how Yahweh saved him from death, probably death in battle. So he is able now, and will be able in the future, to proclaim what Yahweh has done for him. This he will do in public worship in the Temple. The phrase “Yah has disciplined me severely” of v 18 seems to refer to the battle against the enemies and the speaker sees it as Yahweh’s punishment (Bratcher and Reyburn, 1991:990).

### **2.2.5.3. Strophe III (vv 19-21): Procession**

#### **2.2.5.3.1. The contents of Strophe III**

“The narration was probably sung or spoken in the course of a procession, for v 19 speaks of the procession arriving at the gate of the Temple” (Clifford, 2003:205). In v 20, the qualifications necessary for entering are stated: *the righteous shall enter*. In v 21, the psalmist repeats his thanksgiving for Yahweh’s answer and deliverance.

#### **2.2.5.3.2. Verse by verse exegesis**

##### **1) V 19-21**

###### *a. Texts and Translations*

פְּתַח־לִי שַׁעֲרֵי־צֶדֶק אֲבֹא־בָם אֲוֹדָה יְהוָה: (MT Ps 118:19)

*(Open for me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and*

*praise Yah.)*

זֶה־הַשַּׁעַר לַיהוָה צְדִיקִים יָבֹאוּ בוֹ: (MT Ps 118:20)

*(This is the gate of Yahweh; the righteous may enter through it.)*

אֲדַבֵּר כִּי עָנִיתָנִי וַתְּהִי־לִי לִישׁוּעָה: (MT Ps 118:21)

*(I praise you for you have answered me and you became my deliverance.)*

(LXX Ps 117:19) ἀνοίξατέ μοι πύλας δικαιοσύνης εἰσελθὼν ἐν αὐταῖς ἔξομολογήσομαι  
τῷ κυρίῳ

*(Open for me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and  
praise Yah.)*

(LXX Ps 117:20) αὕτη ἡ πύλη τοῦ κυρίου δίκαιοι εἰσελεύσονται ἐν αὐτῇ

*(This is the gate of Yahweh; the righteous may enter through it.)*

(LXX Ps 117:21) ἔξομολογήσομαί σοι ὅτι ἐπήκουσάς μου καὶ ἐγένου μοι εἰς σωτηρίαν

*(I praise you for you have answered me and you became my deliverance.)*

#### ***b. exegesis***

In v 19 the speaker stands in front of the שַׁעֲרֵי־צְדָקָה (πύλας δικαιοσύνης in the LXX) and requests admission. This seems to mean “the gates of the Temple.” The expression “the gate of the Lord” in v 20a may be understood as synonymous with “the gates” in v 19a, emphasizing here that the gates lead to the sanctuary of Yahweh (Bratcher and Reyburn, 1991:992).

#### **2.2.5.4. Strophe IV (vv 22-29): Repeated thanksgiving and**

## Conclusion

### 2.2.5.4.1. The contents of Strophe IV

The main speaker's thanksgiving is followed by communal praise (vv 22-27). The psalm ends with thanksgiving and praise by the main speaker (v 28) and all in a repetition of v 1 (v 29).

### 2.2.5.4.2. Verse by verse exegesis

#### 1) V 22-23

##### *a. Texts and Translations*

אֶבֶן מְאֹסוֹ הַבּוֹנִים הִיְתָה לְרֹאשׁ פִּנָּה (MT Ps 118:22)

*(The stone which the builders rejected become the head of corner.)*

מֵאֵת יְהוָה הִיְתָה זֹאת הִיא נִפְלְאוֹת בְּעֵינֵינוּ: (MT Ps 118:23)

*(This came about through Yahweh; it is a wonder in our eyes.)*

(LXX Ps 117:22) λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας

*(The stone which the builders rejected become the head of corner.)*

(LXX Ps 117:23) παρὰ κυρίου ἐγένετο αὕτη καὶ ἔστιν θαυμαστὴ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν

*(This came about through Yahweh; it is a wonder in our eyes.)*

*b. exegesis*

For v 22, two interpretations are possible. Most scholars think אֶבֶן to be a symbol for the people of Israel, God's holy nation and הַבּוֹנִים for the empires of that day (Westermann, 1989:275; Leupold, 1972:818; Dahood, 1970:159). Though considered insignificant by the super powers, who enjoyed reputation, and who seemed to have unusual prosperity, Israel received a respectable and significant place in the building of Yahweh's kingdom (Leupold, 1972:818). Another interpretation is to link "the stone" to an individual, probably the king. "Applied to the king, it refers to one who had been in misery, surrounded by enemies, in danger of being dismissed as rejected by the Lord. But in the providence of the Lord he had been vindicated and accepted" (Davidson, 1998:386). According to Derrett (1965:181f), the poem is referring to King David and "the builders" point to the particular individuals (Samuel, David's family, Goliath, and Saul) who ignored him. Both of these interpretations have a weakness. About the former one, Delitzsch (1889:3.214) points out that it is improbable that Jews would refer to the heathen as "the builders." The latter one seems to be against the context of the psalm. Vv 23-27 indicate "the involvement of the people" (Snodgrass, 1973:46). V 23a means that it was Yahweh who had brought about this unexpected reversal of events. And v 23b "it is marvelous in our eyes" can be represented simply by "how wonderful (or, marvelous) it is" (Bratcher and Reyburn, 1991:993).

## 2) V 24-25

### a. Texts and Translations

זֶה־הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה יְהוָה נִגִּילָה וְנִשְׂמַחְתָּ בּוֹ: (MT Ps 118:24)

*(This is the day on which Yahweh did it; let us exalt and rejoice him.)*

יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא אֲנֵנוּ יְהוָה הַצְלִיחָה נָא: (MT Ps 118:25)

*(O Yahweh, please do save! O Yahweh, please give success!)*

(Ps 117:24) αὕτη ἡ ἡμέρα ἣν ἐποίησεν ὁ κύριος ἀγαλλιασώμεθα καὶ εὐφρανθῶμεν ἐν αὐτῇ

*(This is the day on which Yahweh did it; let us exalt and rejoice him.)*

(LXX Ps 117:25) ὦ κύριε σῶσον δὴ ὦ κύριε εὐόδωσον δὴ

*(O Yahweh, please do save! O Yahweh, please give success!)*

### b. exegesis

The expression “this is the day which the Lord has made” of v 24 is the literal form of the Hebrew (Bratcher and Reyburn, 1991:994). The meaning is “this is the day on which the Lord has acted” or “the day of the Lord’s victory,” since the whole psalm celebrates Yahweh’s victory over the enemies of Israel. **נָא**

הוֹשִׁיעָה (σῶσον δὴ in the LXX) of v 25 can be interpreted as a “petition” or “prayer for salvation” (Eaton, 2003:406; Kraus, 1989:400; Dahood, 1970:159; Briggs, 1969:407; Weiser, 1965:729). After acknowledging the Lord’s wondrous act in vv 22-24, the choir or the congregation prays for deliverance and

prosperity.

#### 4) V 26-27

##### *a. Texts and Translations*

בְּרֹוךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה בֵּרַכְנוּכֶם מִבֵּית יְהוָה: (MT Ps 118:26)

*(Blessed is the one who comes in the name of Yahweh. We have blessed you from the house of Yahweh.)*

אֵל יְהוָה וַיֵּאָר לָנוּ אֶסְרוּ-חַג בְּעִבְתֵי-חַג עַד-קַרְנֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: (MT Ps 118:27)

*(Yahweh is God; he let his light shine on us. Bind the feast with cords up to the horns of the altar!)*

(LXX Ps 117:26) εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου εὐλογήκαμεν ὑμᾶς ἐξ οἴκου κυρίου

*(Blessed is the one who comes in the name of Yahweh. We have blessed you from the house of Yahweh.)*

(LXX Ps 117:27) θεὸς κύριος καὶ ἐπέφανεν ἡμῖν συστήσαθε ἑορτὴν ἐν τοῖς πυκάζουσιν ἕως τῶν κεράτων τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου

*(Yahweh is God; he let his light shine on us. Bind the feast with cords up to the horns of the altar!)*

##### *b. exegesis*

Most scholars regard v 26 as a benediction by the priests at the Temple (Eaton,



2003:406; Kraus, 1989:400; Kroll, 1987:353; Leupold, 1972:820; Weiser, 1965:729). Then, who are “the one who comes” and who are “you” (plural) who are blessed by the priests? Some think of an *individual* (Schaefer, 2001:290; Dahood, 1970:160). According to Dahood (1970:160), both words refer to the king (cf. vv 10-12). “The plural suffix  $\text{םָ}$  can be parsed as a plural of majesty referring to the king, or it may be numerically plural, addressing the king’s troops.” Others see a *group* (Leupold, 1972:820; Briggs, 1969:407). According to Briggs (1969:407), the benediction is pronounced upon those coming or entering the gates of the temple with a view to partake of the festival, namely the worshippers.<sup>27</sup> Eaton (2003:406) takes a neutral position. The entering of the king is welcomed with a benediction (v 26a): “he enters by the power of the name of Yahweh. The blessing, from priests within the sanctuary, is extended to all the procession (“you” plural in v 26b).” In v 27a “he has given us light” (literal translation) refers to the blessings of prosperity and success which God has bestowed on his people; it may explicitly refer to victory. V 27b, c contains directions about the festival procession in the Temple (Bratcher and Reyburn, 1991:994). Anderson (1981:804) explains the second hemistich of v 27 as a reference to the lulab carried by worshippers in procession during the Festival of Tabernacles.

## 6) V 28-29

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<sup>27</sup> According to Carson (1991:432), here “in the name of the Lord” modifies “Blessed.” Consequently, the priests pronounce a blessing in the name of the Lord on the one who comes.

*a. Texts and Translations*

אֱלֹהֵי אֲתָהּ וְאֲדָרְךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוּמִמְךָ: (MT Ps 118:28)

*(You are my God, I will exalt you; my God, I will exalt you.)*

הַדָּוָה לִיהְוָה כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ: (MT Ps 118:29)

*(Praise Yahweh, for he is good, for his kindness endures for ever!)*

(LXX Ps 117:28) θεός μου εἶ σύ καὶ ἑξομολογήσομαί σοι θεός μου εἶ σύ καὶ ὑψώσω σε ἑξομολογήσομαί σοι ὅτι ἐπήκουσάς μου καὶ ἐγένου μοι εἰς σωτηρίαν

*(You are my God, I will exalt you; my God, I will exalt you.)*

(LXX Ps 117:29) ἑξομολογεῖσθε τῷ κυρίῳ ὅτι ἀγαθός ὅτι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ

*(Praise Yahweh, for he is good, for his kindness endures for ever!)*

*b. exegesis*

In v 28 the psalm once more gives thanks to Yahweh. The psalm closes with a final call to thanksgiving, sung by the choir or the congregation, which is exactly like the opening call in v 1.

### **2.3. Ps 118 and the Jewish Feasts**

Since Ps 118 (broadly speaking, Pss 113-118) was chanted regularly on the main Jewish feasts i.e. Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles and Dedication (Prinsloo, 2003:408; Zeitlin, 1962:23), it is important to investigate the role of Ps 118 in the festivals, especially in Passover and Tabernacles which are closely

connected with the Exodus theme.

