



Psalm 2: The Davidic Kingdom's Royal Ideology

by

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DECLARATION

I, Katlego Assis, declare that this thesis, "Psalm 2: The Davidic Kingdom's Royal Ideology," which I hereby submit for the degree of MTh in Biblical Studies Old Testament and Hebrew Scriptures at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

ETHICS STATEMENT

I, Katlego Assis, have obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval. I declare that I have observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's Code of Ethics for Researchers and the Policy Guidelines for Responsible Research.

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Abstract

This study explored intersecting Israelite royal ideology and broader Ancient Near East (ANE) traditions in Psalm 2. The main focus was to examine how Israel's monotheistic worldview adapted elements of ANE royal traditions to construct a unique vision of kingship. In this vision, the Davidic king was presented as both Yahweh's earthly representative and an anointed ruler. Psalm 2 is a critical text for understanding the development of Israelite royal theology. The Psalm is significant for how it portrayed divine kingship and its theological implications across Jewish and Christian traditions.

The dissertation used synchronic and diachronic methodologies to investigate how Psalm 2 incorporated universal characteristics of kingship from neighbouring cultures. These cultures included Egypt and Mesopotamia; the Psalm also redefined the characteristics to fit the context of Israel's covenantal relationship with Yahweh. The synchronic analysis focused on the text's final form, exploring its literary structure and metaphors that illustrated the king's divine mandate to govern the nations. The king's authority was affirmed through his close relationship with Yahweh, symbolised by divine sonship, emphasised throughout the Psalm. Metaphorical language, such as the king breaking nations "like pottery," highlighted his role as an enforcer of divine justice.

The diachronic approach traced the historical evolution of these royal themes, situating them in the broader political and cultural landscape of Ancient Israel. The study found that Psalm 2 likely emerged when Israel was increasingly involved with ancient Near Eastern (ANEern) empires. The psalm reflected these interactions by depicting the king's role in international diplomacy and warfare. This context shaped the Psalm's imagery of kingship, where victory over foreign enemies was seen as evidence of Yahweh's favour and the king's divine sanction.

The research also explored the theological implications of Psalm 2, especially its messianic interpretations within Jewish and Christian traditions. For Christians, Psalm 2 is often viewed as a prophetic text predicting the coming of Christ, the ultimate fulfilment of the Davidic covenant, and the establishment of a universal kingdom. The New Testament writers, such as those in Acts and Hebrews, frequently referenced Psalm 2 to highlight Jesus' divine sonship and role as the Messiah. This messianic

interpretation corresponds with the psalm's promise of a future king who reigns over all nations, thus reinforcing its enduring theological significance.

The dissertation explored the connection between Psalm 2 and other texts in the Psalter, specifically its relationship with Psalm 1. The comparison of these two psalms established a thematic connection between personal righteousness and the king's duty to uphold divine law on a national level. This connection positioned the Davidic king as the supreme ruler who governed Israel and represented Yahweh's justice for all nations.

The study's findings added to the ongoing discussions about how Israelite royal ideology interacted with and differed from traditions in the ANE. The study showed that while the Psalmist borrowed from the broader cultural environment, he interpreted these elements to reflect its unique theological framework. In this framework, the king's legitimacy comes not from divine lineage, as in neighbouring cultures, but from his covenantal relationship with Yahweh. The Davidic king was not presented as a deity, as in neighbouring cultures, but as Yahweh's servant, responsible for maintaining divine justice and upholding the covenant.

In conclusion, this study enhanced the current understanding of Psalm 2 as a crucial text in developing Israelite royal ideology. Analysing the psalm from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives provided a comprehensive view of how royal ideology operated in Ancient Israel and how it continues to impact religious thought today. The research also emphasised the significance of Psalm 2 in influencing messianic expectations and its enduring impact on Jewish and Christian theology. Future research could delve into a comparative study of divine kingship across the ANE, particularly concerning liturgical and political contexts. Such a study could offer more profound insights into how royal ideologies shaped social and religious identities across ancient cultures.

Keywords: Psalm 2, Royal Ideology, Davidic Kingship, Ancient Near East (ANE), Divine Sonship, Messianic Prophecy, Synchronic Analysis, Diachronic Analysis, Israelite Monarchy, Covenantal Theology.

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List of Abbreviations:

BCE	Before Common Era
ED or ED's	Editor or Editors
LXX	Septuagint
ANE	Ancient Near East
ANEern	Ancient Near Eastern
DtrH	The Deuteronomistic Historian
DtrP	The Prophetic Deuteronomist
DtrN	The Nomistic Deuteronomist
NIV	New International Version
WTT	Westminster Leningrad Codex
BHS	Biblic Hebraica Stuttgartensia

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Barbour (2008:728-730) stated, "The king is not merely a political figure; he is also a divine representative on earth, embodying the authority of the gods". This highlights how kingship was intertwined with divine legitimacy in ancient cultures. Barbour (2008:728-730) further noted that "the ambivalence surrounding the divine status of kings in West Semitic cultures reflects a broader Near Eastern tradition where rulers were often viewed as semi-divine beings". This directly connects to the idea that surrounding cultures influenced Israelite kingship.

Kim (2008:37-40) explained that kingship in the Ancient Near East (ANE) provides insight into Ancient Israel's perception of their monarchy, particularly concerning the divine origin of kingship. In Egypt, Canaan, and Mesopotamia, kings were often considered divine or representatives of the gods. However, in Israel, the king was seen as an adopted son of God, not as a deity, as evidenced in Psalm 2:7. This concept of "sonship by adoption" represented a deviation from the ANE, where kingship was frequently deified.

The duties of kings in the ANE (e.g., ensuring the people's well-being and maintaining divine order) can be noted in Ancient Israel's kingship. This can especially be noted during the Davidic rule when this kingship was metaphorically compared to that of a shepherd (2 Samuel 5:2; Psalm 23). Psalm 72 and other texts emphasised the king's responsibility in establishing righteousness and peace. While there were similarities in royal duties, Israelite kingship differed in its theological basis—Israel's kings were seen as agents of Yahweh, carrying out His will (Kim 2008:40).

In Israel, kingship was closely connected to the priesthood, as demonstrated in Psalm 110, where David's kingship was associated with Melchizedek, the priest-king of El-Elyon (Genesis 14:18). This relationship, however, differed from the ANE, where kingship was intended to establish the king as the god's sole representative. In Israel, Yahweh was central, and the king was a charismatic leader empowered by God's spirit. Ultimately, the focal point of Israel's royal ideology was Yahweh, not the king (Kim 2008:40). In the ANE, kings were often deified or seen as gods' sons, particularly

in Egypt, Canaan, and Mesopotamia. In Israel, however, the king was viewed as God's adopted son, as seen in Psalm 2:7. Scholars like Day (1998) and Zenger (2005) discuss this concept, suggesting its Canaanite roots but highlighting its unique adaptation in Israel.

Brueggemann (2003:277-280) mentioned that Israelite kings, especially the Davidic kings, were metaphorically described as shepherds and were responsible for their people's well-being, justice, and protection, similar to kings in the ANE. However, unlike in the ANE, where kings were seen as divine, Israel's king was considered an agent of Yahweh, empowered by His Spirit to execute God's will rather than maintaining divine order by himself.

Craigie (1983:29-35) stated that the king also had a priestly function in Israel, as seen in Psalm 110. This link between kingship and priesthood parallels the figure of Melchizedek, who was both a priest and a king. However, Israel's royal ideology differed in that the king's legitimacy came from God, not through deification, but through divine empowerment to fulfil God's will, as exemplified by figures like David.

The establishment of Israel's monarchy also signified political changes. Initially, Samuel supported Saul's kingship but later criticised it as it seemed to transfer power from religious to political realms symbolically. Scholars such as Ishida (1977) and Coote (2006) proposed that the monarchy brought about new social and political systems in Israel, transitioning from a tribal organisation to a society centred around the state.

Similarly, Day (1999:82) stated that the approach of the son of God by adoption emerged from the Canaanites. However, Day (1999:82) disagreed that this was the contextual understanding of the monarchy of Israel. Moenikes (1999:619-621) stated that the concept of "son of God" by adoption was unique to the Israelites and did not arise from the influence of the ANE..

Some discoveries revealed a very close relationship between Israelite religious practices and the religious milieu of the ANE (Miller et al. 1986:502–507). As a result, the question of the uniqueness of the Israelite religion, as depicted in the Old Testament, is essential. The parallels between Israelite social and religious institutions and the ANE can foster an understanding of many religious ideas in Israel's royal and

imperial ideologies. These similarities become of critical importance when seeking to understand the Davidic kingdom.

There is a general scholarly agreement that the setting of Psalm 2 is in the monarchical period (Craigie 2004:64). There are those who place the date of the text in the reign of Manasseh (Terrein 2003:87). This classification indicates that Yahwism may have already been an established national religion in this period. This is evident from the "son of God" concept used to announce God's adoption of the king in ancient Israel. According to (Smith 2004:203–208), the idea of the son of God in the ANE is syncretistic. Israel used the idea from Egypt and Canaan; therefore, it was appropriate metaphorically to showcase the divine choice of the king and explicitly highlight the Davidic kingship.

Psalm 2 was written within the context and style of the ANE culture to be used for the enthronement of a Davidic king, as this reinforced the message that *Yahweh* was the supreme power (Walton 1994:193–202). There were no kings after the exile, and the Psalm had no purpose. Essential to this study were titles or epithets of kings from the ANE; these titles and epithets arrayed precise political and religious ideologies about kingship.

Psalm 2 is viewed as an expression of Israel's royal ideology, where the king's rule was by divine decree. According to Beckman and Day (2003:238-241), a large portion of the *Psalter* was categorised as royal (Pss 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 132, & 144:1-11). Psalm 2, according to biblical scholarship, such as Granderod 2010:303, was considered an important source when reconstructing the idea of kingship in Israel. The surrounding ANE cultures around Israel explicitly influenced divine kingship in ancient Israel (Granerød 2010:303). Ancient Israelite tradition communicated that kingship was always a part of God's plan for His people, irrespective of the historical developments (Ross 2012:132–138).

Whitelam (1992:40-48) argued that the royal ideology of the ANE acted as the core of the whole social system. Since it is the destiny of a kingdom to have a king, the primary focus of the royal ideology was to promote the kingship as the centre of the entire society (Kempt 1983:19). Inevitably, the kingship provided the pinnacle point to bring together all social organisations and dynamics. Pollock (1999:173) stated that royal

ideology administered a religious, social and political base for the kingship to legitimise and justify the king's role over his political enemies and other social threats.

Gordon and Rendsburg (1998:93–97) highlighted that Israel's royal ideology was embedded in Psalm 2. The concept of a council headed by a high god (*El* or *Elyon*) was present. In the ANE, other gods were also present, referred to as "sons of *El*, sons of God," or the sons of *Elyon*. Battle reports have been presented in Hebrew literature, poetry, and prose, where the human and divine dimensions unite.

When one endeavours to understand Psalm 2 within its context, one expects to find similarities between Israel and its neighbours. Linguistic similarities are unavoidable because Hebrew is a Semitic language linked to other Northwest Semitic languages. An example is the word *el*, which was used in Canaanite literature as the proper name for the highest god. In the Hebrew Bible, the word *El* is often used as a title for the Israelite God. Rodriguez (2001:43) argued that this does not mean that the God of Israel is to be equated with the Canaanite *el*; however, similar phrases or titles were allocated for a particular individual or their function.

When elaborating on the ANE, Psalm 2 fortifies the message of *Yahweh*, the God of Israel, as the supreme power and David as his assigned king over the nations, Johnsen (2014:1-2). Although Psalm 2, part of the introductory units in the *Psalter* (Pss 1-2), is appropriated as a royal Psalm, Gillingham (1994:63-67) described this appropriation as content-specific and not formal-specific. It is also positioned to have been written as a coronation Psalm for the accession of kings stemming from the Davidic line (Johnsen 2014:1). However, it is unclear whether the Psalm was used repeatedly or for a specific occasion (Johnsen 2014:1).

Considering Psalm 2 and the Davidic kingdom through a historical lens and textual analysis, this study explored the Psalm and scholarly sources about David and his kingdom in the context of the broader ANE. Ancient Israel's royal ideology served as a tool in understanding the Davidic kingdom and its relationship with *Yahweh* as a warrior; a two-fold approach was taken to accomplish this. Firstly, in this research, the scholar allowed the text to speak for itself by exploring it (see Chapter 3). The exploration was brief but focused on the text itself and poetic junctures within the text.

Secondly, the relationship that Psalm 2 has with other texts in its immediate context was also explored (see Chapter 4).

1.2 Motivation and relevance

Breton (2016:7-17) defines ideology as a system of ideas and representations that dominate an individual's mind or that of a social group. These ideas can be conveyed through myths transmitted orally, visually, or textually, but they all uphold societal norms and behavioural models. Additionally, ideology creates an imaginary relationship between individuals and the actual conditions in which they exist, relying on material action and the process of interpellation to subject humans to different messages (Breton 2016:7-17).

The Royal Psalms found in the Psalter and the Hebrew Bible are unique. They were initially written about the kings of Israel and Judah, conveying the theology of the Davidic kingdom (around 1000-586/7 Before Common Era (BCE)). When interpreting these Psalms, they have historically been associated with the actual kings of Israel and Judah. Krusche (2020:87) suggested they can be interpreted messianically, relating to God and his people. The current study's scope was limited to Psalm 2. Hays (2014:33) described the royal Psalms as follows:

The King of God, the regent on earth of the Lord's reign, is the Davidic King designated as the Anointed by the Lord's covenant. His kingship is given the vocation to represent the divine rule of the people of the Lord and the nations.

In ancient Israel, battle reports were presented in the Hebrew literature in poetry and prose. Within this context, the human and divine dimensions were fused and represented the royal Psalms and the Davidic kingdom. The current study investigated this through a historical lens and textual analysis. This study looked at Psalm 2 and scholarly sources concerning the Davidic kingdom in the context of the broader ANE.

This study gathered insight into Israel's royal and imperial ideology by analysing Psalm 2. This study aimed to make an extensive and comparative analysis of the essential exegesis of scholars who wrote commentaries or explanations (as seen in Chapters 2 and 3). The comparison and contrast of the explanations of these authors showcased the exegetical perspective of this Psalm and the diversity of viewpoints on references

to historical or eschatological figures, nations and kingdoms. Furthermore, this study investigated the place of Psalm 2 within the context (*Sitz in der Literatur*) of the Psalms, and this clarified Israel's royal ideologies as revealed in the structure of the *Psalter* (as seen in Chapters 3 and 4).

1.3 Research problem

In Psalm 2, a one-dimensional reading of the portrait of the Davidic king was presented with a person who, despite his weakness, was a man "after God's own heart". However, in the later writings of David, such as Chronicles, his weaknesses were less emphasised as his character grew in piety (Robert 2012:116). Gerstenberger (1988:47) asked why most commentators of Psalm 2 communicated a scenario of world rule on the part of the Israelite king. Weiser (1962:111) showed that the king in Psalm 2 claimed the dominion of the "whole world".

Clines (1938:6) added that the Israelite belief in the Psalm was that *Yahweh* is Lord of the world and its history. This view may represent the Psalmist's perspective; however, nothing is said of the universal dominion by *Yahweh* (Clines 1938:6). The promise made to give nations as an inheritance does not mean that *Yahweh* owns the nations or is ruler over them. The Davidic king must "ask for them".

According to Clines (1938:6), the Psalm anticipated that the king would ask for them. Furthermore, *Yahweh* would help the Davidic king when undertaking foreign wars and deliver his enemies into his hands. What was stated clearly is that the king did not have a peaceful property transfer in mind. The Psalm spoke of shattering enemy nations like a pot. This language points to the image of acts of war, not mere peaceful advancement and dominion.

The current research was focused on the question of ANE's influences on Israel's royal and imperial ideology and Davidic kingdom in Psalm 2, its *genre* as a royal Psalm and the elements within the text of Israel's imperial ideology. This research contributed to understanding the meaning of the Psalm in its original context by considering the placement of the Psalm within Book 1 of the *Psalter* and examining how it related to the Davidic kingdom and the preceding Psalm 1.

1.4 Aims and objectives

This study aimed to probe Psalm 2 and establish an understanding of this royal Psalm and its relationship with the preceding Psalm. The aim was to understand the historical setting and the function of the Psalm in the religious and political context of Ancient Israel. This was accomplished by investigating the placement of Book 1 in the *Psalter*. Hereafter, the study also sought to determine the *genre* of Psalm 2. The main aims explored in this study included:

- The aim was to assess Psalm 2 through a literature review and a literary, exegetical text analysis.
- The aim was to examine the textual features in the text while identifying and seeking to understand what a royal Psalm is.
- The aim was to investigate the interpretation disputes among scholars regarding the themes and structure.

The following aims were explored regarding the Synchronic analysis:

- The aim was to conduct a literary, exegetical analysis of the Psalm, addressing the interpretational problems concerning the genre and the *Sitz im Leben* of the actual text.
- The aim was to conduct a detailed analysis of the sub-themes presented within the text to assist the interpreter in analysing and translating the text.
- The aim was to conduct a political and linguistic analysis of each stanza to examine the royal tradition in the text.
- The aim was to uncover the understanding of the role of the king as it has been contained within the text.

The following aims were explored regarding the Diachronic analysis

- The aim was to examine the present historical context (*Sitz im Leben*) and the cultic context embedded within the text.
- The aim was to proceed with the provision of the literary context of Psalms 1-2, Book I-III (Psalms 2-89), focusing on the rise and demise of the king, Book I (Ps 2-41 & Ps 2-14).

The following aims were explored regarding the royal ideology

- The aim was to expound on the case of royal ideology in the ANE, which included Egypt, Canaan, Mesopotamia (Assyria and Babylon), and Israel, particularly as outlined in the Old Testament and the book of Psalms, especially in Psalm 2.
- The final aim was to incorporate and appropriate the findings toward the research problem and hypothesis.

1.5 Research methodology

This was a literature and exegetical study with a synchronic and diachronic literary historical analysis. This section examined the textual features of Psalm 2. Through this analysis, the researcher investigated the structure of the Psalm and addressed the interpretational issues related to its genre and setting. These issues were integrated with the synchronic section of the study, as seen in Chapter 2. In addition, a diachronic analysis was conducted, using an intertextual perspective analysis to explore the similarities between Psalm 2 and other historical texts and investigate what distinguishes Psalm 2 from other royal Psalms, as seen in Chapter 2. This part of the study examined the compilation and editing of Book 1 of the *Psalter* to determine the role and position of Psalm 2 as a royal Psalm.

Throughout the history of biblical interpretation, there have been significant eras where a particular mode of interpretation held sway. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Historical Criticism dominated biblical interpretation (Alter 2006:226-240). However, in the 20th century, there was a paradigm shift as postmodern values began to take centre stage. There was a debate on the credibility of the different exegetical methods of interpretation of biblical texts. This debate was sparked by the move away from the absolutist ideas of modernism and the claims of Historical Criticism. The diachronic approach represents this historical-critical method and argues that a text is best understood when read concerning the history of its origins and development (De Villiers 2006:24).

However, The synchronic approach works with the text in its final form without focusing on the world behind it (De Villiers 2006:824). Literary criticism and narrative criticism fall under the banner of synchronic approaches. Eventually, scholars concluded that an either-or approach is not required in interpreting biblical texts but rather an inclusive

"and-and" decision. A reading of the text that employs a diachronic and synchronic approach is beneficial to the exegete in a more thorough reading. Gesundheit's (2013:10) proposed method involves the traditional and historical-critical approach, which a literary and critical approach should supplement.

Psalm 2 is referred to as a "royal Psalm". According to Kim (1985:143), however, there is no systematic study on the order of the royal Psalms collectively in Book I.V. Through a literature review, this study aimed to create a "landscape" for the reader, demonstrating a complete understanding of the developments that have taken place in the sense of Psalm 2 within the Hebrew Bible and other historical sources. The study followed an exegetical method with a synchronic and a diachronic literary historical analysis.

Botha (2017:4) affirmed literature to be a method of communication. All methods of communication involve a sender and a recipient of the message communicated. To understand and correctly interpret the text, the meaning must be transmitted through a common language understood by both the sender and the receiver. Prinsloo (2008:50) stated that for effective communication, the message recipient must have a dual awareness of the language (the text) and the context from which the communication is embedded. Therefore, the analysis of the text must be textual and contextual (Botha 2017:14). A holistic approach must consider all contextual and textual elements when conducting research. Therefore, combining a synchronic and diachronic analysis illustrates an understanding of the text.

1.6 Research hypothesis

The hypothesis for this study was:

The ideology of the Davidic kingdom, as depicted in Psalm 2, exhibits universal characteristics deeply rooted in the broader traditions of the ANE but uniquely adapted to Israel's monotheistic worldview. There is an intersection of Israelite and ANE royal ideologies that have implications for understanding the role of the Davidic king in Psalm 2.

1.7 Chapter division

Chapter 1 outlines the study's motivation, research problem, approach, hypothesis, chapter division, and terminologies/orthography.

Chapter 2 of the research includes a literature review summarising and describing the concept of royal ideology within the context of the ANE. The review draws on parallels discovered in ancient cultures closely related to Israelite religious practices and milieu, such as Egypt, Canaan, Mesopotamia, Assyria, and Babylon. The chapter explores the concept of royal ideology in Israel, focusing on the Old Testament, Psalms, and specifically on Psalm 2.

Chapter 3 of this study focuses on a synchronic analysis of Psalm 2. This chapter commences with an introduction that helps to identify the genre of Psalm 2. An analysis of the text and translation of the Psalm and its division into stanzas and structure was explored in this chapter. This is followed by a stanza-by-stanza poetic and linguistic analysis to understand the king's role and the synthesis at the end of the chapter. The synchronic study is the foundation for the structural understanding and exposition of the relevant Hebrew text. In addition, it provides the basis for a more detailed analysis of literary components for a better understanding of the Psalm.

Chapter 4 of this study provides a detailed analysis of Psalm 2 from a diachronic perspective. The chapter starts with an introduction that examines the Psalm's historical context, or *Sitz im Leben*, before exploring its cultic and literary context. The chapter focuses on Psalm 2's relationship to other texts within its immediate and broader context, including Psalm 1 and an analysis of Book I-III. Finally, the chapter ends with a synthesis of the various elements discussed.

Chapter 5 of this study examines the theology of Psalm 2 as conveyed by various scholars. It also explores Psalm 2 as a theological metaphor for the Davidic ideology and its theological symbolism.

Chapter 6 provides a concise overview of the research findings. This chapter includes an analytical discussion of the study's findings, a summary of the study's conclusion, and an answer to the study's research question. Additionally, this chapter suggests closing remarks, further outcomes, and recommendations.

1.8 Terminology and orthography

This section explores the selected terminologies that were used in this study.

1.8.1 Ancient Near East

The ANE refers to the area that closely coincides with the contemporary Middle East, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Iran (Snell 2005:xviii). "ANE" refers to the geographical location and the chronological period where different people existed in other natural environments. (Botha 2017:17). The ANE consolidates various living conditions where cultures birthed complex and rich civilisations (Benzel et al. 2010:9).

1.8.2 Synchronic analysis

A synchronic analysis is a dissection of different linguistic elements within the text. This does not consider the historical development surrounding the text. According to De Saussure (2013:104), language is the only reality in a synchronic study of a text. Botha (2017:17) stated that several language levels should be explored, such as grammar, vocabulary, and poetic features. A synchronic reading seeks to explore linguistic clues without allowing information unrelated to language to contaminate the findings, such as the historical developments of the text (Talstra 1995:196). A synchronic analysis, therefore, isolates the use of language within the text.