## **2.3.1. Ps 118 and the Feast of Passover**

### **2.3.1.1. The Feast of Passover**

#### **2.3.1.1.1. Terms of the feast of Passover**

The biblical name for the festival is **חַג הַפֶּסַח** (feast of the Passover) (Ex 34:25).

The term “Passover” is derived from **פָּסַח** which means “to pass (over)” (Ex 12:13) – referring to the Lord’s passing over the houses of the Israelites when the first born of all the Egyptians were destroyed (Brown, 1979:820). The word **פֶּסַח** indicates “the Passover offering and more generally the feast centering on that sacrifice, which was eaten at night and which comprised a holiday in its own right, ‘Passover’ or ‘the Festival of the Passover Offering’” (Bokser, 1992:755).

In addition to this etymology of **פָּסַח**, several others have been suggested: (1) The term is connected with a Hebrew verb meaning “to limp, hobble,” (2 Sm 4:4; 1 Ki 18:21, 26) — and thus Passover depicts “a special cultic dance” — or “to protect” (Is 31:5) — Yahweh will protect the houses of the Israelites from the destroyer to enter; (2) it is linked to the Akkadian verb meaning “to appease, assuage (a deity) in ritual”; and (3) it is associated with an Egyptian verb meaning “stroke, blow” and thus the Passover is the blow of the last plague in which Yahweh struck the firstborn of Egypt (Harris, Archer and Waltke,

1980:729).

#### **2.3.1.1.2. The relation between the Passover and the Unleavened Bread**

According to Ex 12, the Passover was the annual Israelite feast on the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month (Abib). It was followed by a distinct 7-day festival called the feast of the Unleavened Bread, to which the name Passover was also applied by extension (Lv 23:5). The two were closely linked with the Exodus from Egypt which they celebrate; the former being in memory of the last meal in Egypt, eaten in preparation for the journey, while the Lord, passing over the houses of the Israelites, was striking the firstborn offspring of Egypt (Ex 12:12f; 13:2, 12ff); the latter being in remembrance of the first days of the journey during which the unleavened bread was taken (Ex 12:14-20) (Wilson, 1986:676).

While the OT distinguishes between both, in later Judaism they were popularly combined and the name Passover was generally used for both. This is the dominant usage in the NT (cf. Lk 22:1) (Jeremias, 1967:5.898).

#### **2.3.1.1.3 The History of the feast of Passover**

In the OT, passages mentioning this festival are: Ex 12–13; 23:15 and 34:18, parts of the two cultic calendars; Lv 23:4-8; Nm 9:1-15; 28:16-25; and 33:3; Dt 16:1-8; Js 5:10-15; 2 Ki 23:10-14; Ezk 45:21; Ezr 6:19-22; 2 Chr 30:1-27; 35:1-9 (Bokser, 1992:756). Ex 12-13 introduces the historical background of Passover.

Lv 23, Nm 28 and Dt 16 explicate the procedures in the celebration of Passover. Nm 9, Js 5, 2 Ch 30 and 35, 2 Ki 23 and Ezr 6:19-22 are historical texts that relate the commemoration of a particular Passover (Harris, Archer and Waltke, 1980:728).

Several works of the Second Temple period mention the Feast of Passover. The book of *Jubilees* contains the Festival tradition in Jub 49. Expanding on remarks in Ex 12 concerning the protective aspect of the offering, *Jubilees* asserts that those who observe the Passover will be free from plague in the next year. It thus applies the message of Passover to the people's future in terms other than those of national independence. The Passover was to function until the final Jubilee, when complete redemption was expected (Bokser, 1992:757). Strangely, Jub 49 does not mention the unleavened bread or the bitter herbs, both of which were prominent at the Passover meal. Instead, it has the first allusion to wine, which became prominent at the Seder. It is likely that the introduction of wine at the Passover meal was the effect of a radical change that was taking place in the character of the Passover. It was no longer a solemn annual gathering of male adults; it was to become the occasion for family celebration, in which the drinking of wine found a natural place (Segal, 1963:231-32).

*Ezekiel the Tragedian* vividly depicts the preparations of the night before the Exodus in his repetition and expansion of Ex 12–13. It mentions the time in the evening to slaughter and eat the offering, and notes the accompanying

preparations. Here, it contains two sets of teachings for the future: eating the unleavened bread for seven days in remembrance of the seven-day journey from Egypt to the Red Sea where the Israelites attained final liberation; and the offering of firstborn animals to recall God's deliverance of the Israelite firstborn in Egypt (Ezk.Trag 152-92). Hence, like *Jubilees*, *Ezekiel the Tragedian* shows an interest in demonstrating the link between the rite and what took place during the Exodus (Bokser, 1992: 761). Remarks on Passover in Ezk.Trag 188-92 reflect a widespread connection of the Feast with a future hope of deliverance because the phrases "going forth" and "it being the first of months" often appear in rabbinic eschatological thought (Brunson, 2003:69-70).

Two scrolls found at Qumran also mention the two festivals. *The Qumran Festival Calendar* from Cave 4 (4Q509) relates the Passover regulations of Lv 23 and Nm 9:13 with the pure solar calendar of 364 days. According to this calendar, the Seder meal on the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month always corresponds to a Tuesday and the first day of the feast on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month always to a Wednesday (Otto, 2003:23). *The Temple Scroll* (11QTemple) explicitly mentions the Passover sacrifice (17:6-9) and the Festival of Unleavened Bread (17:10-16) (Bokser, 1992: 761). 11QTemple corresponds with Jub 49 in some ways. Firstly, the Passover meal must be taken in the courtyards of the sanctuary (11QTemple 17:9; Jub 49:16-20). Secondly, the age regulation of twenty years for participants (11QTemple 17:8) agrees with Jub 49:17. The stipulations for the Feast of Unleavened Bread in 11QTemple follow Jub 49:22-23 (Otto, 2003:24).

But the scroll does not mention the festivals' ideological and historical basis in the Exodus deliverance experience, for "the scroll is oriented toward the future redemption, the messianic age, providing guidelines for how, in the interim, one may serve God in a state of perfection" (Bokser, 1992:761).

Rabbinic writings also mention the celebration of the Passover. The Passover offering was slaughtered by the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel, not by Levites (m. Pesah 5:5). The Levites' task was confined to supervising the purity of temple visitors and the Hallel singing (Otto, 2003:20). As m. Pesah 10 mentions, the Passover meal comprised "the four cups of wine, recitation of the Hallel, and remembrance of the exodus from Egypt." During the first century BC, the messianic-eschatological atmosphere of Passover became increasingly evident, as shown in the Hallel singing, particularly in the double recitation of Ps 118:25-26 (Otto, 2003:21).

### **2.3.1.2. The role of Ps 118 in the Feast of Passover**

#### **2.3.1.2.1. The Hallel and Passover**

The singing of the Hallel was an indispensable part of the Passover. Firstly, it was directly linked with the sacrifice and preparation for the evening feast. The Mishnah preserves the role of the Hallel at the Passover sacrifice performed on the afternoon of the 14<sup>th</sup> of Abib:

The Passover offering is slaughtered [by the people] in three groups. . . . When the first group entered, the courtyard was filled, the gates of the courtyard were closed. . . . An Israelite slaughtered [the Passover lamb] and a priest received the blood, hands it to his fellow, and his fellow to his fellow receiving a full basin and handing back an empty one. The priest nearest to the altar tosses the blood in a single act of tossing, toward the base. The first group went out and the second group came in. The second group went out and the third group came in. In accord with the rite of the first group were the rites of the second and third. [The Levites meanwhile] proclaimed the Hallel. If they completed [the recitation], they repeated it, and if they completed it the second time, they repeated it for a third — even though they never in all their days had to repeat it a third time. R. Judah says, “In all the days of the third group they never even reached the verse, I love the Lord because he has heard my voice (Ps 116:1), because its numbers were small.” (m. Pesah 5:5-7).

Secondly, it was closely associated with the evening meal on the night of the 15<sup>th</sup> which started at sunset of the 14<sup>th</sup> (Zeitlin, 1962:25). It is also preserved in the Mishnah:

To what point does one say [Hallel]? The House of Shammai say, “To A joyful mother of children (Ps 113:9).” And the House of Hillel say, “To A flintstone into a springing well (Ps 114:8).” And he concludes with [a formula of] Redemption. R. Tarfon says, “. . . who redeemed us and redeemed our forefathers from Egypt.’ And he did not say a concluding benediction.” R. Aqiba says, “. . . So, Lord, our God, and God of our fathers, bring us in peace to other appointed times and festivals, rejoicing in the rebuilding of your city and joyful in your Temple worship, where may we eat of the animal sacrifices and Passover offerings,’ etc., up to, ‘Blessed are you, Lord, who has redeemed Israel.” They mixed the third cup for him. He says a blessing for his food. [And at] the fourth, he completes the Hallel and says after it the grace of song (m. Pesah 10:6-7).



The Hallel is sung as part of the Seder service, commemorating the Exodus (Finkelstein, 1950/51:323). Jewish families recited Pss 113-114 before the Seder meal and 115-118 after drinking the last cup (Sampey, 1982:600). In the Synoptic Gospels (Mt 26:17-29; Mk 14:12-25; Lk 22:7-20), Jesus and his disciples ate the Passover supper, and sang a hymn before departing for the Mount of Olives (Mt 26:30). Thus, in all probability, they chant all or parts of Pss 115-118 (or, less probably, Pss 135-36) (Swanson, 1992:30). “Sung in the Passover context, these psalms could not have failed to bring to mind thoughts of hope and redemption” (Brunson 2003:73).

The Hallel as a unit is strongly linked with Passover not only functionally, but also thematically. The collection begins with praise of God who reverses human situations by raising the needy and powerless (Schaefer, 2001:288). The most apparent thematic connection is found in Ps 114. The theme of Ps 114 is the Exodus and thus Wilcock calls it “the Exodus Psalm” (2001:178). Ps 115 suggests a time of misery for Israel, with the affirmation that God will deliver his people. Ps 116 recalls the great deliverance from slavery, and Ps 117 recollects the kindness of Yahweh, perhaps associated with his election of Israel. Whether these psalms were written specifically for Passover or not, they contain motifs (e.g., election, deliverance from bondage) and images (e.g., cup of salvation, exodus) which make them particularly suitable for use at the feast (Brunson, 2003:76-77).

### 2.3.1.2.2. Ps 118 and its Motifs

Ps 118, as the climax of the Egyptian Hallel, includes a number of Exodus parallels and connections which make it very suitable for Passover. Firstly, there are a lot of similarities in vocabulary between Ex 14 and Ps 118. Mays notes (1988:304) the stark verbal contrast between *נִוֹת* in Ex 14:11-12 and *לֹא נִוֹת* in Ps 118:17-18. Prinsloo (2003:415) also mentions verbal similarities between Ex 14:30-31 and Ps 118: “saved” (Ex 14:30a) and “save” (Ps 118:14b, 15a, 21b, 25a); “that day” (Ex 14:30b) and “this day” (Ps 118:24a); “saw” (Ex 14:30-31a) and “look down upon” (Ps 118:7b); “Yahweh did” (Ex 14:31b) and “the deeds of Yahweh” (Ps 118:17b); and “The people feared Yahweh” (Ex 14:31c) and “those who fear Yahweh” (Ps 118:4a).