1.8.3 Diachronic analysis

The primary focus of a text's diachronic analysis is the historical development of the text (Botha 2017:18). A diachronic study of a text is no longer concerned with isolating the text from the historical events that led to the modification of language in the current form that it is studied. The concern of a diachronic approach is how the text was produced. It, therefore, does not isolate the text to language alone. Still, the process that led to the development of the text (Botha 2017:18) includes the historical context (Sitz in Leben), cultural context, redactional history (Sitz in der Literature) or placement in the larger text context.

1.8.4 Royal Psalms

Several Psalms are royal because they deal with kingship and kings' spiritual role in worshipping *Yahweh* (Eaton 1976:11-26).

1.8.5 Ideology

A system of ideas and representations dominates a person's mind or that of a social group (Althusser 1971:158). Brueggemann (1991:85) defined ideology as a 'vested interest passed off as truth, a partial truth which is counterfeited as the whole truth or a theological claim functioning as a mode of social control.

1.8.6 Empire

An empire is a formal or informal relationship in which one state controls and effectively has sovereignty over another political society. It can be achieved by force, political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence (Doyle 2006:16)

1.8.7 Royal ideology

Royal ideology is the practice of believing that the king's divine origin is upheld, specifically, the concept of the king as a deified god and the son of God as attested in Egypt, Canaan, and Mesopotamia (Day 1998:82).

1.9 Orthography

Biblical books in this study have been taken from the *New International Version* (NIV) as a reference. The Hebrew texts used in the study have been taken from the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS). The method of reference in this study is the modified or adapted Harvard referencing system.

1.9.1 Abbreviations

The following abbreviations were used:

The NIV Bible is a reference for biblical abbreviation. In addition, the following abbreviations were used:

BCE Before Common Era

BHS Bible Hebraica Stuttgartensia

ED or ED's

Editor or Editors

Ps

Psalm

Pss

Psalms

v

Verse

vv

Verses

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter showcases the perspective of biblical scholarship on the Bible as a reflection of the historical context of the Near Eastern civilisation (Friedman 2003:47-49). David Noel Friedman(2003:47-49) the author of "The Bible with Sources Revealed," challenged the prevailing view of biblical history, highlighting discrepancies and factual errors. He argued for an interpretation of the Bible, acknowledging its literary nature and presenting diverse perspectives on various subjects (Friedman 2003:50-53).

The concept of kingship in ancient Israel has been interpreted in various ways due to the absence of a "unified biblical view". Some interpretations oppose kingship, seeing it undermining God's authority, while others view it as influenced by neighbouring nations, impacting Israel's history positively and negatively (Friedman 2003:54-56). This study focused on kingship in ancient Israel, particularly the Davidic dynasty during the Israelite monarchy era. To accomplish this, the researcher compared the viewpoints on Israelite kingship from an Old Testament passage, a Ugaritic text, and an Assyrian text, as seen in Chapter 3. By examining these sources' similarities and differences, the researcher aimed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of anointed kingship in Palestine (Friedman 2003:57-59).

De Bruyn (2013:194) used a cognitive linguistic approach to analyse Psalm 2. He found that during the time of Augustine (354-430 CE), people interpreted the text allegorically rather than literally. Early Christian scholars saw Psalm 2 as a prophetic anticipation of the Second Coming or the *Parousia* of Jesus Christ and tried to show how Christ fulfilled the scriptures. Willis (1990:37-39) agreed that Psalm 2 was a prophetic or predictive song that announced the coming of the Christian Messiah. It celebrated the divine proclamation of the Messiah's kingship over the world. Psalm 2 verse 6 promised worldwide domination for the king, a feat that would be impossible for a king of Israel or Judah.

Willis (1990:33) argued that this verse should be interpreted literally, as it does not refer to an earthly king of Israel but to the future Messiah. However, some scholars,

such as John Calvin, did not see Psalm 2 as a prophecy about Jesus Christ (de Bruyn 2013:195). Instead, they viewed it as God speaking directly to David. In the English translation of Calvin's Commentary on the Psalms (Calvin & Anderson 1845:9-26), stated:

We ought... to beware of wickedly refusing the edict which he publishes, Thou art my Son. David, indeed, could with propriety be called the son of God on account of his royal dignity, just as we know that princes because they are elevated above others, are called both gods and the sons of God. But here God, by the singularly high title with which he honors David, exalts him not only above all mortal men but even above the angels.

According to McCann (1993:16), who used a canonical lens, by the 1900s, the Psalms were commonly seen as the work of individual authors and were classified based on the period they were written in, their intended audience, and the historical context. Brueggemann (1991:63-92) shared a similar perspective and affirmed this view. Gunn (2011:7-9) discussed the debate among scholars regarding whether Psalm 2 is "Messianic". Historically, Jewish and Christian scholars have considered Psalm 2 to be Messianic. However, Rashi (1040-1105) proposed a historical context involving King David's conflicts with the Philistines, leading to subsequent scholarly attempts to associate the Psalm with historical Davidic or Hasmonean rulers. However, there is no consensus on this matter.

The language and themes of the Psalm appear to align more with an early monarchic era, leading some scholars to interpret it in light of Nathan's prophecy to David (2 Sam 7:5-16). Psalm 2 is often linked to Christ due to its references to nations rebelling against a crowned king and an anointing on Mount Zion, aspects not attributed to any historical king of Israel or Juda. According to Gunn (2011:33), one way to interpret the reference to Psalm 2:1 in this passage is to view it as a "generic" rather than a precise prophecy.

Hays (1989:27-33) suggested that the phrase in Acts 2:25 allows for a more general interpretation rather than a specific prediction. "You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David," does not explicitly refer to the prediction or fulfilment of rebellion. It suggests that the rulers of the world have always rebelled

against God. Their ongoing resistance to His anointed one demonstrated through their persecution of the Church, is viewed as a continuation of this rebellious behaviour.

Cross (2009:217–219) affirmed that the term — king is used as a title to refer to a male sovereign ruler who exercises authority over a defined territorial area, the state. The position of the king may be purely or partly hereditary or, in some cases, elective. The king is a central symbol for the territory and the population he rules over, symbolising its prosperity, fertility, and security. This view was corroborated by (Weinfeld 1995:35–39), who stated that kingship refers to the rank, authority, or office and dignity of the king, including the exercise of power over the subjects of the state. These two terms are applied to states that vary considerably in degree of social development, size of population, or territorial extent. They use small agrarian polities of the past, which have centred on a sovereign ruler and much larger monarchies, including modern industrialised societies.

Cross (1992:50-52) mentioned that the inauguration and development of kingship in Israel was one of the most significant episodes in its history, affecting the formation and transformation of traditions now preserved within the Hebrew Bible. King and kingship have profoundly influenced the history of the community and its religious and literary traditions. The monarchies of Israel and Judah lasted little more than four centuries and were small compared to the surrounding riverine cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia, but they left an indelible mark on the religious traditions of humanity.

The ideology, which developed close to the Israelite and Judean kingship, proved to be of immense significance for developing messianic beliefs that have shaped major world religious traditions. An understanding of king and kingship in Israel forms part of the broader investigation conducted by social anthropologists and historians regarding the formation and development of early state societies. It is also an essential element in trying to understand and appreciate the religious movements and ideas which culminated in the formation of the canon of the Hebrew Bible (Miller 2000:207).

2.2 Definition and nature of kingship

According to Bright (1992:146), monarchy has been the most common form of government in agrarian societies throughout history. The development of the state with the king as the central symbolic figure represents a significant stage in the evolution of political systems. The king maintained law and order within a defined territory through a professional and permanent military force and a dedicated central bureaucracy. There is considerable evidence to suggest that the bureaucracy in Israel was modelled upon Egyptian patterns (Mettinger 1971; Heaton 1974). Such states were politically centralised societies based on social stratification and specialisation. The royal family would have depended upon the extraction of an agricultural surplus from the peasantry to provide for the subsistence needs of the royal elite and its religious and political specialists. The king had the power to command the payment of various forms of taxation and the rendering of services (Bright 1992:146)

The king oversaw the implementation of law and order. The central bureaucracy provided a means for the king to control the various levels of government responsible for the military, economic, legal, and ritual activities of a network of urban centres and villages within the state's territorial boundaries. As the owner of the state institutions, the king had control over the agrarian economy. In an agrarian society, owning agricultural land was crucial to kingship. Establishing a monarchy essentially involved the transfer of authority over agricultural land from the villages to the king. Arable land was typically given to royal functionaries as hereditary estates in exchange for taxes and military services. Alternatively, prebendal land grants were given to officials as compensation for their duties in the state's central administration. Although these prebendal estates were supposed to be in exchange for official duties, they often became hereditary (Bright (1992:146).

Elite landlords would collect up to 50 per cent or more of all produce from peasant cultivators through taxation and rent. They, in turn, paid taxes, rent, and labour to the king. These land tenure and taxation systems upheld and reinforced the power and privilege distribution in stratified agrarian societies such as the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. This information was based on Ishida's (1977:109) contribution he Hebrew Bible used derivatives of the root *mlk* to denote this form of government. *melek* is the

designation for a —king, whereas other derivatives of the root *mlk* denote—kingship, —kingdom, —to be king/reign Heaton (1974:218).

The notion of —dominion or —rule was also expressed by the root *mšl*. In light of the above discussion, it is interesting to note that the basic meaning of the Arabic root *mlk* was —to own completely- and may indicate a similar basic meaning of the Hebrew *melek*. It is an intriguing feature of Semitic languages that Hebrew used *melek* for —king and *šar* for —official —prince, while Akkadian used *šarru*—king and *māliku* —counsellor (Mettinger 1976:296). The noun *melek* was used frequently in the Hebrew Bible to refer to neighboring or foreign monarchies, including Canaanite city-states, Philistia, Ammon, Edom, Moab, Hamath, Aram, and Tyre. The most frequent usage, however, was reserved for the ruler of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, as recorded by Heaton (1974:218).

In the biblical traditions related to the introduction of kingship into Israel, Saul was anointed by Samuel as *nāgîd* over Israel (1 Sam 9:16; 10:1). The meaning of the noun *nāgîd* has proven to be particularly elusive and engendered a long yet inconclusive debate. Alt (1966) concluded that it referred to one who was designated a leader by *Yahweh*, whereas *melek* was designated an office conferred by the people's acclaim. Richter's (1965) extensive treatment concluded that the term underwent a complex development: it was initially a pre-monarchic title for a military leader and denoted a position quite distinct from *melek*.

He emphasised continuity with the charismatic leadership of the judges, as opposed to the dynastic kingship of David and Solomon designated by the term *melek*. Ishida (1977:50) rejected the view that it was originally a title for the charismatic war leader in the pre-monarchic period. Instead, he concluded that it denotes the —king designated by *Yahweh*. Similarly, Mettinger (1976:151–84), who thoroughly reviewed previous literature, suggested that it was initially a secular term for the —crown prince designated by the reigning king. The term's theological use as a divine designation came later. Flanagan (1981:67) advocated that *nāgîd* indicates the chiefly power of Saul and David before the emergence of the early state and a fully developed kingship.

2.3 Psalm 2 as a royal Psalm

Gunkel (1998:150) and other scholars have suggested that Psalms 61, 63, and 188 should be considered part of the royal Psalms. In addition, Mowinckel (1962:278-299) included Psalms 28, 44, 60, 66, 68, 80, 83, and 84 in his list of royal Psalms. These Psalms conveyed the theology of the Davidic kingdom, approximately from 1000 to 587 BCE, and offered a new interpretation for the Jewish community following the fall of the Davidic kingdom in 587 BCE. The royal Psalms, in their original setting, highlighted the unique position of King David and his descendants in the lives of the Israelites. Each king from David's line was anointed as the early ruler of Israel on behalf of the true king, *Yahweh*. The Davidic monarch was seen as the royal intermediary of the covenant between God and the people of Israel.

The Lord God was proclaimed as Israel's king from the establishment of Israel and the covenant at Mount Sinai, where some tribes accepted *Yahweh* as their king. Jacobson (1985:193) suggested that *Yahweh* is not merely a god in the religious sense and that the political designation "King" communicates *Yahweh*'s leadership role in the lives of the Israelites. The relationship between God and Israel during the first two hundred years was based on a covenant. In this covenant, God was the king of the Israel tribes, which extended to each tribe, clan, and family, unifying independent semi-nomadic tribes (Jacobson 1985:193). This covenant changed around 1000 BCE as the tribes struggled to maintain independence. Threatened by the enemy nations surrounding them, Israel was forced to become a monarchy of twelve tribes united under King David. Under the new covenant, the people related to God through their earthly monarch, considering the king the anointed regent of God and the trustee of the people.