Secondly, several scholars see intertextual links between Ps 118 and the so-called Song of Moses (Ex 15:1-21). Dahood (1970:156) compares the verbal similarities between this psalm and the ancient victory hymn in Ex 15: v 14 with Ex 15:2<sup>28</sup>; vv 15-16 with Ex 15:6; and v 28 with Ex 15:2. Prinsloo (2003:415) also notes the strong verbal connection: Ex 15:2ab is cited verbally in Ps 118:14ab. Furthermore Ex 15:2b is alluded to in Ps 118:21b and Ex 15:2bc to Ps 118:28bc. Goulder (1998:186-87) also argues the connection between the two songs:

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<sup>28</sup> According to Leupold (1972:815), Ps 118:14 is “the classic statement, coined by the song sung after the victory at the Red Sea in Moses’ days (Ex 15:2) and then again used effectively in Isaiah’s days (Is 12:2), *The Lord is my strength and my salvation.*” The echoes of this hymn ring down to the NT (Rv 15:3).

V 14 is in fact identical with Ex 15:2, Moses' Song at the crossing of the sea: *Jah is my strength and my song/defence, And he is become my salvation*. Nor is this an accidental echo. Ex 15:6 ascribes the Egyptian debacle to *the right hand of Yahweh* (118:15-16), and v. 21, *And art become my salvation*, again takes up Ex 15:2; while v. 28, the penultimate verse, closely follows Ex 15:2cd, 'This is *my God* (אלהי), and *I will praise him, My father's God and I will exalt him*'. It is not an accident either that Yahweh is referred to five times in these verses as 'Jah' (vv 5, 14, 17, 18, 19), or that he is אלהי (v. 27). The whole psalm is a celebration of a renewed Red Sea triumph, under the right hand of Jah.

There are also intertextual relationships between Ps 118 and the New Exodus passages which reflect the eschatological expectation for the Restoration of Israel. Especially Is 26<sup>29</sup> and Zch 10, both of which are in the context of Judah's eschatological restoration, include striking parallels with Ps 118 (Prinsloo, 2003:416-17): "that day"; "salvation" (Is 26:1), and "this day" (Ps 118:24a) and "save" (Ps 118:14b, 15a, 21b); "open the gates that the righteous nation"; "enter" (Is 26:2), and "open for me the gates of righteousness" (Ps 118:19a), "enter" (Ps 118:19b), "the gate of Yahweh" (Ps 118:20a) and "the righteous may enter through it" (Ps 118:20b); and "cornerstone" (Zch 10:4) and "cornerstone" (Ps 118:22).

## **2.3.2. Ps 118 and the Feast of Tabernacles**

### **2.3.2.1. The Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*)**

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<sup>29</sup> According to Botha (2003:211), Ps 118 parallels Ex 15:2, and Is 26:2, 11.

### 2.3.2.1.1. Terms of the feast of Tabernacles

The biblical name for the festival is חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת (Lv 23:34). The feast of Tabernacles is the last of the three great pilgrimage – festivals of the Jewish year (Ex 23:16; 34:22; Lv 23:34-36, 39-43; Nm 29:12-38; Dt 16:13-15) and was kept for 7 days from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> of the seventh month (Lv 23:34-36, 39-41; Nm 29:12-38). This festival commemorated the Exodus from Egypt and reminded the Israelites of their wandering and dwelling in booths in the desert (Lv 23:43). It was also called the “festival of booths” (Dt 16:13). The name “feast of booths” derives from the requirement for everyone born an Israelite to live in booths made of boughs of trees and branches of palm trees for the 7 days of the feast (Lv 23:42) (Freeman, 1996:1148). Another name for it is “the feast of ingathering” because it was celebrated by the Israelites at the time of the ingathering of the harvests on the threshing floor and at the wine press (Dt 16:13; Lv 23:39) at the end of the year (Ex 23:16; 34:22).

#### *b. The History of the feast of Tabernacles*

The main passages in the OT mentioning this festival are: Ex 23:14-17; Lv 23:33-44; Dt 16:13-17; 1 Ki 8:2, 65-66; Zch 14:12-21. In Ex 23 the Feast of Sukkot is closely associated with the Feast of Ingathering. In Lv 23 it is depicted as a cheerful occasion and the stay in the wilderness motivates the dwelling in tents/booths (De Vaux, 1978:496). A more detailed account is given in Dt 16, where the festival is called Feast of Sukkot and is to last seven days. In 1 Ki 8 the dedication of Solomon’s temple takes place during this festival. In Zch 14,

Zechariah predicts that all the nations will each year come to worship Yahweh in Jerusalem, at the Feast of Sukkot (Zch 14:16).

A variety of the second temple literature also mentions Sukkot celebrations.<sup>30</sup> *Jub* 16, for example, provides a more extensive account of Sukkot celebrations. Abraham rejoices greatly (*Jub* 16:19), builds an altar to God and celebrates a festival of joy (*Jub* 16:20) when God appears to him. It confirms and elaborates on the previous promises and the blessings to come for his seed (*Jub* 16:17-18). In *Jub* 16:21, Abraham builds booths for himself and for his servants, takes branches of palm trees and the fruit of goodly trees for his circumambulations of the altar, and offers praises and joyfully gives thanks to his God for all things (*Jub* 16:31). That Abraham praises and thanks while he circumambulated the altar points to a liturgical recitation. It may be Ps 118 (Rubenstein, 1995:55).

Rabbinic literature preserves additional descriptions of the celebration of Sukkot in temple times. Especially, the Mishnah depicts three main rituals: water libations (m. Suk 4:9-10), the willow procession (m. Suk 4:1-7), and rejoicing at the place of water-drawing (m. Suk 5:1-5).

The Feast of Tabernacles was eschatologized as well as historicized. In other words, it was celebrated in terms of the end time, as shown in Ezekiel and Zechariah (Moloney, 1998:233).<sup>31</sup> Ezekiel's eschatological vision of the new

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<sup>30</sup> The Books of Jubilees and Maccabees, the philosopher Philo, the historian Josephus, etc. provide significant information on Tabernacles (Rubenstein, 1995:31).

<sup>31</sup> Among the intertestament literature, especially, Pseudo-Philo, 1 Enoch and Jubilees suggest an eschatological interpretation of the Tabernacles (cf. Brunson, 2003:49-50).

temple rehearses the renewal of the cult at the feast of Tabernacles. Kraus (1966:231) notes the similarities between the eschatological messages of Is 40-66 and the renewal of the cult in Ezk 40-48: “In this complex, too, an eschatological order is foreshadowed, down to the minute details of the sacral institutions. The temple will become the redemptive center of the world in the last days.”

Zch 14 also relates the festival of Sukkot with the end of time (Moloney, 1998:234). Two elements characteristic of the new age envisioned in Zch 14 (the continuous light in Zch 14:7 and the river flowing out of Jerusalem in Zch 14:8) can be closely connected with Tabernacles motifs (Brunson, 2003:47-46). According to Moloney (1998:235), the two motifs may help in the eschatologization of the feast of Sukkot.

### *c. Tabernacles Symbols of the feast of Tabernacles*

The *lulab*,<sup>32</sup> *ethrog* and water are the important Tabernacles symbols. The former two first appear on coins dating from the first Jewish revolt (AD 66-70). Of the five years in which coins were minted, all the coins with the Tabernacles emblems bear the imprint “year four,” that is to say, AD 69-70 (Kadman, 1960:84). The motto changed from “Freedom for Zion” of years two and three to “Redemption of Zion” for year four (Rubenstein, 1995:97). They also appear – sometimes the *lulab* without the *ethrog* – on the coins of the Bar-Kochba revolt

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<sup>32</sup> As one of the four plants which form an obligatory part of the rite of Tabernacles i.e. the Four Species, *Lulab* is made of myrtle and willow twigs tied around a palm branch (Brunson, 2003:53).

(132-135 CE). A number of scholars (Dacy, 1992:105-106; Ulfgard, 1989:134-37; Kadman, 1960:94) plausibly suggest that this change in terminology reflects a shift in aspiration from political freedom to messianic redemption, and the Tabernacles symbols therefore possess a messianic significance. Goodenough (1954-68:4.145-46) maintains that the lulab and the ethrog on the coins of both revolts here functions as a triumph symbol.<sup>33</sup> Brunson (2003:56) claims the lulab and ethrog “were associated with the deliverance of Israel and personal – perhaps also national – eschatological hopes.” These scholars’ opinions seem reasonable. After all, one would expect tokens associated with salvation to appear particularly during such times of heightened Jewish hope. There is evidence that the lulab was connected with triumph and deliverance in 1 Maccabees (Brunson, 2003:56).

Another Sukkot symbol deserving attention is that of the water-drawing and water-pouring ritual which featured so prominently in the feast liturgy.<sup>34</sup> As mentioned previously, as with light, water had acquired eschatological associations (Moloney, 1998:235). The eschatological river of Zch 14 and Ezk 47 was linked with the eschatologization of Tabernacles and the emphasis on light at the water-drawing is suggestive of the continuous daylight of the Zch 14 Tabernacles (Brunson, 2003:55-56).

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<sup>33</sup> Rubenstein (1995:97-98) disputes Goodenough’s view.

<sup>34</sup> This ceremony associated with this festival was reflected in Jesus’ proclamation in Jn 7:37-38. Its recognition of rain as a gift from God, necessary to produce fruitful harvests, is implied in Zch 14:17 (Freeman, 1996:1148).

## 2.3.2.2. The role of Ps 118 in the Feast of Tabernacles

### 2.3.2.2.1. The Hallel and Tabernacles

The singing of the Hallel was an essential element in the Tabernacles.<sup>35</sup> The Hallel is connected with the willow ritual which took place every day of Tabernacles. The Mishnah preserves the account of the willow:

The religious requirement of the willow branch: How so? There was a place below Jerusalem, called Mosa. (People) go down there and gather young willow branches. They come and throw them along the sides of the altar, with their heads bent over the altar. They blew on the *shofar* a sustained, a quavering, and a sustained note. Every day they walk around the altar one time and say, “*Save now, we beseech thee, O Lord! We beseech thee, O Lord, send now prosperity (Ps 118:25).*” R. Judah says, “(They say), ‘*Ani waho, save us we pray! Ani waho, save us we pray!*’” And on that day [seventh] they walk around the altar seven times (m. Suk 4:5).

According to Rubenstein (1995:157), “the entire Hallel was probably recited as the willow procession made its way from Mosa to the temple courtyards. The ritual reached its climax when they arrived at the altar to the final verses of Ps 118, perhaps repeating 118:25 over and over.”

Ps 118 is also related to the shaking of the lulab, which is one of the Tabernacle symbols. The Mishnah preserves the earliest source, a discussion between the

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<sup>35</sup> The Hallel was recited on the eve of Passover during the slaughter of paschal lambs in the temple service, on its first and last days. Unlike the Passover, during the Tabernacles the Hallel was sung each day (Rubenstein, 1995:157).



House of Hillel and the House of Shammai, which defines the points at which the lulab should be waved during the recitation of the Hallel:

When did they shake it? “At *Praise the Lord*, at the beginning and the end [of Ps 118; = 118:1, 118:29]. Also at *O Lord deliver us* (Ps 118:25a).” These are the words of the House of Hillel. The House of Shammai say: I say: “Also at *a Lord, let us prosper* (Ps 118:25b).” R. Akiba said: “I watched Rabban Gamaliel and R. Yehoshua. The entire people shook their lulabs, but they shook only at *O Lord, deliver us*” (m. Suk 3:9).

According to all views in the Mishnah the lulab was waved at some point or points during the recitation of Ps 118 (Rubenstein 1995:156). The shaking of the lulab apparently occurred at more than one point of the psalm in expectation of a New Exodus. The festival built towards a climax so that on the seventh day this would have taken place seven times (Brunson, 2003:58-59).

#### **2.3.2.2.2. Ps 118 and Tabernacles associations**

Although there are a number of connections between the Hallel as a unit and Passover themes so that the psalms are especially fitting for the festival, Ps 118 is better suited to Tabernacles than to any other feasts (MacRae 1966:264). Mowinckel (2004:1.120) argues for a Sukkot setting for Ps 118:

It is a procession psalm and alludes to the day of the feast (v 24), to the procession up to and around the altar and to the branches with which the altar was covered “up to its horns,” or, as read in Sukka IV 5, “so that their tops bent over the altar.” The psalm alludes also to the

Hosanna-cry of the procession and to the light of the torches in the torch dance on the first night of the feast, giving the rites a symbolic interpretation: “Yahweh is our God who has brought us light” (v 27).

### **2.3.3. Summary**

The background of Ps 118 and its relation with two of the Jewish Feasts were investigated. Although scholars’ views differ on the original setting of Ps 118, the majority agrees that it is post-exilic and represents a “Dankfestliturgie.” As the last poem of Egyptian Hallel (Pss 113-118), Ps 118 was liturgically used in the Jewish Festivals of Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles and Hanukkah.

Ps 118 is associated with the Feasts of Passover and Tabernacles in particular. Ps 118 contains numerous Exodus Motifs and connections which make it appropriate for Passover. It also has some expressions that parallel Tabernacles and made it uniquely suited to its use in the Festival of Sukkot (e.g., tents in v 15 and light in v 27).

### **2.4. Ps 118 in the Jewish and early Christian traditions**

Ps 118 (LXX 117) itself was closely associated with the Passover by the Jews and with Easter in the Church during early Christian times (Thomas, 1965:319). “It is sung during the entire week following Easter Sunday, being the last remnant of the seven-day long Jewish celebration of Passover” (Kistemaker, 1961:57). Werner argued similarly, saying that “apparently this psalm citation belonged to the liturgy of synagogue and church” (1959:57).

## 2.4.1. A survey of the use of Ps 118 in the Jewish tradition<sup>36</sup>

### 2.4.1.1. Ps 118 in the Dead Sea Scrolls

It is obvious that the Psalter was used extensively at Qumran, judging from the quantity of existing manuscripts and fragments that contain Psalms.<sup>37</sup> Among all found manuscripts —both biblical and non-biblical— no book is represented by more copies than the Psalms, which underscores the importance of the Psalter among the Qumran community (Sanders, 1967:9).<sup>38</sup> Although extensive copies of Psalms have been found in the Qumran library, however, there are few manuscripts preserving portions of Ps 118.<sup>39</sup> Among these, the scroll 11QPs<sup>a</sup> which includes in column XVI six verses from Ps 118 has aroused great interest because of its unusual arrangement and contents.<sup>40</sup> Its sequence is

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<sup>36</sup> One of the difficulties in finding the hermeneutical clues for intertestamental interpretation of Ps 118 is that it is not quoted explicitly in Philo, Josephus, or other early Jewish sources except for the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Testament of Solomon (Brunson, 2003:22-23). In case of the Dead Sea Scrolls, one fragment that suggests a possible allusion to Ps 118:22 is 2Q 23 1-11. The writer was prophesying the death of one of his enemies and wrote, “You will be thrust from the cornerstone” (Snodgrass, 1973:68). 4QpPs<sup>b</sup> fragment 5 also appears to contain a quotation of or allusion to Ps 118:20. Horgan (1979:266) notes the possibility of quotation about that fragment. In addition, 4QpPs<sup>b</sup> fragment 4 may also quote Ps 118:26, 27. But due to the poor state of the fragments it is not possible to recover the context (Brunson, 2003:23). *The Testament of Solomon* quotes Ps 118:22 in reference to the building of the temple (TSol 23:4) as follows: “I, Solomon, being excited, exclaimed, ‘Truly Scripture which says, It was the stone rejected by the builders that became the keystone, has now been fulfill,’ and so forth.” However, its dating is disputed (AD First to Third Century) and one cannot be sure whether it comes from the intertestamental period (Duling, 1983:940-43).

<sup>37</sup> According to Sanders (1967:9), fragments of the biblical Psalms have been found in Caves 1,2,3,4,5,6,8 and 11.

<sup>38</sup> Psalms (36), Deuteronomy (27) and Isaiah (24).

<sup>39</sup> Segments of Ps 118 are found in the following scrolls: Ps 118:25-29 (11QPs<sup>a</sup> fragment E I); Ps 118:1, 15, 16, 8, 9, 20 (11QPs<sup>a</sup> col. XVI); Ps 118:1, 5, 16 (11QPs<sup>b</sup>); Ps 118:1-3, 6-12, 18-20, 23-26, 29 (4QPs<sup>b</sup>); Ps 118:29 (?) (4QPs<sup>e</sup>).

<sup>40</sup> According to Abegg, Flint and Ulrich (1999:505), from Ps 91 onward, many of the

Pss 135, 136, parts of Ps 118, and 145 with some additional inserts and a (largely missing) subscription (Skehan, 1973:195).

Various attempts have been made to give an explanation for this divergence. Sanders (1967:13) understands this manuscript to contain part of a scriptural Psalter prior to the extensive or universal acceptance of the collection of the 150 Pss in the MT in the late first century AD suggesting that the scroll reflects a period when the components and order of the Masoretic Psalter were still in flux. In response, Talmon and Goshen-Gottstein independently raised the possibility that the scroll was a secondary liturgical compilation utilizing the already finalized and accepted 150 Pss of the MT (Talmon, 1966:12; Goshen-Gottstein, 1966:24). The strongest opposition to Sanders' hypothesis of a dynamic canon, however, came from Skehan. He (1973:195) suggests a twofold explanation for the arrangement of its contents: liturgical regroupings and "library edition" of the works of David. The copyist extracted sections from liturgical works and from the Book of Psalms and provided a notice regarding David's extraordinary literary productivity.

Whether 11QPs<sup>a</sup> is a scriptural Psalter or a secondary collection, all parties have suggested a strong Davidic emphasis in the scroll recognizing the importance of David's Compositions, the prose "epilogue"<sup>41</sup> that appears in col.

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Psalms scrolls differ radically from the MT Psalter. The variations involved are of two chief types: variations in arrangement (this is, different order of Psalms) and variations in content (that is, the inclusion of compositions not found in the traditional book of Psalms).

<sup>41</sup> That is to say, the last columns of the scroll end with an emphasis on David.

XXVII (Flint, 1997:176-177). The fact that the scroll underscores Davidic authorship confirms the contemporary identification of the Psalter with Davidic kingship and indicates that at least in the sectarian community Ps 118 was ascribed to David (Brunson, 2003:87). This reference to “David” may propose an eschatological reading of the 11QPs<sup>a</sup> Psalter. Wacholder contends that “David” should be comprehended as an allusion to the eschatological offspring of Jesse anticipated at the end of days (1988:23). As a result the collection can be viewed as an eschatological liturgy with the Davidic deliverer leading Israel in singing at the close of days. Both uses of Ps 118 in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> may support such a reading. First, the strange placement of Pss 146 and 148 following Ps 118 may be explained as the compiler’s addition of angelic praise to the songs of David and Israel in the previous Psalms (Wacholder, 1988:46). Second, in the Catena there is a unique addition to the original wording of Ps 118:9 (the phrase “It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in a *thousand people*”) that may refer to the last triumph of Israel over the hosts of nations at the end of days (Wacholder, 1988:48). Aside from this connection, the combination of Psalms in fragment E would promote eschatological aspirations, since Pss 118, 104 and 105 contain Exodus references, and Ps 147 mentions the future gathering of Exiles (Brunson, 2003:88).

Another compelling explanation for the unusual arrangement of 11QPs<sup>a</sup> is that it is grouped according to liturgical considerations. Whether or not the compiler borrowed phrases from Ps 118 to shape a new Psalm, it seems that the Catena

was an intentional grouping with liturgical purpose,<sup>42</sup> and so the fact that the psalm provides material for the liturgical complex implies that it was well-known, adaptable, and played an important liturgical role. The occurrence of Ps 118:25-29 in Fragment E may suggest the use of the Hallel as a unit, or alternatively may shape part of another liturgical complex. It is therefore probable that the Dead Sea Scrolls largely provides examples of the liturgical use of Ps 118 rather than a simple copying of the Psalm in its Bible order (Brunson, 2003:86-87).

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<sup>42</sup> Skehan contends that this is the clearest of the liturgical groupings in the scroll (1973:195). Some scholars are of similar opinion (Wacholder, 1988:43-44, 48; Talmon, 1966:12; Goshen-Gottstein, 1966:24).