Psalm 2 is often interpreted by considering the topics of royalty, the throne, or the Messiah. However, McIntyre (2022:1-3) offered an alternative interpretation. He argued that the traditional understanding is flawed because it assumes that the Psalm's theme is structural rather than thematic. According to McIntyre, genre/composition and structure are crucial for understanding an author's arguments, and articles should be subject to structural analysis. The interpretation suggests that Psalm 2 should be viewed as a "prophetic rebuke" instead of a royal, enthronement,

or messianic Psalm (McIntyre, 2022:22). McIntyre (2022:3) also argued that the speaker and the audience in Psalm 2 are royal figures.

In different communities, the birth of a child has been interpreted in different ways. One theory proposed that the child could be the "Teacher of Righteousness" for the community. References from Isaiah and Micah suggest potential collective identities for the newborn "son". Scholars like Hughes (2015:45) proposed a dual interpretation, seeing the infant child as both an individual and a representation of the collective. She aligned the "wonderful counsellor" with the "male child" mentioned in adjacent lines, suggesting their equivalence. Hughes argued that allusions to Isaiah 9:6 and 66:7 anticipated the restoration of Jerusalem, its king, and its people after a period of distress. This parallels the speaker's suffering and hope for deliverance with the eschatological hopes for Jerusalem's salvation and associated messianic expectations (Hughes (2015:45).

The text blurs the distinction between an individual's and collective birth. In the Hebrew Bible, language originally intended for an individual, such as a royal figure, is often applied to the collective, such as Israel or Jacob. In Isaiah's passage, the reference to God's "servant," typically associated with the king, has referred to Israel as a whole, making the servant's identity ambiguous. For instance, passages like Psalms 89:27-28 promised blessings to David and Israel interchangeably, indicating a shared designation as "God's son".

The covenant that God made with David in 2 Samuel 7 (cf. Ps 89:4; Rev 89:3) applied to all of Israel in Isaiah 55:3. This connection between promises to the royal figure and the people has demonstrated the "nationalization of the royal ideology" as noted by Levinson (1997:52). The study of ancient texts related to the Old Testament showed that in the ANE, the royal ideology emphasised that only a chosen king, believed to be called by divine purpose, could bring prosperity to his society (Levinson 1997:54). This is illustrated by drawing parallels with natural phenomena. For example, rain, essential for the fertility of the land, was thought to be brought down from the heavens by clouds, symbolising the king's role in providing nourishment (Levinson 1997:56). Similarly, the safety and protection of a city in times of danger were associated with the king's authority (Levinson 1997:58).

Two examples illustrate this concept. The first instance involves King Tukulti-Ninurta I, who faced criticism for attempting to move the capital city from Ashur to Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta. This decision imposed hardships on the people, as the new city was not yet considered safe. Consequently, King Tukulti-Ninurta I was branded responsible for bringing misfortune to Assyria (Leick 2002:149). The second example revolves around the threat faced by Jerusalem. When King Hezekiah faced an invasion from Sennacherib, the messengers of the Assyrian king did not believe that Hezekiah could compel the people to flee the city and dismissed his confidence as worthless (Cogan & Tadmor 1988:57).

The text (see section 2.4) described the Mesopotamian belief in divine kingship. One prayer addressed to the god Inshushinak, the god of Susa, described the suffering of the Elamites under Babylonian dominance. The prayer asked the god to find a new king who could bring prosperity to the kingdom, suggesting that the Elamites wanted a ruler to ensure lasting welfare. These accounts demonstrated the ancient understanding of divine kingship, emphasising the king's role as the provider of welfare and protection for his society. (Leick 2002:149-150; Cogan & Tadmor 1988:58).

2.4 Divine kingship in Mesopotamia

The ancient Mesopotamian tradition of kingship is often regarded as the pinnacle of sacred kingship. According to the Sumerians and Babylonians, the institution of kingship was believed to have originated from heaven. The city of Eridu was the first to be ruled by a king, who was initially a deity but later became mortal. After a period of several rulers before the great flood, this king was deified and transferred to Dilmun. This process was considered a creation of the gods and aimed at replicating the hierarchical structure of the divine realm on Earth (Cooney 2021:45-47).

Temples played a crucial role in the reign of the king and in connecting the divine and human realms. It was believed that the gods resided in the cult images within the temples and received offerings. For instance, in the temple of Ishtar in Mari, a statue of the king named Zimri-Lim was discovered. The statue depicted him in a dominant stance over the people of the world, holding a mace and a bow, symbolising his right to rule, which was derived from Ishtar. The kings were considered living gods and acted as intermediaries between the divine and human realms (Cooney 2021:48-50).

The highest-ranking rulers sought to dominate the quadruple river regions, as depicted in the inscriptions of Narum-Suen of Agade. Although the laws of Hammurabi did not directly address the king's involvement in the administration of justice, this was consistent with his role as the representative of the god of justice, Shamash, who sought to bring righteousness to the oppressed (Cooney 2021:51-53).

2.4.1 Temple-palace complex

Buccellati (1967:125) stated that one of the primary responsibilities of Ancient Near Eastern (ANEern) kingship was to provide a temple for the state god. Building the temple symbolised the god as the protector of the state and the ruling dynasty (2 Sam 5:12). The temple served as the central point for politics, economics, and religion, thereby symbolising the king's connection with the god and his divine authority to rule. The temple represented heaven on earth (Ps 1:4) and was the dwelling place of the deity on earth, located next to the king's palace. It symbolised the king's special relationship with the divine world and served as the political and religious centre of the state. In Judah, this was expressed in the royal Davidic ideology of electing Jerusalem as the dwelling place of *Yahweh* and the promise of David's perpetual dynasty (2 Sam 7:1-17; Ps 89:1-37). Similarly, Jeroboam's renovation and promotion of Bethel in the north was a statement of his sovereignty and unique relationship with the state deity.

The temple-palace complex was the central, organising, unifying institution in the ANE. It legitimised the king's political role and was central to the state's economic structure (1 Kgs 5-9). The maintenance of the temple's ritual system was part of the king's control of the state economy. The state cult required a substantial investment of labour and resources, drawing vast resources to the royal court and cult as tribute, taxation, and sacrificial inputs. In return, the royal cult system was presented ideologically as a guarantee of fertility and prosperity for the general population (Hundley 2013:276–284).

Much literature has been dedicated to the Solomonic temple in Jerusalem (Businck 1970:74; Gutmann 1976:118). Most of the discussion has centred on ANEern prototypes and architectural patterns. Recently, there has been greater interest in examining how the temple and its rituals were integral to the political ideology of the royal state (Meyers 1983:41; Lundquist 1982:71; Whitelam 1986:56). Foreign patterns and symbols were adopted and managed by the royal bureaucracy to symbolise

critical aspects of the king's relationship with the deity. The symbolic aspects of the temple and palace were highly intricate and operated on various levels. The fortified exterior of the Solomonic temple visually conveyed the essential ideas of power and authority (Meyers 1983:37). In contrast, the complex imagery in the interior, depicting more sophisticated images of the king's significance, was only visible to the royal court, urban elite, and religious functionaries.

2.4.2 Royal propaganda

Rost (1982:24-27) explained that royal ideology was spread in various ways and targeted different audiences. The reigns of David and Solomon exemplified early state formations through the creation of monumental art and architecture. The significant investment of labour and extensive resources in constructing royal fortifications, temple-palace complexes, and other public buildings were justified by their role in showcasing the king's strength, power, and wealth to potential adversaries. The visibility, simplicity, and size of royal buildings showcased impressive displays of royal power. The use of ashlar masonry in the Solomonic gates at Megiddo and Gezer and other royal buildings offered striking and immediate images of the king's power.

Another common architectural feature of royal buildings was the Proto-Aeolic capital found at Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, Samaria, and Ramat Rahel. These features were important symbols of royal power and the king's right to rule. The royal fortifications explicitly demonstrated the protection offered by the state against both external and internal military threats. Border fortifications were essential symbols of the king's power, guaranteeing protection while defining the state's limits. The use of literary material to spread royal ideology was not understood well and is uncertain.

The Succession Narrative (1 Sam 9–1 Kgs 2) has been viewed as a form of propaganda promoting King Solomon, according to Rost (1982:28). Recently, scholars have compared this narrative and other content in the books of Samuel to the Hittite "apology of Hattusilis," which aimed to justify a usurper to the throne (McCarter 1980:46; 1981:83; Whitelam 1984:59). New developments in literary and canonical studies have questioned long-held assumptions about the social context of biblical texts and their use for historical reconstruction. This ongoing debate significantly influences future research on the nature of kingship in early Israel (Whitelam 1984:59).

2.4.3 Introduction of kingship in Israel

How kingship was formed in the ancient Israelite state is a topic that has sparked ongoing scholarly debate and research. There are two main discussions on how kingship was introduced into Israel. The more common approach has involved a literary investigation and analysis of the traditions within the Hebrew Bible related to the rise of the monarchy. In recent years, reconstructions of the formation of an Israelite state have drawn more extensively on social scientific studies and methods, mainly anthropological studies of state formation. This approach has led to alternative interpretations that do not rely on detailed literary analysis of biblical texts. Instead, this work has focused on the connections between the environment, economy, trade, demography, settlement patterns, and other factors that contributed to the rise of an Israelite state and the introduction of kingship into Israel (Frick 1986:81; Chaney 1986:137; Coote & Whitelam 1986:101-104).

The influential work of Alt (1966:195) has shaped the debate on the formation of an Israelite state in Palestine. Alt's research was based on a detailed analysis of biblical and extrabiblical material and topography. According to Alt (1966:195), Israel gradually settled in the sparsely populated hill country over a long period, possibly centuries. The areas where Israel settled were influenced by the military strength of the city-states in the lowlands, which were too powerful for the Israelites to challenge. The rise of an Israelite state was directly influenced by the threat posed by Philistine domination (Alt 1966:183,188,195–96). This perspective has been highly influential in the history of scholarship and is commonly found in standard textbooks on the history of Israel.

Alt (1966:196) stated that Saul's charismatic leadership marked the beginning of kingship in Israel, but this title was based on public approval. Initially, it was a defensive response to the Philistine threat and did not imply hereditary kingship. Alt suggested that hereditary kingship emerged during the reigns of David and Solomon to unify the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and the city-state monarchies of Ziklag and Jerusalem. Additionally, Alt proposed that the initial structure of the Israelite state was similar to the contemporary east Jordanian states of Ammon, Moab, and Edom, but this idea requires further investigation.

Lundquist (1982:69) explained that there have been extensive studies of biblical texts on establishing kingship in Israel. It has been widely accepted that 1 Samuel 7–15

provided a valuable but complex account of the introduction of the monarchy in Israel. The composite nature and theological interpretation of the introduction of kingship make it challenging to use this material. The analysis of these chapters has focused on identifying different literary sources. The traditional view identified two sources: one early and in favour of monarchy (1 Sam 9:1–19:16; 11:1–11, 15; 13–14) and the other late and against monarchy (1 Sam 7:3–17; 8; 10:17–27; 11:12–14). This view has remained influential despite some attempts to find three sources. It is also assumed that 1 Sam 11:1–15 provided the most authentic account of how Saul became king. However, recent literary studies have raised serious questions about using such material for historical reconstruction.

The view held by Alt (1966:195–196) suggested that kingship in early Israel resulted from external pressure and interpretations of biblical material as anti-monarchic. This has led to the widespread acceptance of the monarchy as an institution alien to early Israel. These arguments have taken various forms, but they all depend mainly on interpreting texts in the books of Judges and Samuel. From this perspective, Israel has been described as a theocracy ruled by the heavenly king, who endowed various earthly "judges" with charismatic power to deliver the community from foreign oppressors. The refusal of Gideon to accept the offer of a dynastic form of kingship (Jdg 8:22–23) is seen as central evidence for early Israel's rejection of a dynastic monarchy.