## 2.4.1.2. Ps 118 in the Targum

### Text comparison of Ps 118:22-29 between MT and Targum<sup>43</sup>

<p>22 אֲבָן מְאֹסוֹ הַיְתָה לְרֹאשׁ פְּנֵה: מֵאֵת יְהוָה הַיְתָה זֹאת הִיא נִפְלְאָת</p>	<p>22 טְלִיא שְׁבִיקוֹ אַרְדִּיכְלִיא הוֹת בִּינִי בְנֵי דִישִׁי וּזְכָה לְאַתְמָנָא לְמִלִּיךְ וְשׁוֹלְטָן:</p>
<p>23 בְּעֵינֵינוּ:</p>	<p>A youth was rejected by the builders. He was among the sons of Jesse and was entitled to be appointed king and ruler.</p>
<p>24 זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה יְהוָה נִגְלָה וְנִשְׁמַחָה בּוֹ:</p>	<p>23 מִן־קֶדֶם יְהוָה הוֹת דָּא אָמְרוּ אַרְדִּיכְלִיא הִיא פְּרִישָׁא קִדְמָנָא אָמְרוּ בְנֵי דִישִׁי:</p>
<p>25 אֲנֵא יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא אֲנֵא יְהוָה</p>	<p>"This was from YHWH," said the builders; "This is wonderful for us," said the sons of Jesse.</p>
<p>הַצְלִיחָה נָא:</p>	<p>24 דִּין יוֹמָא עֲבַד יְהוָה אָמְרוּ אַרְדִּיכְלִיא נְדוּץ וְנַחְדֵי בִיה אָמְרוּ בְנֵי דִישִׁי:</p>
<p>26 בְּרוּךְ הָבֵא בְשֵׁם יְהוָה בְּרַכְנוּכֶם</p>	<p>"This day YHWH made," said the builders; "Let us rejoice and be glad in it," said the sons of Jesse.</p>
<p>מִבַּיִת יְהוָה:</p>	<p>25 בְּבַעוּ מִינְךָ יְהוָה פְּרוּק כְּדוּן אָמְרוּ אַרְדִּיכְלִיא בְּבַעוּ מִינְךָ יְהוָה אַצְלַח כְּדוּן אָמְרוּ יְשִׁי וְאַנְתְּחִיהִי:</p>
<p>27 אֵל יְהוָה וַיָּאָר לָנוּ אֶסְרֵי־תַנּוּן בְּעֵבְתֵימָם</p>	<p>"We pray you, YHWH, save now," said the builders; "We pray you give success now," said Jesse and his wife.</p>
<p>עַד־קַרְנֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ:</p>	<p>26 בְּרִיךְ דַּתְּחֵי בְשׁוּם מִימְרָא דִיהוּוֹה אָמְרוּ אַרְדִּיכְלִי יִבְרַכּוּן יִתְכוּן מִן בֵּית מִקְדְּשָׁא דִיהוּוֹה אָמַר דָּוִד:</p>
<p>28 אֱלֹהֵי אֲתָהּ וְאֹדֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי אַרְוִמְמֶךָ:</p>	<p>"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Word of YHWH," said the builders; "They will bless you from the temple of YHWH," said David.</p>
<p>29 הוֹדֵנוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדּוֹ:</p>	<p>27 אֱלֹהָא יְהוּוֹה אָנְהָר לָנָא אָמְרוּ שְׁבִטֵיא דְבֵית יְהוּדָה כְּפִיתוּ טְלִיא לְנִיכְסַת חָגָא בְּשׁוֹשְׁלוּן עַד דִּי תִקְרַבּוּנִיה וְתָרוּן אַדְמִיָּה בְּקֶרְנַת מִדְּבַחָא אָמַר שְׁמוּאֵל נְבִיאֵי:</p>
<p>הוֹדֵנוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדּוֹ:</p>	<p>"God, YHWH, illumine us," said the tribes of the house of Judah; "Tie the lamb with chains for a festival sacrifice until you have offered it and sprinkled its blood on the horns of the altar," said Samuel the prophet.</p>
<p>הוֹדֵנוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדּוֹ:</p>	<p>28 אֱלֹהֵי אֲתָהּ וְאֹדֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי אַרְוִמְמֶךָ: "You are my God and I will give thanks before you, my God, I will praise you," said David.</p>
<p>הוֹדֵנוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדּוֹ:</p>	<p>29 מוֹתִיב שְׁמוּאֵל וְאָמַר שְׁבַחוּ כְּנִישְׁתָּא דִישְׂרָאֵל אֹדוּ קֶדֶם יְהוּוֹה אַרְוִם טַב אַרְוִם לְעַלְמָא טוֹבִיָּה:</p>
<p>הוֹדֵנוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדּוֹ:</p>	<p>SaumeI answered and said, "Praise, assembly of Israel, and give thanks before YHWH for he is good, for his goodness is eternal.</p>

<sup>43</sup> The above translation was borrowed from Snodgrass (1973:82-83).

As the above comparison shows, the Aramaic tradition interprets “stone” as “a youth” in v 22. Strack & Billerbeck (1965:876), Jeremias (1966a:259)<sup>44</sup> and Evans (2001:238) understand him as referring to David. The facts that the young man was among the sons of Jesse and that all the people concerned in the antiphonal praise were contemporaries of David back up referring to him as David (Snodgrass, 1973:83).

Accordingly, the Targum on Ps 118 seems to incorporate themes from David’s life, beginning with his youth and how he was firstly rejected, continuing with his acceptance as Israel’s king, and ending with Samuel’s offering of a sacrifice to celebrate young David’s accession to the throne (Evans, 2001:229).

Gärtner, however, interprets the youth as the Messiah, i.e. David’s son, suggesting that מלך and שולטן are terms used in connection with the Messiah (1953/54:100-101). The messianic-eschatological interpretation of other OT stone passages and the description of the stone as a ruler/king raises the possibility that similar associations would be made with Ps 118:22 (Brunson, 2003:41).

#### **2.4.1.3. Ps 118 in the Rabbinic Literature**

As the following table<sup>45</sup> demonstrates, the Hallel as a whole was interpreted

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<sup>44</sup> Jeremias suggests that the application of Ps 118 to the anointing of David by the Targum could be a secondary reinterpretation arising out of “anti-Christian polemic” (1966a:259).

<sup>45</sup> Jeremias (1966a:256-57).



eschatologically and/or messianically in late Judaism.

<i>Hallel</i>	<i>Rabbinic Literature</i>
Ps 113:2	The praise of God in the world to come (Midr. Ps 113:4)
Ps 113:9	Zion in the end time (Pesik. 141a)
Ps 115:1	The suffering of the messianic times and the war against Gog and Magog (b. Pes. 118a)
Ps 116:4	Saving of the souls of the pious from Gehenna (b. Pes. 118a)
Ps 116:9	Resurrection of the dead (b. Pes. 118a); the eschatological meal (Ex. R. 25.10 on 16:4)
Ps 116:13	David's table-blessing after the meal of the salvation time (b. Pes. 119b; Ex. R.25.10 on 16.4)
Ps 118:7	The last judgment (Midr. Ps 118, §10)
Ps 118:10-12	War against Gog and Magog (Midr. Ps 118, §12)
Ps 118:15	Beginning of the messianic times (Pesik. 132a)
Ps 118:24	The messianic redemption (Midr. Ps 118, §22)
Ps 118:24-29	The antiphonal choir at the Parousia (Midr. Ps 118, §22)
Ps 118:27a	God the light of salvation time (Midr. Ps 36, §6)
Ps 118:27b	The days of Gog and Magog (j. Ber. 2.4d.49)
Ps 118:28	The future world (j. Ber. 2.4d.50)

Particularly the second section of the Hallel was interpreted messianically in rabbinic literature (Cohn-Sherbok, 1981:707).

This eschatological interpretation is well showed in the Midrash on the Psalms, especially in Midr. Ps 118, § 22, which is presented below.

*Midr. Ps 118, § 22*<sup>46</sup>

Ps 118:24	After all the redemptions that came to Israel, enslavement followed, but from
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<sup>46</sup> This translation on Midr. Ps 118, § 22 was borrowed from Braude (1959:245).

	now on no enslavement will follow, as is said
Ps 118:25	From inside the walls, the men of Jerusalem will say, "We beseech Thee, O Lord, save now!" And from outside, the men of Judah will say, "We beseech Thee, O Lord, make us now to prosper!"
Ps 118:26	From inside, the men of Jerusalem will say, "Blessed be he that cometh IN the name of the Lord!" And from outside, the men of Judah will say, "We bless you OUT of the house of the Lord!"
Ps 118:27	From inside, the men of Jerusalem will say, "The Lord is God and hath given us light" And from outside, the men of Judah will say, "Order the festival procession with boughs, even unto the horns of the altar!"
Ps 118:28	From inside, the men of Jerusalem will say, "Thou art my God and I will give thanks unto Thee" And from outside, the men of Judah will say, "Thou art my God, I will exalt Thee"
Ps 118:29	Then the men of Jerusalem and the men of Judah, together, opening their mouths in praise of the Holy One, blessed be He, will say "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever"

For instance, Midr. Ps 118, § 22 interprets Ps 118:24 as referring to the day of redemption which ends all enslavement eternally, namely to the Messianic redemption. It records that vv 25-29 were sung antiphonally by the inhabitants of Jerusalem from inside the walls, while the men of Judah were outside.

Accordingly, it seems pertinent that Jeremias (1966a:258) understands the Midrash as describing the eschatological hour when the Messianic King heads the pilgrims from Judea into Jerusalem:

In the eschatological hour the inhabitants of Jerusalem are standing on

the pinnacles of the holy city, with the temple priest, and descending from the Mount of Olives the Messianic King draws near at the head of the pilgrim caravan from Judea. The Jerusalemites and the arriving pilgrims greet one another by singing a *hymn as an antiphonal choir*, using the words from Ps 118:25-28, until at the climax both groups unite in the praise of God in v 29.

It is clear that Ps 118 and its liturgical unit, the Egyptian Hallel, were given an eschatological and/or messianic interpretation in the rabbinic literature (Brunson, 2003:22; Snodgrass, 1973:84).

## **2.4.2. The use of Ps 118 in the early Christian tradition**

### **2.4.2.1. Ps 118 in the NT**

#### **2.4.2.1.1. Ps 118 in the Synoptic Gospels**

##### *a. The quotations from Ps 118 (117 LXX) in the Synoptic Gospels*

In the Synoptics Ps 118 (117 LXX) is quoted in three different contexts. One is in the parable of the Wicked Tenants, the other in the Triumphal Entry, and another is the Lament over Jerusalem.

##### *a.1. The parable of the Wicked Tenants*

#### **A comparison of the reading of the Greek texts of Ps 117:22-23 (LXX) with the Synoptics<sup>47</sup>**

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<sup>47</sup> The quotation of Ps 118 (117 LXX):22 appears also in Ac 4:11 in which it is adapted to its context.

LXX	Mk 12:10-11	Mt 21:42	Lk 20:17
	<sup>10</sup> οὐδὲ τὴν γραφὴν ταύτην ἀνέγνωτε·	Λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδέποτε ἀνέγνωτε ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς·	ὁ δὲ ἐμβλέψας αὐτοῖς εἶπεν· τί οὖν ἐστὶν τὸ γεγραμμένον τοῦτο·
<sup>22</sup> λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας	λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες, οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας·	λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες, οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας·	λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες, οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας;
<sup>23</sup> παρὰ κυρίου ἐγένετο αὕτη καὶ ἔστιν θαυμαστὴ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν	<sup>11</sup> παρὰ κυρίου ἐγένετο αὕτη καὶ ἔστιν θαυμαστὴ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν;	παρὰ κυρίου ἐγένετο αὕτη καὶ ἔστιν θαυμαστὴ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν;	

### *Parallel Quotations*

Most of all, Ps 118 (117 LXX):22-23 is cited in the context of the parable of the Wicked Tenants of Mk 12:1-11. According to Crossan (1971:451), this parable is also found in Mk 12:10-11, Mt 21:33-46, Lk 20:9-19, and in the Gospel of Thomas, logion 65, where it is followed by the corner-stone saying in logion 66. In response to questions about Jesus' authority, the Synoptic authors punctuate the end of the parable with a quote from Ps 118 (117 LXX):22-23 (but Luke omits v. 23).

### *Introductory Formulae*

All of the Synoptics introduce the Ps 118 (117 LXX) quotation with their typical introductory formulae: οὐδὲ τὴν γραφὴν ταύτην ἀνέγνωτε in Mk 12:10, οὐδέποτε ἀνέγνωτε ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς in Mt 21:42 and τί οὖν ἐστὶν τὸ γεγραμμένον τοῦτο in Lk 20:17.

### *Comparison with the LXX*

The quotation from Ps 118 (117 LXX):22-23 in the Synoptics (Luke cites only v 22) is in verbatim agreement with the LXX which corresponds, in turn, with the MT (Archer and Chirichigno, 1983:87).

### *The messianical interpretation*

In agreement with the exegesis of the Midrash on Psalms, the evangelists report that Jesus interpreted Ps 118:22-23 messianically. Jesus understands in Ps 118:22-23 how God will lead his Messiah through suffering to glory (Jeremias, 1966a:259).

### *a.2. The Triumphal Entry*

#### **A comparison of the reading of the Greek texts of Ps 117:25-26 (LXX) with the Synoptics**

LXX	Mk 11:9-10	Mt 21:9	Lk 19:38
	καὶ οἱ προάγοντες	οἱ δὲ ὄχλοι οἱ	λέγοντες·

<p>ὦ κύριε σῶσον δὴ          ὦ κύριε εὐδόωσον          δὴ          εὐλογημένος ὁ          ἐρχόμενος ἐν          ὀνόματι κυρίου          εὐλογημένος ὁ          ἐρχόμενος ἐν          ὀνόματι κυρίου          εὐλογημένη ἡ          ἐρχομένη βασιλεία          τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν          Δαυίδ·          ὡσαννὰ ἐν τοῖς          ὑψίστοις.          εὐλογήκαμεν ὑμᾶς          ἐξ οἴκου κυρίου</p>	<p>καὶ οἱ          ἀκολουθοῦντες          ἔκραζον·          ὡσαννά·          εὐλογημένος ὁ          ἐρχόμενος ἐν          ὀνόματι κυρίου·          εὐλογημένη ἡ          ἐρχομένη βασιλεία          τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν          Δαυίδ·          ὡσαννὰ ἐν τοῖς          ὑψίστοις.</p>	<p>προάγοντες αὐτὸν          καὶ οἱ          ἀκολουθοῦντες          ἔκραζον λέγοντες·          ὡσαννὰ τῷ υἱῷ          Δαυίδ·          εὐλογημένος ὁ          ἐρχόμενος ἐν          ὀνόματι κυρίου·          ὡσαννὰ ἐν τοῖς          ὑψίστοις.</p>	<p>εὐλογημένος ὁ          ἐρχόμενος, ὁ          βασιλεὺς ἐν          ὀνόματι κυρίου·          ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰρήνη          καὶ δόξα ἐν          ὑψίστοις.</p>
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### *Parallel Quotations*

The Ps 118 (117 LXX) quotation of Mk 11:9-10 is in the context of the Triumphal Entry (Mk 11:1-11). This Psalm quotation is also found in the other Gospels, that is, Mt 21:9; Lk 13:35, 19:38 (cf. Jn 12:13).

### *Absence of introductory formula*

In the Triumphal Entry an introductory formula of Ps 118 (117 LXX) quotation is absent in all the Gospels. Consequently it is sometimes classified as an allusion. But the distinction is unimportant since the use of Ps 118 (117 LXX) is not in doubt.

### *Comparison with the LXX version*

Compared with the LXX text, all the Synoptic writers give the quotation from Ps 118 (117 LXX):25-26 their own peculiar theological colouring by inserting such an interpretative note as ἡ ἐρχομένη βασιλεία τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Δαυίδ (Mk 11:10), or τῷ υἱῷ Δαυίδ (Mt 21:9), or ὁ βασιλεὺς (Lk 19:38) into the original psalm (cf. in Jn 12:13, ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ).

### *The eschatological interpretation*

As mentioned above, the Midrash on the Psalms interprets Ps 118:24-29 eschatologically. As Jeremias points out (1966a:258), this eschatological interpretation of Midr. Ps 118, § 22 may have influenced the NT<sup>48</sup>:

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<sup>48</sup> Here the dating of the Midrash on Ps 118 becomes an issue. Its date is uncertain. The date for its compilation has been set as late as the 9<sup>th</sup> century. But Braude (1959:1.xxv-xxvi) contends that its beginning maybe was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Furthermore, most of the scholars agree with the thought that the Midrash on Pss 1-118 is earlier than that on Pss 119-150 (Brunson, 2003:93). Accordingly, such scholars as Snodgrass and Brunson follow Jeremias' opinion that the eschatological interpretation of Ps 118 goes back to the time of Jesus. I also go with Brunson who argues that "Matthew and Luke may have used the psalm with such a sense" (2003:93).

This eschatological exegesis of Ps 118:24-29 which we find in the Midrash on Psalms is not dated, But the NT shows that it certainly *goes back to the days of Jesus*, and that it was the common property of the people. For when the evangelists report that at his entry into Jerusalem Jesus was greeted with Ps 118:25f., this not only presupposes that these verses were eschatologically interpreted, as in the Midrash, but also that they were understood as acclamations to hail the entering Messiah, Indeed, it is possible that the interpretation given to Ps 118:24-29 in the Midrash has influenced the accounts of the Triumphal Entry even down to details.

### *a.3. The Lament over Jerusalem*

#### **A comparison of the reading of the Greek texts of Ps 117:26 (LXX) with Mt 23:39 and Lk 13:35**

LXX	Mt 23:39	Lk 13:35
<p>εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου εὐλογήκαμεν ὑμᾶς ἐξ οἴκου κυρίου</p>	<p>λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν, οὐ μὴ με ἴδητε ἀπ' ἄρτι ἕως ἂν εἴπητε·</p> <p>εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου.</p>	<p>ἰδοὺ ἀφίεται ὑμῖν ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν. λέγω [δὲ] ὑμῖν, οὐ μὴ ἴδητέ με ἕως [ἤξει ὅτε] εἴπητε·</p> <p>εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου.</p>



### *Comparison with the LXX version*

Matthew<sup>49</sup> and Luke's citation here agrees exactly with the LXX – which is also an accurate rendering of the Hebrew.

### *The messianical and eschatological interpretation*

The quotation from Ps 118 (117 LXX):26 in the two Gospels follows the messianical and eschatological exegesis applied to Ps 118:24-29 in the Midrash.

Jeremias (1966a:259-60) appropriately explains it:

That Jesus indeed found in Ps 118 how God would guide his Messiah through suffering to glory, through chastisement to the God at the time of the consummation, is made probable by the fact that according to Mt 23:39 (par. Lk 13:35b) he knew the dynamic interpretation given to Ps 118.24-29 in the Midrash quoted above. When we read Mt 23:39 (par. Lk 13:35b): “For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord,’” not only here, as in the Midrash, is Ps 118:26a understood by Jesus as a Messianic acclamation in the eschatological hour, but also the half-line is put by Jesus, as in the Midrash, into the mouths of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This observation throws new light upon the context. Mt 23:37-39 par. Lk 13:34f. constitutes a unity: the verses are held together by the address to Jerusalem.

### *b. Allusions to Ps 118 (117 LXX) in the Synoptic Gospels*

In the Synoptics, Ps 118 (117 LXX) is alluded to in five different contexts. The first is found in the *Magnificat*, the second in the passion prediction; the third in

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<sup>49</sup> D has θεοῦ, “God” instead of κυρίου.

John the Baptist's question; the fourth in Jesus at the Temple; and the last in the Lord's Supper.

*b.1. The Magnificat*

**A comparison of the reading of the Greek texts of Ps 117:15-16 (LXX) with Lk 1:51**

LXX	Lk 1:51
<sup>15</sup> φωνή ἀγαλλιᾶσεως καὶ σωτηρίας ἐν σκηναῖς δικαίων <u>δεξιὰ κυρίου ἐποίησεν δύναμιν</u>	Ἐποίησεν κράτος ἐν βραχίονι αὐτοῦ, <u>διεσκόρπισεν ὑπερηφάνους διανοία</u>
<sup>16</sup> δεξιὰ κυρίου ὑψώσεν με <u>δεξιὰ κυρίου</u> <u>ἐποίησεν δύναμιν</u>	καρδίας αὐτῶν·

One possible allusion to Ps 118 (117 LXX):15-16 is found in Mary's Song (Lk 1:46-56). Bovon argues that there are parallels between Ps 118 (117 LXX):15-16 and v 51a; Pr 3:34 and v 51a-b; Ps 89:10 and v 51b (2002:62). The allusion from Ps 118 (117 LXX):16 is also found in Ac 2:33 and 5:31. Ac 2:33 is in the context of Peter's Pentecost sermon (2:14-40). In his address to the multitude the wording τῇ δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ ὑψωθεῖς appears to allude to Ps 118 (117 LXX):16 (δεξιὰ κυρίου ὑψώσεν) because a similar phrase is also employed in Ac 5:31 (ὑψωσεν τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ) (Conzelmann, 1987:21).

b.2. The passion prediction

**A comparison of the reading of the Greek texts of Ps 117:22 (LXX) with Mk 8:31, Lk 9:22 and 17:25**

LXX	Mk 8:31	Lk 9:22	Lk 17:25
Λίθον ὃν <u>ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ</u> οἰκοδομοῦντες οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας	Καὶ ἤρξατο διδάσκειν αὐτοὺς ὅτι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ παθεῖν καὶ <u>ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι</u> ὑπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τῶν γραμματέων καὶ ἀποκτανθῆναι καὶ μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀναστῆναι·	εἰπὼν ὅτι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ παθεῖν καὶ <u>ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι</u> ἀπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ ἀρχιερέων καὶ γραμματέων καὶ ἀποκτανθῆναι καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐγερθῆναι.	πρῶτον δὲ δεῖ αὐτὸν πολλὰ παθεῖν καὶ <u>ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι</u> ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης.

The first possible allusion to Ps 118 (117 LXX):22 in the Synoptics is found in the first passion prediction in Mk 8:31-33.<sup>50</sup> Peter's declaration of Jesus as Messiah is followed by the first passion prediction which alludes to Ps 118 (117 LXX):22. The direct link to Ps 118 (117 LXX):22 is the verb ἀποδοκιμάζω. All three passion predictions in 8:31, 9:31 and 10:33-34 agree on the concluding

<sup>50</sup> Among scholars who accept the allusion to Ps 118 (117 LXX):22 cf. (Juel, 1999:144); (Gundry, 1993:429); (Lane, 1974:301-302); (Snodgrass, 1983:101).

elements, ἀποκτανθῆναι καὶ μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀναστήσεται (He would be killed, and three days later he would rise again). But only 8:31 employs the term ἀποδοκιμάζω. The use of the word makes this verse an easily identifiable allusion, not only because of verbal agreement with Ps 118 (117 LXX):22 but because of the reappearance of the rare verb<sup>51</sup> in the citation of Ps 118 (117 LXX):22-23 in Mk 12:10-11. That Jesus' opponents for the subsequent psalm citation are the chief priest, scribes, and elders (see Mk 11:27), the identical group of leaders mentioned in Mk 8:31, reinforces the link (Brunson, 2003:103).