Abimelech's abortive attempt at monarchy (Jdg 9) and Jotham's parable (Jdg 9:7–15) against the nature of earthly kingship have been seen as corroborative evidence of this opposition to kingship. The existence of anti-monarchic passages in 1 Samuel 8–12 is central to the idea that early Israel opposed the introduction of a monarchy. This perspective considers the monarchy an institution "alien" to Israel's origins and essential nature. However, scholars have disagreed on dating the Judges material, similar to the debate on the "anti-monarchic" material in 1 Samuel 8–12.

Different opinions exist regarding whether the text reflected late Deuteronomistic material or contemporary concerns about the nature of kingship compared to the theocratic nature of early Israel. Buccellati (1967:126) demonstrated that the idea of Israelite kingship as foreign does not consider internal social development. Ishida (1977:30) acknowledged the theological influence on the narratives but argued that

they accurately depict the sectional and factional conflicts in developing new political situations. This aligned with Mendelsohn's (1958:121) influential perspective, which, based on comparisons with Ugaritic evidence, suggested that 1 Samuel 8 represented the contemporary opposition to establishing a monarchy.

Crüsemann (1978:54) drew on anthropological studies of segmentary societies from the work of Sigrist and also viewed the opposition to the inception of kingship as contemporary with the monarchy rather than as a late Deuteronomic redaction. Crüsemann suggested that widespread unrest during David's reign provided a fertile ground for the growth of anti-monarchical literature. He believed that the anti-monarchic sentiment stemmed from the opposition of segmentary societies to centralisation and was expressed more fully during the era of Solomon.

Chaney (1986:137-139) agreed that the growing interest in utilising social scientific research for biblical studies has led to new perspectives on the nature and development of Israelite kingship. Recent changes in approaches to reading biblical narratives, mainly through new literary and canonical studies, have combined this renewed interest in applying social scientific methods and research. This has opened up the debate on the emergence of the Israelite state. Recent studies have focused on transitioning from pre-state Israel to establishing a state with hereditary kingship and centralised institutions.

2.5 Pharaoh as a god-king in Egypt

In ancient Egypt, there is consistent support from various sources for the traditional belief that the pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, was revered and worshipped as a god-king. Evidence for this can be found in inscriptions carved on temple walls, statues depicting the pharaoh, personal stelae owned by respected officials, and texts such as annals and biographies. The following sources reinforce the central ideology that the king was considered divine Cooney (2021:45-47), Leonard (2020:88-90), Wood (2020:101-103), Neyland and Seyfzadeh (2022:87-89), Pichel and Domínguez, (2023:123-125), and Mark (2009).

During the coronation ceremony, the pharaoh would transform, embodying Horus, who was believed to be the son of the creator deity, Amen-Ra. The pharaoh would be titled "Lord of the Two Lands," a phrase commonly used in Egyptian history to emphasise

the king's authority over Upper and Lower Egypt. This title reflected the timeless Egyptian worldview, which saw the world as a perpetual struggle between order and chaos. This struggle was often symbolised by the king's ability to subdue Egypt's enemies. A notable example of this is depicted in the Narmer Palette, an artefact showing Pharaoh Narmer uniting Egypt and prevailing over his adversaries (Leonard 2020:88).

In the Fourteenth Century, the pharaoh Amenhotep III proudly proclaimed, "All lands are in fear of him who bore the divine body. His majesty is lord of joy and is the sun god incarnate whose form has been fashioned by Thoth". This statement vividly highlighted the strong association between the sun god and the pharaoh. It was customary for the pharaoh to commission colossal statues of himself, identifying with the sun god at temple sites, thereby showcasing his recognition of his divine status (Assmann 2014:405–411).

The concept of divine kingship was fundamental in ancient Egypt. The pharaoh played a central role in all religious rituals and served as the bridge between the people and the gods. It was the pharaoh's duty to maintain harmony between the mortal and immortal realms, and failing to do so was unthinkable as it would lead to chaos. Additionally, the pharaoh was responsible for resisting the forces of evil. The institution of kingship formed the basis of "*ma'at*," representing truth, justice, and cosmic order, with the pharaoh serving as its guardian. This understanding of kingship remained essentially unchanged throughout Egyptian history, although there were deviations during the reigns of Akhenaten and the Greek period when the pharaohs began to display more human-like qualities (Tyldesley 2023:123-126; Hawass 2024:43; Neyland & Seyfzadeh 2022:87).

2.6 Royal Ideology in Canaan

The following section explores royal ideology in the Canaanite context, showing how divinity and politics often found similar expressions.

2.6.1 Introduction

The Canaanite royal ideology in ancient studies is notable for deviating from traditional divine struggle imagery and being incorporated into political history. This shift was

apparent in the Baal Epic. However, the current version of this text is syncretistic, making it difficult to obtain exclusive or specific Canaanite evidence. Nevertheless, one can gain a partial reconstruction and understanding by combining information from Ugaritic texts', mythology and other fragmented sources (Williams 2020:45-48; Stahl 2021:103-106). The mythology is set in a backdrop of chaos and conflict, during which the supreme god (*El* or *Il*) appointed lesser divine beings as rulers over different nations. The story of Kothar and the recovery of the kingship narrated a time when disorder reigned in both heaven and on earth. *El* chose Kothar to restore order and reestablish the status quo by granting kingship to Baal, thus making him the ruler of the other gods (Stolze 2022:65-67).

At this point, it seems like Baal's kingship was in line with *El*'s, a situation that Baal was trying to take advantage of in his interactions with the King of the gods in the Baal Epic. Baal wanted to establish a legitimate and historical reign and a dynasty he aimed to create by marrying Anat-Ashtart as his queen and having sons and heirs. This text vividly portrayed the political ambitions of Canaanite kings, consciously drawing analogies from mythology to show that mortal men hold more power than the gods' dynasty (Russell 2023:90-93). Even though Canaan never achieved unity under a single ruler, as it comprised city-states, the idea of a king ruling over a unified realm was a recurring theme in royal literature, such as in the Treaty of Baal and `Anat. The concepts of divine struggle and its integration within historical events led to the establishing of a real dynasty and a unified dominion under a king. These thoughts were prevalent features in adapting mythology into a distinct national theology (Burke 2022:132-135; Trimm 2022:147-150; Ronnevik 2024:154-157).

The ancient text of Psalm 2 provided valuable insights into the beliefs of ancient Israelites regarding their kings (Botha 2021:55-57). Scholars commonly interpreted this Psalm as having played a role in the ancient coronation ceremonies of Israelite kings (McIntyre 2022:78-80). It held great eschatological significance and resembles later apocalyptic literature, mainly texts discovered at Qumran (Odafe 2021:102-105). The references to Zion/Jerusalem and the Davidic covenant in the Psalm indicated that it was likely composed in Jerusalem and is directly related to the reign of King David (Creasy 2021:20-25). This implies that the Psalm was probably written during the Davidic dynasty, possibly by David himself. Although the Psalm is considered a

unified composition, it may be more accurate to consider it as having been written in two stages, with the second stage expanding upon the ideas presented in the first (McKenzie 1995:304). One possible approach is to analyse the Psalm through a hypothetical poetic fragment hypothesis, which can help to clarify its various components (Wendland 2016:382–388).

2.6.2 *Yahweh* as king

Kraus (2009:34–42) mentioned that one of the most critical features of kingship in many different societies is the concept of the deity as king and the relationship with the earthly occupant of the throne. Thus, studying *Yahweh's* kingship has essential implications for understanding the concepts of king and kingship in Israelite thought. The origin and nature of the concept of *Yahweh's* kingship in Israel have been the source of considerable debate. It is a matter of controversy whether the idea was an essential feature of the Israelite religion from an early date. References to *Yahweh* as king in the Pentateuch and Deuteronomistic History (Exod 15:18; Num 23:21; Jdg 8:23; 1 Sam 8:7; 10:19; 12:12) have been notoriously difficult to date. It is a familiar concept throughout the Near East that the god, or high god, was the king of the state or polity.

Ödman (1962:102-110) explained that in royal ideologies, the king was seen as the earthly representative of his god. Essentially, the earthly king's rule, or at least the ideal aspects of kingship, reflected the heavenly king's rule. The concept of *Yahweh's* kingship was most explicitly explored in the *Psalter* and, to a lesser extent, in the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible. Gunkel's classic study (1933:124) identified Psalms 47, 93, and 96–99 as enthronement Psalms celebrating *Yahweh's* kingship. This view has been supported by Kraus (1951:77) and Westermann (1965:141), who considered these Psalms as late and eschatological. In contrast, Mowinckel's (1922:47; 1962:207) influential study expanded this category to include Psalms 95 and 100. Mowinckel also noted that several other psalms were closely related to this group in subject matter (Pss 8; 15; 24; 29; 33; 46; 48; 50; 66a; 75; 76; 81; 82; 84; 87; 114; 118; 132; 149; and Exod 15:1–18). Furthermore, he produced a strong case for seeing these Psalms as part of the essential monarchic autumn festival.

The enthronement Psalms dealt with *Yahweh's* accession to his royal throne and exercise of royal power over the divine council, creation, and Israel. *Yahweh* was

declared as king (Pss 47:6–8; 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 98:6; 99:1) by his victory over the forces of chaos as represented by the *primaeval* waters (Ps 93:3–4). *Yahweh* could subdue all opposition and guarantee the security of Israel (Pss 47:3–4, 8–9; 97:3, 7, 9; 98:2; 99:1–2). The guarantee of order, *mišpāt*, peace, security and well-being was fundamental to *Yahweh*'s kingship.

Yahweh was depicted as the divine judge (Pss 96:10–13; 97:2, 8; 98:9; 99:4). The theme of *Yahweh*'s kingship was developed in very similar terms in the extensive collection of Psalms, which Mowinckel (1922:53–55) associated with the enthronement Psalms. *Yahweh*'s claim to kingship stemmed from his victory over the waters of chaos or rebellious sea monsters (Pss 74:12–14; 89:10–11) and earthly opponents (Pss 48:3–4; 68:30). He was viewed as the king of the gods in the divine council and responsible for the guarantee of justice and peace among the underprivileged (Ps 82; cf. Deut 32). The very base of his throne was thought to be established upon justice and righteousness (Ps 89:14). *Yahweh*, as king, could order and sustain his creation (Pss 24:1; 74:15–17; 89:11–12; 29; 68:9).

The recurrent phrase *yhwh mālak*, announcing *Yahweh*'s kingship, was a feature of the enthronement Psalms. The translation and meaning of this phrase have been the subject of considerable debate. Kraus, following Gunkel, believed that the verb was a prophetic perfect, which pointed to an eschatological understanding of these Psalms. Mowinckel believed that it referred to something new and vital that had just taken place, and therefore, he translated it as —*Yahweh* has become king (see Westermann (1987:253–265)). Gray (1979:20–25) argued it refers to an enduring and lasting condition and should be translated as —*Yahweh* is king. Gray (1979:20–25) further discussed these various suggestions. It may be better to think of Psalms, which celebrate *Yahweh*'s enduring kingship since, theologically, there is not a time when *Yahweh* was not king (Ps 93:2). In the context of the canon as a whole, rather than a supposed historical context, all aspects of this phrase as past, present, and future combine in the assertion that *Yahweh* was, is, and continues to be king.

Mowinckel's (1922:120–123) reconstruction of a festival to honour *Yahweh*'s kingship at the New Year enthronement has significantly contributed to biblical scholarship. The "myth and ritual school" built upon his work by expanding the discussion of this Israelite festival and comparing it to similar ideas and themes in the ANE, particularly the

Babylonian *akītu* festival, have contributed to the more significant conversation. Mowinckel associated the celebration of *Yahweh*'s kingship at the New Year Festival with the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkoth). The debate over the nature and essential characteristics of this festival continues.

Weiser (1962:93) interpreted the enthronement of Psalms as part of a Covenant festival celebrating the Exodus at the central sanctuary of the Israelite league. Kraus (1951:75-77) envisioned the celebration of *Yahweh*'s kingship at a royal Zion festival, which celebrated the divine election of Jerusalem and the Davidic dynasty. According to Kraus, the emphasis on the kingship of *Yahweh* did not occur until after the end of the Davidic dynasty in 587 BCE. However, Mowinckel's arguments have gained the most support in placing the celebration of *Yahweh*'s kingship at the great autumnal festival of the New Year in the Jerusalem temple. The main aspects of this celebration were the kingship of *Yahweh*, the defeat of the waters of chaos, the creation of the world, and the defeat of Israel's enemies. The enthronement Psalms presented *Yahweh* as the divine warrior who subdued the waters of chaos and then rose to judge the earth, ensuring justice and order.

Eaton (1976:37) suggested that the prophetic literature often addressed the themes of *Yahweh*'s kingship. While these themes may not always be explicitly stated in individual oracles, they formed the underlying basis for much of the prophetic material. The literature frequently discussed *Yahweh*'s kingship, his triumph over the primal forces of chaos, his defeat of earthly enemies, and the salvation of Israel (see Isa 24:21–23; 41:21–24; 44:6–7; 52:7; Jer 10:6–10; Zech 14:9, 16–17; Zeph 3:14–19). The controversial concept of the Day of *Yahweh* shares similarities with the notion of *Yahweh*'s kingship as depicted in the enthronement Psalms. An essential aspect of the prophetic literature is the interrelated themes of salvation and judgment, including the judgment and punishment of Israel. The intricate nature of prophetic literature, combined with oracles and later interpretations, makes assigning specific dates to individual passages challenging. Nevertheless, as documented in the Hebrew Bible, *Yahweh*'s royal attributes as a divine warrior and judge continued to be significant themes in Israel's religious traditions.

2.6.3 The royal ideal

The belief that the ideal qualities of a king align with the central elements of *Yahweh's* kingship demonstrates the significance of religious approval in establishing and upholding royal power in early agrarian societies. Gunkel identified the royal Psalms (Pss 2; 45; 72; 101; 110) as evidence of the primary themes of the Israelites, particularly Davidic royal ideology. Mowinckel expanded this collection of Psalms (Pss 28; 44; 60; 61; 63; 64; 66; 68; 80; 83; 118; 1 Sam 2:1–10) and suggested that they were used during the grand autumnal festival. Eaton (1976:43-44) and Mettinger (1976:308) have re-evaluated this material and advocated that a broader range of content, such as 2 Samuel 23:1–7, as evidence of the ideal of royalty, should be included.

The main problems in interpreting this text arose from disagreements over understanding the language used to describe the king: whether it should be taken literally or as exaggerated language used in the royal court. This debate also involves attempts to reconstruct how this material was used during the autumn or other festivals. The precise role of the king in religious ceremonies has been a topic of extensive yet inconclusive debate regarding the reconstruction of the great autumnal festival as a celebration of *Yahweh's* kingship. Scholars like Johnson (1967:62-65) and Eaton (1976:41-43) took a more moderate position, suggesting that the king participated in a significant ritual involving humiliation and glorification as part of the annual renewal of kingship.

Their views differ from those of earlier scholars who believed in a direct link between this ritual and the king's divine nature. There is considerable uncertainty in reconstructing the autumn festival and its main components (Mettinger 1976:3-4, 308). Nevertheless, it is widely accepted that most of the royal Psalms and related material, such as hymns from the royal sanctuary, provide essential evidence for the beliefs associated with the king in Israel. The king was the central symbol of the social system. His primary function was to establish and maintain order throughout the kingdom. The king had multiple roles, including warrior (1 Sam 8:20), judge (1 Sam 8:5; 2 Sam 12:1–15; 14:1–24; 15:1–6; 1 Kgs 3; 21:1–20; 2 Chr 19:4–11), and priest (1 Sam 13:10; 14:33–35; 2 Sam 6:13, 17; 24:25; 1 Kgs 3:4, 15; 8:62; 9:25; 12:32; 13:1). These roles

were interconnected and essential for maintaining a divinely ordained order that encompassed all aspects of the society and individual's existence in cosmic terms.

Pritchard (1969:421–427) stated that kingship is evident in a wide range of literature from the ANE, from Mesopotamia through Syria-Palestine to Egypt over many centuries. There are similarities in the portrayal of kingship in royal Sumerian hymns, the famous introductions and conclusions to Lipit-Ishtar and Hammurabi law codes, and various royal inscriptions and documents from Egypt. Lipit-Ishtar of Sumer was believed to have been appointed by the gods Anu and Enlil: "to establish justice in the land, to eliminate complaints, to suppress enmity and rebellion by military force, and to bring prosperity to the Sumerians and Akkadians" (ANET, 1955). Introducing Hammurabi's law code later reiterated this understanding of the king's responsibilities.

Wilson (1959:234-236) explained that in Mesopotamia, the term "*mēšarum*" represented the divine and cosmic order that was the responsibility of the king, whereas, in Egypt, the Pharaoh was responsible for upholding "*ma'at*". The king's duties included protecting and defending the state against internal and external military threats as a warrior, ensuring order by establishing justice as a judge and maintaining cultic order as a priest. The king thus secured the kingdom's well-being by fulfilling the divine realm's wishes. While both "*mēšarum*" and "*ma'at*" are often translated as "justice," their meanings encompass much more than the typical understanding of the English word. They embody the concepts of "justice," "order," and "truth" for the entire society and include the ideas of well-being, fertility, and prosperity.

Pinch (1993:87-90) explained that the gods' gifts were bestowed upon the king, who was seen as the earthly representative of the divine realm and was responsible for bringing about *mēšarum/ma'at* upon his ascension to the throne. This concept was central to Egyptian royal ideology and was depicted in the myth of creation. He was praised for banishing the forces of chaos through his act of creation. The establishment of *ma'at*, personified as the daughter of Re, was essential to the very fabric of creation. The Pharaoh, referred to as the "Lord of *ma'at*," a title belonging to Re, safeguarded and defended Re's creation. The constant menace to cosmic order posed by the forces of chaos became evident at the time of the Pharaoh's death. Installing a new Pharaoh to the throne was believed to expel chaos and reinstate *ma'at*.

Meanwhile, the Babylonian epic Enuma Elish, created in Mesopotamia, also validated the monarchy. According to Jacobsen (1976:47-49), this narrative illustrated similar ideas about the ideal nature of kingship. In this story, Marduk, who proved himself fit to be king of the gods, expelled chaos by defeating the sea monster Tiamat in a dramatic battle. The law codes and other royal inscriptions provided the most apparent evidence for the king's duty to establish and maintain a divinely ordained order. The Ugaritic legends of *Krt* and *Aqht*, along with more fragmentary royal inscriptions throughout the Levant, point to the widespread acceptance of similar ideas about the ideal nature of the king. The Israelite royal Psalms witness similar notions about the functions of kingship.

Goulder (1981:83-85) agreed that Psalm 72 is generally, though not universally, accepted as part of the enthronement ceremony of the king, thereby proclaiming the ideal aspirations and hopes for the new reign. This Psalm embodied most of the main elements of the ideals of kingship. The request (Ps 72:1–2) that the king be granted the divine gift of justice, *mišpāṭ*, was tied to the fertility and prosperity of the nation. His primary duty was to preserve and protect the order and harmony of the kingdom and, thereby, the whole of *Yahweh's* creation (Ps 72:3, 5–7, 15–17). He was promised universal dominion and the defeat of his enemies, i.e., the defeat and expulsion of chaos (Ps 72:8–11). All these themes were expressed in the other royal Psalms and associated material in the Hebrew Bible. The king was seen as the fount of justice (Pss 45:4, 6; 101; 2 Sam 23:3), fertility, prosperity (Pss 45:2, 8–9; 111:3; 2 Sam 23:4), and order (Pss 45:3; 101; 110:1–2, 5–7; 89:21–23; 2 Sam 23:6–7).

2.7 King's relationship with God in Psalm 2

The section delves into the king's relationship with God regarding his kingship and his role as the chosen one to represent God to humanity.

2.7.1 Introduction

The king's reception of divine wisdom and his acquired sonship proved that he was chosen to mediate between God and humankind. This was achieved by governing with wisdom and maintaining a close connection with God (Pendergrass 2020:75-78). This was possibly the most crucial element of Israelite royal ideology. The sequence in Psalm 2 provided a more immediate account of the king's reception of wisdom and royal authority, but the shared themes and vocabulary with Proverbs 8 suggested that the two passages depict the same event (Lee 2024:102-105). In both cases, God has chosen a specific king to fulfil His desires, granted him wisdom and divine sonship, and promised universal dominion and triumph (Rohr 2024:45-47).

In this passage, the king remembered his inauguration ceremony, where he was anointed as king on Mount Zion and received Sanctuary from the Lord, symbolising his divine election and the eternal nature of his reign (Harris 2023:88-90). He then recited the actual content of the decree, in which the Lord pledged to grant him dominion over all nations and victory over his enemies (Majors 2023:120-123). A similar progression can be observed in Psalm 2:7-9, which detailed the words of the Lord's decree, the installation of the king, and the proclamation of his rule over the nations. In verse 2:7, the king declared the Lord's decree: "You are my son. This day I have begotten you". Just as divine Wisdom metaphorically begot the speaker in Proverbs 8, the king in Psalm 2 attained an enduring, filial relationship with God and a role to carry out God's purpose, similar to Lady Wisdom's task of governing humanity (Batdorf 2021:102-105).

2.7.2 Nature of the king

Sawyer (1967:109-110) suggested that the themes of justice, fertility, cosmic and natural order, and universal dominion celebrated in the enthronement Psalms were the same themes and attributes of *Yahweh's* kingship. There has been an extensive debate about the precise relationship between *Yahweh* and the king. One significant difficulty has been determining whether the exalted language of the royal Psalms should be taken literally or treated as court style or hyperbole. In several royal Psalms and other texts, it has been claimed that the king was the "son" or "first-born" of *Yahweh*, while *Yahweh* was the "father" of the king (Pss 2:7; 89:27; 2 Sam 7:14; cf. Isa 9:6). This was an essential ideological claim underlying the right of the occupant

of the throne to rule on behalf of the state deity. The precise meaning of these claims remains the subject of an unresolved dispute.

Scholars such as Engnell (1943:90-92) and Widengren (1955:93-95) argued that the Israelite king was of divine descent, citing similar beliefs in the ANE. However, these arguments have been strongly contested. While the Egyptian Pharaoh was believed to be the offspring of Re and revered as the embodiment of Horus, Osiris, and Seth, Frankfort (1948:116-118) has been influential in challenging parallel interpretations of Mesopotamian sources. It is argued that the Hittite king was not deified until after his death. One of the epithets of Keret at Ugarit was "offspring of El," but Gray (1969:27; 1979:33-35) and others have rejected the idea that the Ugaritic king had a divine nature, emphasising instead his sacred status.

The evidence in the Hebrew Bible about the beliefs of the Israelites regarding the nature of the king has been quite challenging. The debate has revolved around the controversial interpretation of Psalms 45:6. The main issue was whether the king was revered as a "god" (*ēlohiṁ*) or not. Those who argued against the king being considered a god provided various explanations for the original text. The most common explanations included interpreting the term as an adjective referring to the king's "divine throne," suggesting textual corruption through haplography, or assuming that the verse contains an ellipsis. Similar difficulties have been encountered concerning Isaiah 9:6, which von Rad (1967:46-47) viewed as similar to the Egyptian royal protocol containing the Pharaoh's throne names at the time of his coronation.

The suggestions made by von Rad (1966:57-59) that the king was addressed as a "mighty god" (*ēl gibbôr*) have been strongly contested. Alternative explanations have understood the term in a metaphorical rather than literal sense, as referring to the king's unique nature, which set him apart from the human sphere (cf. Isa 10:21; Jer 32:18). This was also a common understanding of the "father"- "son" relationship between *Yahweh* and the king. Thus, the decree of *Yahweh* in Psalm 2:7, "You are my son, today I have begotten you", has been interpreted as a formula of adoption on the day of the king's coronation. Thomas (1981:100-102) stated that the king was understood to have a special relationship with *Yahweh*, which sets him apart from other mortals. However, this divine sonship expressed the king's sacred importance and functions rather than a belief in the king's divine nature. The king's divine qualities

and god-like abilities were referred to frequently (2 Sam 14:17, 20; 1 Kgs 3:4–15; 16–28; 4:29–34; 10:1–9, 24; Isa 11:2–4).