As in the Markan version (8:31-33), Luke's first passion prediction (Lk 9:21-27) follows Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ and alludes to Ps 118:22. Here and in Lk 17:25, the rare verb ἀποδοκιμάζω is used. It is therefore likely that Luke 9:22 and 17:25 also allude to Ps 118 (117 LXX):22.<sup>52</sup>

### *b.3. John the Baptist's question*

#### **A comparison of the reading of the Greek texts of Ps 117:26 (LXX) with Mt 11:3 and Lk 7:19**

LXX	Mt 11:3	Lk 7:19
εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι	εἶπεν αὐτῷ· σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἢ ἕτερον	ἔπεμψεν πρὸς τὸν κύριον λέγων· σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος

<sup>51</sup> In all but one occurrence in the NT (Hb 12:17), this verb is found in citations of, or allusions to, Ps 118 (117 LXX) (Mk 8:31; Lk. 9:22; Lk 17:25; 1 Pt 2:4, 7) (Wagner, 1997:162). According to Brunson (2003:113), it always refers to the rejection of Jesus.

<sup>52</sup> Although Luke has here followed the phraseology from Mark, the recurrence of ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι in the context of the passion prediction of 17:25 suggests both a recognition and further use of this intertextual echo of Ps 118 (117 LXX) (Wagner, 1997:163).

κυρίου εὐλογήκαμεν ὑμᾶς ἐξ οἴκου κυρίου	προσδοκῶμεν;	ἢ ἄλλον προσδοκῶμεν;
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A possible allusion to Ps 118 (117 LXX):26 is found in John the Baptist's question mentioned in Mt 11:3 and Lk 7:19. Matthew is dependent on Q, agreeing closely with Luke. The phrase ὁ ἐρχόμενος links back to the Baptist's preaching in Mt 3:11, but also evokes Ps 118 (117 LXX):26 (Wagner, 1997:161). In Matthew, the expression ὁ ἐρχόμενος is found three more times, i.e., in the Baptist's preaching (3:11// par. Lk 3:16), in the Triumphal Entrance (21:9// par. Lk 19:38), and in the Prophetic Lament (23:39// par. Lk 13:35).

#### *b.4. Jesus at the Temple*

One potential allusion to Ps 118 (117 LXX):25 is found in the context of Jesus at the Temple (Mt 21:12-17). In 21:15 Matthew repeats the Ps 118 (117 LXX) citation in 21:9 ὡσαννὰ τῷ υἱῷ Δαυίδ. Accordingly, this phrase also seems to allude to Ps 118 (117 LXX):25. Unlike the previous pericope in which the crowd uses the phrase from Ps 118 (117 LXX):25-26 (Mt 21:9), this time, children repeat part of the words of the crowd (Ps 118 [117 LXX]:25). Matthew also repeats ὡσαννὰ τῷ υἱῷ Δαυίδ in 23:39, "thus creating an inclusio framing the long passage of the narrative set in the temple (Mt 21-23)" (Weren, 1997:119).

#### *b.5. The Lord's Supper*

Perhaps the last allusion to Ps 118 (117 LXX) in the Synoptics is found in the

singing of a hymn as closure of the Last Supper (Mk 14:26// par. Mt 26:30). Because the Last Supper in Mark and Matthew is a Passover meal, many have thought of the custom of chanting the latter half of the Egyptian Hallel (Pss 115-118) at Passover (Davies and Allison, 2000:483-84).

#### **2.4.2.1.2. Ps 118 in the Johannine literature**

##### *a. John*

##### *a.1. Quotations from Ps 118 [117 LXX] in John's Gospel*

##### *Absence of introductory formula*

In John's Gospel Ps 118 (117 LXX) is quoted once in the context of the Triumphal Entry. Like the Synoptics, the Ps 118 (117 LXX) quotation of John has no introductory formula. But in case of the fourth Gospel this quotation is the sole explicit one in John that is not either introduced or followed by a formula (Freed, 1965:67).<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, the context does not encourage the introduction of a formula — one can barely suppose the multitude to add an introductory formula to their repeated cries. Accordingly, it appears that this is the reason why none of the Synoptics introduce the citation with a formula either (Brunson, 2003:185).<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Evans (1982:80) mentions another citation without formula in Fourth Gospel: Gn 28:12 in Jn 1:51.

<sup>54</sup> According to Freed (1965:67), many specific OT citations take place in the Synoptics without a introductory formula (e.g., Mk 2:26; 4:12, 29, 32; 6:34; 8:18 ; Mt 9:13; 12:40;

### *Comparison with the LXX version*

Compared with the LXX, like the Synoptic writers, John also gives Ps 118 (117 LXX) a theological colouring by interpolating the expression ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ into the crowd's blessing.

#### *a.2. Allusions to Ps 118 [117 LXX] in John's Gospel*

According to Brunson (2003:5), Ps 118 (117 LXX) is alluded to at least four times in John's Gospel. The first is found in the context of the priority of Jesus over Abraham and the prophets (8:48-59); the second in the door of sheep sayings (10:7-10); the third in the Feast of Dedication (10:22-39); and the last in the resurrection of Lazarus (11:38-44).<sup>55</sup>

#### *B. Revelation<sup>56</sup>*

In Revelation, one cannot find any explicit OT quotation. But there are many allusions to Psalm texts in it. Two of them are from Ps 118 (117 LXX). According to Moyise (2004:231), "John's technique is not to introduce them [the psalms] with an introductory formula or even a break in syntax."

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Lk 4:26; 8:10).

<sup>55</sup> John's allusions to Ps 118 (117 LXX) will be discussed in 6.3.3.

<sup>56</sup> According to Moyise (2001:6), the number of the allusions in Revelation ranges from about 250 to well over 1000.

b.1. *The heavenly throne-room audition*

**A comparison of the reading of the Greek texts of Ps 117:24 (LXX) with Rv 19:7**

LXX	Rv 19:7
αὕτη ἡ ἡμέρα ἣν ἐποίησεν ὁ κύριος <u>ἀγαλλιασώμεθα καὶ εὐφρανθῶμεν ἐν αὐτῇ</u>	<u>χαίρωμεν καὶ ἀγαλλιῶμεν</u> καὶ δώσωμεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτῷ, ὅτι ἦλθεν ὁ γάμος τοῦ ἀρνίου καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ἠτοίμασεν ἑαυτὴν

The first allusion in Revelation to Ps 118 (117 LXX) is in the context of the heavenly throne-room audition (19:1-8). The unit in 19:1–8 consists of two subunits: (1) 19:1–4, a two-part hymn of praise and the response, which focuses on the judgment of the whore, and (2) 19:5–8, a call to praise and a hymnic response (Aune, 1998:1019). As the context and the usage of *δικαιώματα* in v 8 back up a meaning of “vindication” or “acquittal” resulting from divine judgments for the believers, it is not accidental that the opening words of v 7 echo Ps 118 (117 LXX):24, since its main point is also praise to God for vindicating the believers, and the wording in Ps 118 (117 LXX) is analogous to John’s *χαίρωμεν καὶ ἀγαλλιῶμεν*<sup>57</sup> (Beale, 1999:936-937).<sup>58</sup> Beale (1999:937) asserts God has vindicated the “rejected stone” (the king or Israel or both) in the psalm.

<sup>57</sup> According to Brunson (2003:285-286), the combination of the two verbs appears in the NT only four times and these were especially associated with cultic settings.

<sup>58</sup> V 7 already contains a possible allusion to Mt 5:12 (*χαίrete καὶ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε*), since its main point is also the same.



b.2. *The last parenthesis*

**A comparison of the reading of the Greek texts of Ps 117:20 (LXX) with Rv 22:14**

LXX	Rv 22:14
<p>αὕτη ἡ πύλη τοῦ κυρίου δίκαιοι  <u>εἰσελεύσονται ἐν αὐτῇ</u></p>	<p>Μακάριοι οἱ πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς        αὐτῶν, ἵνα ἔσται ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ        ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς καὶ <u>τοῖς πυλῶσιν</u>  <u>εἰσέλθωσιν εἰς τὴν πόλιν.</u></p>

The second allusion in Revelation to Ps 118 (117 LXX) is in the context of the last parenthesis (22:10-20). The last wording of v 14, καὶ τοῖς πυλῶσιν εἰσέλθωσιν εἰς τὴν πόλιν, seems to refer to Ps 118 (117 LXX):20, ἡ πύλη τοῦ κυρίου δίκαιοι εἰσελεύσονται ἐν αὐτῇ, since v 22 of Ps 118 (117 LXX) is one of the most employed messianic prophecies elsewhere in the NT: the rejected stone that has become the cornerstone (Beale, 1999:1140).

**2.4.2.1.3. Ps 118 in the Pauline Epistles**

Although the Pauline literature contains a lot of Psalm references, a single *explicit citation* from Ps 118 (117 LXX) is not found in it. The epistles, however, *allude* to Ps 118 (117 LXX) at least four times: Ps 118 (117 LXX):6 in Rm 8:31, Ps 118 (117 LXX):22 in Rm 9:32-33, Ps 118 (117 LXX):17-18 in 2 Cor 6:9, and Ps 118 (117 LXX):22 in Eph 2:20.

#### 2.4.2.1.4. Ps 118 in the General Epistles

In the General Epistles, Ps 118 (117 LXX) is twice explicitly quoted: Ps 118 (117 LXX):6 in Hb 13:6 and Ps 118 (117 LXX):22 in 1 Pt 2:7.

##### *a. Hebrews*

Ps 118 (117 LXX):6 is the very last explicit quotation in Hebrews. The citation from Ps 118 in Hb 13:6 is an almost exact quote of Ps 118 (117 LXX):6 from the LXX with the presence of βοηθός – against the MT. Accordingly, it is likely that the original text form of this citation is closer to the Greek version(s) (Steyn, 2006:130).

##### *b. 1 Peter*

Ps 118 (117 LXX):22 is found in 1 Pt 2:7 with an introductory formula, διότι περιέχει ἐν γραφῇ. The Ps 118 (117 LXX) quotation, which is in between the two citations from Isaiah (Is 28:16 in 1 Pt 2:6 and Is 8:14 in 1 Pt 2:8), is in an almost exact agreement with the LXX.

#### 2.4.2.2. Ps 118 in *The Gospel of Thomas*

##### **Textual differences between LXX and the Gospel of Thomas**

Ps 117:22 (LXX)	GT Logion 66
<sup>22</sup> λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ	Jesus said: Show me the stone which

οἰκοδομοῦντες οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας	the builders rejected. It is the cornerstone.
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The Gospel of Thomas also uses the Parable of the Wicked Tenants with the Ps 118 (117 LXX) quotation. Compared with the Synoptics, the Gospel of Thomas is simpler, apparently less allegorical in form. It has been popular, therefore, for some time, among several scholars (Wilson, 1960:101-2; Crossan, 1971:451-65; Newell, 1972:226-27; Robinson, 1974-75:443-61; Funk and Hoover, 1993:101) to regard the form of the parable in Thomas as more original than the Synoptic forms of the parable.