Mettinger (1976:260-75) suggested that the king's divine sonship was not understood in mythological terms as a literal divine descent but rather as an expression of a special relationship that began only at the time of the king's accession to the throne. Frick (1986:32) has recently suggested, based on African comparisons, that it was the kingship rather than the king which was thought to be divine. The fact that the prophetic material does not attack royal claims to divinity has often been cited as crucial, even if silent, evidence that the king in Israel was not understood to be divine. It is more common to talk of the sacral nature of the king.

The anointing ceremony, particularly during the coronation, was a significant expression of power and authority. In the Hebrew Bible, there were only two short descriptions of the royal enthronement ceremony (1 Kgs 1:32–40; 2 Kgs 11). When the king was proclaimed as "the anointed of *Yahweh*" (*māšî'ah yhw*; 1 Sam 24:6, 10; 26:9, 11, 16, 23; 2 Sam 1:14, 16), it signified the sacred nature of the king's person. This term was most commonly used in the Hebrew Bible to refer to the Davidic king in Judah, but it was also used in other contexts for various individuals. However, there has been no consensus on the specific significance of the rite. Kutsch's (1963) study provided the most extensive treatment of the rite and its significance throughout the ANE, where it was used in various contexts, from the transfer of property to the delegation of authority.

Mettinger (1976:185-94) provided a helpful overview of previous literature on the subject. He noted a shift in the Israelite ritual of anointing the king from a secular authorisation by the people to a divine designation through the priest. The kingly title had a significant claim to legitimacy and the right to rule, closely linked to the divine promise of a perpetual Davidic dynasty (2 Sam 7:8–16; Ps 89:19–37). The royal Psalms illustrated the kingly ideal and the king's unique relationship with *Yahweh*, laying the foundation for developing messianic beliefs in later Judaism and Christianity. The prophetic oracles' ideal of a future ruler was described in royal terms (Isa 9:6–7; 11:1–5; Jer 23:5–6; Mic 5:2–4; Zech 9:9–10). Later, messianic expectations evolved from the reinterpretation of this ideal and the promises to the Davidic dynasty following the loss of kingship to the Babylonians in 587 BCE.

2.7.4 The universal rule of the anointed king in Psalm 2

In ancient studies, a detailed analysis of each verse in Psalm 2 revealed a depiction of ruling over a vast empire (Kalimi 2020:55-57). It seems that Verse 8 may have referred to an ancient ceremony performed during the coronation of a king. This ritual involved the newly appointed ruler breaking a clay tablet, symbolising the obsolescence of existing political institutions (Robbins 2024:88-90). This ceremonial practice seemed to influence the wording in Psalm 2:9 (Smith 2022:120-123). After overthrowing the old order, the king, anointed by God, wielded complete and unrestricted power over the world (Neumann 2023:102-105). Any opposition was ruthlessly crushed, as the authority of hostile nations was deemed an unbearable threat to the newly established reign of God and His king (Závoti 2021:65-67).

The verses foreshadowed the suffering described in verses 1-3. Early Christians believed that this suffering was fulfilled through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, whom they saw as embodying the quintessential king described in Psalm 2 (Strickland 2022:45-47). These observations illustrated the historical context and subjectivity of the Old Testament's ideology surrounding royalty. They reveal that even within a particular era, there was no singular perspective on the role and nature of the king concerning God (McIntyre 2022:75-78). Nevertheless, a theological essence remained at the core of the ideal of kingship, represented through the institution of monarchy, which was evident in various traditions surrounding kings. This has been further developed from a theological standpoint by emphasising the king's divine sonship (Pali & Baron 2020:90-93). The figure of David stood out prominently as the epitome of an ideal king, known as "the man after God's own heart."

2.7.5 Comparison of royal ideology in Psalm 2 and the ANE

In ancient studies, Hjelm (2015:52) argued that in Psalm 2:10-11, the idea of *Yahweh* bestowing divine laws upon the king could be compared to the Hittite account of the king's role in the divine assembly (Fredrickson 2020:45-47). The Hittite text referred to the sun god's decision to give a decree to the king and urged the king to uphold these words as his oracle and law (Roehrenbeck 2023:112-115). In his work, Hjelm (2015:54-56) pointed out the parallels between the theme of rebellion in Psalm 2:1-3 and similar narratives found in Hittite treaties and Ugaritic literature (Misantone 2022:88-90). Hjelm briefly examined how the concept of the divine king as an "adopted" son of God is evident in biblical and extra-biblical sources from the ANE. He highlighted Psalm 2:7, in which the king declared, "*Yahweh* said to me, 'You are my son'".

He compared Assyrian accounts where the king proclaimed, "Ashurbanipal, the great crown prince ... whom the great gods called by my name and entrusted to kingship" (Williams 2020:55-57). Hjelm (2015:58) suggested that the concept of divine sonship, as a way to justify the king's rule, was prominent in the royal ideology of the Near East. This influence likely impacted Israel, especially during their monarchy's Assyrian and Persian periods (Majors 2023:102-105). In the last part of his essay, Hjelm examined the ideology of the divine king in Psalm 2 and compared it to the beliefs of the ANE. Misantone (2022:88-90) proposed that Israel's royal theology was probably influenced by neighbouring nations, shaped by historical events such as political and military pressures, royal marriages, alliances, exchanges of embassies, and the expectation of theological truths.

2.7.6 Royal religion and ideology

One common feature of early agrarian states, including Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, and Mesoamerica, was the use of religion to establish and maintain royal power in a centrally organised society. The *Enuma Elish*, for example, was a well-known state foundation myth used to legitimise the existing royal authority. Israelite kingship also used state religion to justify and uphold royal rule (see Ahlström (1982:27-30)). The king was portrayed as chosen by the deity and given the right to rule on earth as the god's representative. He was responsible for organising and

administering the religious rituals, including any necessary reforms (1 Kgs 15:12–15; 2 Kgs 18:1–7; 22:3–23:23).

The Hebrew Bible provided evidence of a mix of royal and popular religious elements during the time of the monarchs (Jer 44:17–18; 2:27; Ezek 20:30–31; Micah 5:13–14; 2 Kgs 21:7). The consistent disapproval of royal religious deviation from the point of view of The Deuteronomistic Historian (DtrH) and the prophetic criticism of the religious rituals (Am 5:21–27; Is 1:10–17; Jr 7) clearly showed this aspect of the religious system. Discoveries from various Israelite shrines, inscriptions from *Kuntillet Ajrud*, and partly from Elephantine have significantly contributed to the current understanding of religious practices during the time of the monarchs. Many have viewed the syncretistic royal cult as proof that kingship was not originally part of early Israel. Mendenhall (1975:37-39) strongly supported this view, arguing that the rule of David and Solomon represented a rapid return to paganism from the Late Bronze Age. Reconstructing a premonarchic Israelite religious tradition has been challenging and controversial, making comparisons of the later developments under the monarchy difficult. Further research is necessary to understand how the royal cult, with all its mixed features, functioned within Israelite society.

2.7.7 Similarities in divine kingship concepts

In ancient times, divine kingship was widespread in the ANE. It was believed that the gods themselves would choose and appoint the king to serve as their representative on Earth (McConville 2021:72). McConville asserted that kings as divine sons have been well-documented in the ANE (Robertson 2020:45-48). This is evident when comparing the kingship in Psalm 2 with that of the ANE, as several similarities can be observed (Begg & Matthews 2021:102). One notable similarity is the notion of the king being called the "son" of a god. In Psalm 2:7, the king was described as the "son" of God (Johnson 2022:88-90).

The text explained that it is unclear whether the reference is to King David as the ideal king or to a Messianic figure. However, it is evident that the king has been depicted as having a father-son relationship with God (Snell 2021:21). This concept is similarly seen in the Egyptian new kingdom, where the ruling king was considered to be the son of the god Amun. In the Dedication of the Stela of Akhenaten, the king was celebrated as the "Thou Sun of the Living Aten" (Podany 2022:55-57). These

representations strengthen the idea of the king's role as the son of Aten. Likewise, the Mesopotamian belief that the king was the "adopted" son of a god is also comparable. For example, in the *Lugale*, it was mentioned that the goddess Nisaba would regard the king with kindness as if he were her child (Bjur 2020:115).

2.8 Differences in the role of the king

In ancient studies, significant debate has surrounded the interpretation of certain verbs in Psalm 2. There has been uncertainty about whether verbs such as "you will shepherd" and "you will smash them" were directed towards the enemies or the king's people (Wilcock 2023:56). The prevailing interpretation suggested that the verbs referred to the king's people. This interpretation was based on the idea that the king sought permission from *Yahweh* to exercise universal rule, an action typically taken against one's enemies (Hobbs 2020:78-80). However, it could also be argued that the enemies were the intended recipients, as they were the only group explicitly mentioned as the direct object of the action within the Psalm (James 2020:41-46).

In his recitation, the king emphasised lines two and seven, where he reinforced himself as fulfilling *Yahweh*'s decree during his installation (Majors 2023:112). The use of imperfect verbs in the two imperatives suggests that the act had not yet been initiated at the time of the command (Schwartz 2023:37-42). According to Psalm 2, it has been believed that *Yahweh* established the king as a divine son during his installation (Miller 1986:37-42). The king requested that *Yahweh* grant him universal rule, a promise believed to have been made (Mondesir 2024:124-129). The king firmly believed in the oracle he had received, proclaiming him as the son of *Yahweh*, and saw the future global rule as an integral part of the same divine act (DeClaissé-Walford 2020:24-28).

2.8.1 Formation of the state

Service (1971:27-29) identified four stages of development of sociopolitical societies through increasingly complex forms: band, tribe, chiefdom, and state. He later realised that bands and tribes were practically indistinguishable. The study of segmentary societies, especially chiefdoms, has been utilised to understand the transition from tribal confederation to state. Flanagan (1981:52-54) argued, based on a study of biblical genealogies and anthropological studies, that the periods of Saul and David were chiefdoms. Similarly, Frick (1979:96-97; 1985:122-125; 1986:142-144) tested

information about chiefdoms against the biblical data and extensively themised early Israel as a chiefdom. These studies have identified critical areas for future research, creating a better understanding of the developments leading to the early monarchy in Israel.

The introduction of kingship into Israel has been studied from an anthropological perspective, offering new insights into state formation. Various studies on Israelite state formation (Frick 1985:131-133; 1986:150-153; Coote & Whitelam 1986:47-48; 1987:60-62; Hauer 1986:76-78) indicated that the rise of the Israelite monarchy was the result of a complex interplay of different factors. These studies challenge the conventional belief that the origin of the Israelite state was solely due to Philistine pressure. Instead, they emphasise the significance of internal developments and external pressures.

Hauer (1986:87-89), Coote and Whitelam (1986:73-74; 1987:81-83), and Otto (1986:96-98) built a modified version of Carneiro's theory (1970:112-114), which emphasised the role of circumscription in the origins of states. They highlighted the environmental and social constraints that countered the tendency towards disintegration and ultimately led to centralisation. The early Israelites, located in the central highlands and southern Palestine, were circumscribed by semiarid steppe and desert regions and the network of lowland city-states occupied by the Philistines, the Midianites, and the Amalekites.

Frick (1985:136–88) and Coote and Whitelam (1986:75), influenced by Marfoe (1980:23-24), have also noted the importance of highland farming strategies, such as terracing and intensive orchard cultivation, which required long-term investment. These studies also acknowledged the pressure of demographic growth on limited resources as a significant factor leading to agricultural intensification, contributing to centralisation and eventually the introduction of kingship in Israel. Coote and Whitelam (1987:85) mentioned that focusing on the complex interrelationship between various internal and external factors expands the study of the rise of kingship beyond many traditional approaches. Future research, which relies mainly on current archaeological work in the region, must illuminate the relationship between establishing kingship in Israel and the simultaneous rise of state formations in Edom, Moab, and Ammon.