But a lot of scholars do not accept this argument. Montefiore contends that the briefer accounts in the Gospel according to Thomas may be due to compression (1960/61:228). Snodgrass (1974/75:144) also denies the idea that Thomas' version is the original, saying that "the twofold sending of the servants in the Gospel of Thomas stems from a post-Synoptic stage of the parable." Evans (2001:217-18) rejects that idea in support of Sevrin's opinion that the Gnostic redactor of *Thomas* edited and abbreviated the synoptic parables as part of his Gnostic argument against materialism and wealth. In this case, Evans' thought (2001:218) looks more convincing because the supposition that shorter forms are older and more original than more detailed forms, at once encounters difficulties. "A similar simpler, apparently less allegorical form is found in Lk 20:9-17." There are few words and phrases from Is 5:1-2 in the Lukan version, which is dependent upon Mark. Luke omits a large part of Mark's vv 4-5 and

simplifies Mark's v 6. Finally, Luke omits Ps 118 (117 LXX):23, which is also absent in the Gospel of Thomas 66. By the omission, one may come to a conclusion that *Thomas* depended on the Lukan version which "shows great hesitation with regard to allegorization" like *Thomas* (Jeremias, 1966b:77).

#### **2.4.2.3. Ps 118 in the Church Fathers**

The Apostolic Fathers also used Ps 118 (117 LXX). Ps 118 (117 LXX) quotations are found in their writings at least three times: Ps 118 (117 LXX):22-23 in Barn 6:2-4, Ps 118 (117 LXX):19-20 in 1 Cle 48:2 and Ps 118 (117 LXX):18 in 1 Cle 56:3.

##### **2.4.2.3.1. Ps 118 in Barnabas**

The argument of Barnabas is closely connected with the OT. There are roughly 100 direct citations of Scripture. His favourite books are Isaiah (approximately one-fourth), the Pentateuch (particularly Genesis) and Psalms. These were also the most frequently cited texts in the early Christian literature (Ferguson, 1998:828).

As the next table shows, like Peter, the context of Barnabas also has a catena of scriptural citations. There are, at least, three quotations in Barn 6:2-4: Is 28:16, Is 50:7 and Ps 118 (117 LXX):22. According to Paget (1994:129), these three citations rely on the collection of stone *testimonia*. To introduce the quotation of Ps 118 (117 LXX), Barnabas uses the term λέγει. This verb is employed 68 times all over in Barnabas (Hvalvik, 1996:106). The subject in the

introductory formula is ὁ προφήτης. According to Hvalvik (1996:108), this is found 16 times in the whole of Barnabas (4:4; 5:13 [twice]; 6:2b, 4a, 6, 7, 8, 13c; 11:2, 4, 9; 14:2, 7, 8, 9). The quotation of Ps 118 (117 LXX):22 in Barnabas corresponds word for word with the LXX.

### A comparison of the reading of the Greek texts of Ps 117:22 (LXX) with Barn 6:2-4

LXX	Barn 6:2-4
<p><sup>22</sup><u>λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας</u></p>	<p><sup>2</sup>οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὑμεῖς πάντες ὡς ἱμάτιον παλαιωθήσεθε, καὶ σῆς καταφάγεται ὑμᾶς. καὶ παλιν λέγει ὁ προφήτης, ἐπεὶ ὡς λίθος ἰσχυρὸς ἐτέθη εἰς συντριβὴν· Ἰδοὺ ἐμβαλῶ εἰς τὰ θεμέλια Σιών λίθον πολυτελεῖ, ἐκλεκτόν, ἀκρογωναῖον, ἔντιμον.</p> <p><sup>3</sup>εἶτα τί λέγει; Καὶ ὃς ἐλπίζει ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ζήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. ἐπὶ λίθον οὖν ἡμῶν ἡ ἐλπίς; μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλ’ ἐπεὶ ἐν ἰσχύϊ τέθεικεν τὴν σάρκα αὐτοῦ κύριος. λέγει γάρ· Καὶ ἔθηκέ με ὡς στερεὰν πέτραν.</p> <p><sup>4</sup>λέγει δὲ πάλιν ὁ προφήτης· <u>Λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες, οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας.</u></p> <p>καὶ πάλιν λέγει· Αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἡμέρα ἡ μεγάλη καὶ θαυματὴ, ἣν ἐποίησεν ὁ κύριος.</p>

#### 2.4.2.3.2. Ps 118 in 1 Clement

Clement's extensive quotation of the OT is particularly impressive. The roughly seventy explicit citations comprise about one-fourth of this lengthy letter, making it second only to Barnabas among the Church Fathers in the frequent use of OT quotations (Ferguson, 1998:826-27). It is especially noticeable that more than one-third of the OT citations in Clement are adopted from the Psalms.<sup>59</sup> In 1 Clement the Psalter is quoted as many as 21 times in the form of Septuagintal citations<sup>60</sup> (Hagner, 1973:23). Two of them are from Ps 118(117 LXX): Ps 118(117 LXX):19-20 in 1 Cle 48:2 and Ps 118(117 LXX):18 in 1 Cle 56:3.

#### A comparison of the reading of the Greek texts of Ps 117:19-20 (LXX) with 1 Cle 48:2

LXX	1 Cle 48:2
<p>ἀνοίξατέ μοι πύλας δικαιοσύνης          εἰσελθὼν ἐν αὐταῖς ἔξομολογήσομαι τῷ          κυρίῳ αὕτη ἡ πύλη τοῦ κυρίου δίκαιοι          εἰσελεύσονται ἐν αὐτῇ</p>	<p>πύλη γὰρ δικαιοσύνης ἀνεγώγυια εἰς          ζωὴν αὕτη καθως γέγραπται·          Ἀνοίξατέ μοι πύλας δικαιοσύνης ἵνα          εἰσελθὼν ἐν αὐταῖς ἔξομολογήσομαι τῷ          κυρίῳ</p>

<sup>59</sup> The next most frequently quoted books are Isaiah, Job, Genesis, and Proverbs.

<sup>60</sup> 1 Cle 15:3 [Ps 61:5]; 1 Cle 15:4 [Ps 77:36f.]; 1 Cle 15:5 [Ps 30:19]; 1 Cle 15:5-6 [Ps 11:4-6]; 1 Cle 16:15f. [Ps 21:7 -9]; 1 Cle 18:2-17 [Ps 50:3-19]; 1 Cle 22:1-7 [Ps 33:12-18]; 1 Cle 22:8 [Ps 31:10]; 1 Cle 27:7 [Ps 18:2-4]; 1 Cle 35:7-12 [Ps 49:16-23]; 1 Cle 36:3 [Ps 103:4]; 1 Cle 36:4 [Ps 2:7f.]; 1 Cle 36:5 [Ps 109:1]; 1 Cle 46:3 [Ps 17:26f.]; 1 Cle 48:2f. [Ps 117:19f.]; 1 Cle 50:6 [Ps 31:1f.]; 1 Cle 52:3 [Ps 49:14f.]; 1 Cle 52:4 [Ps 50:19]; 1 Cle 54:3 [Ps 23:1]; 1 Cle 56:3 [Ps 117:18]; 1 Cle 56:5 [Ps 140:5].

The quotation of 1 Cle 48:2 has the introductory formula καθὼς γέγραπται – which is found 9 times in 1 Clement (4:1-6; 14:4; 17:3; 29:2; 36:3; 39:3-9; 48:2; 50:4, 6). This citation is in literal agreement with the LXX (A and *a*; B, deficient) except for the subjunctive ἐξομολογήσῃμαι for the indicative ἐξομολογήσομαι but C corrects the verb to correspond with the LXX (Hagner, 1973:46).

### A comparison of the reading of the Greek texts of Ps 117:18 (LXX) with 1 Cle 56:3

LXX	1 Cle 56:3
<p>παιδεύων ἐπαίδευσέν με ὁ κύριος καὶ τῷ            θανάτῳ οὐ παρέδωκέν με</p>	<p>οὕτως γὰρ φήσιν ὁ ἅγιος λόγος·            Παιδεύων ἐπαίδευσέν με ὁ κύριός καὶ            τῷ θανάτῳ οὐ παρέδωκέν με</p>

1 Cle 56:3 begins with the introductory formula οὕτως φησιν ὁ ἅγιος λόγος. The verb φήσι is employed 7 times to introduce quotations (13:4; 16:2-16; 16:15; 30:2; 33:5; 53:3; 56:5). The brief citation of the Psalm is in verbatim agreement with the LXX. *a* has the minor change of omitting the article before κύριος (Hagner, 1973:47).

### 2.4.3. Summary

The use of Ps 118 in the Jewish and Christian tradition was investigated. In search of the *Wirkungsgeschichte*, two points are noticeable. First is the liturgical use of Ps 118. This is well shown in the scroll 11QPs<sup>a</sup> of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which probably arranged the Psalms unusually for the purpose of

liturgical use. Its sequence is Pss 135, 136, parts of Ps 118, and 145 with some additional inserts and a (largely missing) subscription.

Second is an eschatological-messianical interpretation of Ps 118. The strong Davidic emphasis of the Dead Sea Scrolls may suggest an eschatological reading of Ps 118. In the Targum on Ps 118, exegesis of “stone” into “a youth” in v 22 and the depiction of the stone as a ruler/king raise the possibility of a messianic-eschatological interpretation for Ps 118. In late Judaism the second section of the Hallel was interpreted messianically. The eschatological interpretation is well attested in the Midrash on the Psalms. In accordance with the exegesis of the Midrash on the Psalms, the evangelists report that Jesus interpreted Ps 118:22-23, 25-26 eschatologically and messianically.

Possible Ps 118 (117 LXX) references in the early Christian tradition are:

- Vv 5, 21 of Ps 118 (117 LXX) are alluded to in Jn 11:41-42.
- V 6 of Ps 118 (117 LXX) is quoted once in Hb 13:6 and alluded to once in Rm 8:31b.
- Vv 10-12 of Ps 118 (117 LXX) are alluded to in Jn 10:24-25.
- V 15 of Ps 118 (117 LXX) is alluded to in Lk 1:51.
- V 16 of Ps 118 (117 LXX) is alluded to three times in Luke-Acts (in Lk 1:51; Ac 2:33; 5:31).
- Vv 17-18 of Ps 118 (117 LXX) are alluded to in 2 Cor 6:9.
- V 20 of Ps 118 (117 LXX) is alluded to in Rv 22:14.



- V 22 (or vv 22-23) of Ps 118 (117 LXX) is one of the favourite Psalms of the early Christian writers. It is found at least 10 times in the early Christian literature.
- V 24 of Ps 118 (117 LXX) is alluded to in Jn 8:56 and in Rv 19:7.
- Vv 25-26 (or v 26) of Ps 118 (117 LXX) are quoted at least six times in the Gospels (in Mk 11:9-10; Mt 21:9; 23:39; Lk 13:35, 19:38; Jn 12:13) and are alluded to twice in the Synoptics (in Mt 11:3; Lk 7:19).