2.8.2 Royal ideology in ANE context

Many studies have been conducted on reconstructing an ancient Israelite enthronement ritual. These studies used the royal Psalms and compared the data from the ANE. They examined the context of a New Year festival where the king played a central role in a ritual drama within the religious system. The hypothetical scenario generally involved the king leading a battle, being temporarily defeated, dying, descending into the underworld (*Sheol*), rising victorious and ascending to the throne (Stewart 2010:10). In ancient Egypt, the king was considered the 'son of God' or even a god himself. Similarly, in ancient Mesopotamia, kings were generally viewed as earthly representatives of the gods. Evidence supporting the deification of the kings in the ANE was primarily found in the records of royal ascensions (Rice 2003:96-100; Hornung 1997:284), royal inscriptions (Wilson 1958:262), and monumental architecture (Rice 2003:72; Laato 1997:244-269; David 1986:23).

The king's divinity was prominently displayed during his ascension ceremony, especially in Egypt. In other instances, royal inscriptions highlighted the king's divine lineage through his victories over his enemies. The king constructed temples for the gods to demonstrate his divine authority and position as a king sanctioned by the gods. Freedman (1992:245-247) noted that early agrarian states had a network of beliefs centred around the king.

Justifying and legitimising the king's rule was very important. A centralised bureaucracy disseminated a royal ideology, including critical images, attitudes, and ideals related to kingship. These ideals can be found in various societies' literary traditions, ceremonies, and iconography. Symbols such as the sceptre (Ps 45:6), the crown (2 Sam 1:10; 2 Kgs 11:12; Pss 89:39; 132:18), and the throne (2 Sam 14:9; 1 Kgs 2:12) were important in expressing the justice and legitimacy of the king's reign. The royal or official state religion legitimised and reinforced the social structure by distributing power and privilege.

Freedman (1992:251-253) suggested that the Hebrew Bible is the primary source for understanding the central aspects of Israelite royal ideology. Archaeological findings have provided valuable but limited evidence to enhance this understanding. Reconstruction of royal ideology has been challenging due to the incomplete nature of the source material and ongoing debates regarding the dates or use of texts. The

justification of kingship and its centralised social structure was based on the promise of order, security, prosperity, and fertility in exchange for loyalty and subservience. Additionally, studying how royal ideology was communicated to the state's population and potential external adversaries is crucial.

Many written and visual materials related to kingship have been preserved from various ANEern societies, covering a wide geographical and temporal range. This material showed significant similarities in the concepts of kingship across these societies. British and Scandinavian scholars (Engnell 1943:56; Widengren 1955:110-112), also known as the "myth and ritual" and Uppsala schools, attempted to find a typical religious pattern of divine kingship throughout the ANE. Their work marked an essential point in the discussion about whether kings were seen as divine or sacred and the different rituals and ceremonies related to kingship.

It is important to note that while the ideal picture of kingship in the ANE may have had formal similarities, it does not mean that the practical application and understanding of the king's functions were the same in all societies. Each society has its particular ideologies within a more extensive social system, and it is crucial to understand them in systemic terms before making cross-cultural comparisons. The evidence for Judean and Israelite royal ideology is incomplete and often hard to interpret. The differences between the two kingdoms are uncertain. Comparing this evidence with similar agrarian kingships can help pose questions and lines of research into the organisation and dynamics of the whole social system. However, it is important to consider differences alongside formal similarities, as various factors, such as environmental constraints, may have shaped how monarchies functioned.

2.8.3 Influence of ANEern royal ideology on Psalm 2

Howard (1997:23) explained that in Psalm 2, ancient Israelites gained insight into kingship. The poem contrasted a virtuous king with a corrupt one (Howard 1997:23). The common perception of a human ruler was portrayed negatively, while God's proclamation of His chosen king reigning in Zion on His sacred hill brought hope (Dekker 2021:45). It was widely accepted that the Davidic Covenant ensured the everlasting reign of a descendant of David over Israel through a lineage of Davidic monarchs (Martin 2022:78). In its historical context, this Psalm addressed the difference between past experiences with good and bad kings.

The specific circumstances are somewhat unclear, but it is possible that this occurred during a time of a divided kingdom or under the oppressive rule of a wicked king following a series of unfavourable events (Davis 2022:112). The righteous king mentioned in the Psalm would have been a symbol of hope to the Hebrew audience, as he would restore the qualities expected of a true monarch (Budha 2023:134). Since the fulfilment of the covenant promise has yet to occur, some may interpret the prophetic ideal of the king in the Psalm as an indication of a gradual progression towards the ultimate realisation of God's promised covenant (Knoppers 2004:56).

2.8.4 Psalm 2 as "Prophetic Rebuke"

Analysing the themes in their well-organised writing is crucial to fully understanding and assessing an author's arguments. For example, laments have a specific structure that includes addressing *Yahweh*, expressing grief, confessing trust, seeking assurance of being heard, making requests, and concluding with a vow of praise. God rebuked the nations in verses 4-6, and the Psalm concluded with a call for submission to *Yahweh*'s authority through the chosen king of Israel (McIntyre 2022:1-3). Gunkel (1966:1-52) and Mowinckel (1962:278-299) interpreted Psalm 2 as a lament of the people, considering it a sub-genre of royal or kingship Psalms, also known as "prayers of the king". According to Gunkel (1966:1-52), royal Psalms (such as 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 132; 145:1-11 & 89:47-52) were internally unified because they solely focus on the king.

It is important to note that in a culture where collective cohesion is prized, the king, as the nation's representative, was seen as speaking on behalf of the nation in his

prayers, as the word of the king was considered the word of the nation. McIntyre (2022:1-3) argued that Psalm 2 was a prophetic rebuke on a structural basis. The warning in verse 12 confirms this conclusion. McIntyre considered Psalm 2 a lament of the people, with a sub-genre classification of a royal prophetic rebuke since the speaker and the audience were royal figures. This argument proposed a re-classification but affirmed the current researcher's hypothesis that Psalm 2 employed a royal ideology. Therefore, the idea of a royal ideology should not be seen as limited to pictures of enthronement.

2.9 Re-classifying Psalm 2

McIntyre (2022:1-3) suggested that the classification of kingship needs re-assessment. Gunkel and Mowinckel were prominent critics of form, but the royal Psalms did not focus on form. Instead, their similarity lies in the recurring themes surrounding kingship and monarchy. This raises the question of whether Psalm 2 was mainly concerned with kingship. According to McIntyre (2022:1-3), Psalm 2 primarily discussed the reaction of the Gentiles to *Yahweh*. This was evident as they had rebelled against *Yahweh*'s authority (v. 1), and the Psalm demanded that they first serve *Yahweh* and then his chosen king. While the themes should be considered to understand the theological content of Scripture, priority should be given to the structure of the text.

The structure of a text can set boundaries for its interpretation. These boundaries are significant because they help scholars refine their conclusions about the meaning of the text. This is particularly important for a widely used (and self-contained) passage like Psalm 2. Regarding genre, Psalm 2 falls into a different sub-genre identified by Gunkel, which provides a better explanation for the re-evaluation and adequately clarifies the inter-textual use of the Psalm, lending support to this interpretation. Gunkel pointed out that other prophetic genres have influenced some Psalms and stated that "rebuke" appeared three times within these prophetic genres, while the word or concept of "threat" only appeared once. Gunkel referred to Psalms 50, 53, and 81 as examples of the rebuke genre, also noting Psalms 52, with the warning

appearing only in Psalm 53:6. Gunkel (1966:1-52) described the form taken by the prophetic rebuke Psalms, and included the following elements:

- The rebuke commenced with an indignant question.
- The rebuke introduced the words used by those being rebuked.
- The rebuke often directly addressed those being rebuked in the second person.
- The rebuked individual was identified as "*nābāl*" or foolish for not heeding *Yahweh*'s voice.

2.10 Biblical ideology

The following section explores the term "ideology" from a biblical perspective and its place and use concerning the Bible reader's ideological investments.

2.10.1 Introduction

Clines (2014: 23-25) stated that the term "ideology" is frequently used in Biblical Criticism, but its meaning is a subject of debate among scholars. Brueggemann defines ideology as "vested interest passed off as truth, partial truth which counterfeits as whole truth, theological claim functioning as a mode of social control". Garbini (1988:11) believed that "theologians who masquerade as historians" are responsible for creating an ideology that "distorts reality". He argued that writers of Biblical history had "an ideological motivation which controls the exposition of events" Clines (1995:244–250).

Clines (1995:244–250) suggested that writers and readers of biblical texts have ideological investments, particularly a position to maintain or an argument to advance, and their position or argument is their 'ideology'. He further argued that writers and readers are not neutral and that ideology provides the power to move people beyond the crisis. Ideologies compensate with hermeneutics similar to new theologies, religious revivals, and reinterpretations of ancient symbols and stories. This is where literary, historical, and social science criticisms serve canonical biblical studies, as each helps to study emerging ideologies within the biblical canon.

2.10.2 Ideological criticism

Clines' essay "Meta Commentating Amos" in his book "Interested Parties" is an example of ideological criticism, according to Collins (2005:24). Clines reads the text differently from the conventional interpretation, which he described as "reading from left to right," contrary to the typical right-to-left Hebrew reading style. Clines' focus was more on ethics. He defined ideology as large-scale concepts that shape entire groups' perspectives. While historical-critical scholarship often critiques elements of the biblical corpus, such as royal ideology or conquest narratives, most scholars consider specific segments ethically superior. However, using a postmodern approach, Clines directed criticism at particular sections like the Ten Commandments and the book of Amos.

The commandments in the Old Testament favour the interests of property-owning men while excluding women. Clines argued that these commandments were shaped by the preferences of societal patriarchs, who typically were older men. Even if one disagreed with this view, Clines asserted that the commandments do not serve the interests of all members of society. In Amos, Clines delivered a more substantial critique. He questioned the prophet's harsh condemnation of the wealthy in Amos 6:4-7, challenging whether having luxurious items or engaging in leisurely activities should be considered sinful. He believed that Amos' message critiqued the wealthy and the entire social system, which allowed such inequality to exist. Clines argued that the message in Amos is still relevant today, as it challenges humanity to examine modern societal structures and how these structures perpetuate inequality.

2.11 Deuteronomistic royal ideology

In the following section, Newman (2019:15-34) discussed the Zion royal ideology in the Psalms. This part of the study focused on a distinct royal ideological framework associated with the Deuteronomistic History. There has been a significant controversy surrounding this idea, with many asserting that these books do not form a unified historical work. Scholars have been questioning the perceived relationship between Deuteronomy and the Former Prophets. In this section, the researcher addresses this controversy and explains how a cohesive royal ideology can still be identified within what is commonly called "The Deuteronomistic History". It is important to remember that Deuteronomistic royal ideology is a fusion of traditions. The texts labelled

Deuteronomistic can not embody a homogeneous "Deuteronomism" but should rather be seen as engaging in a conversation with the book of Deuteronomy among the Former Prophets (Noll 2007:311-45).

Despite the improved understanding of the Deuteronomistic royal ideology during the time of King Josiah compared to the uncertainties surrounding the viewpoints of David and Solomon on Zion, it is essential to acknowledge that both Deuteronomistic Royal Ideology and Zion Royal Ideology come to us through texts that were finalized after the Babylonian exile. Just as the symbol of Zion carried different meanings for David and Hezekiah, the symbol of the Deuteronomic covenant held distinct significance for the author of the law of the king in Deuteronomy compared to the Deuteronomists recording the reigns of the kings of Judah.

The Deuteronomistic History hypothesis, initially proposed by Martin North, suggested that the books from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings formed a unified literary work. This unified work aimed to explain the downfall of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah from an exilic perspective (Römer 2007:67-70). While scholars like Spinoza recognised the connection between Deuteronomy and the Former Prophets, the idea of a Deuteronomistic redaction has its roots in de Wette's work. However, North(1972:10-25) significant departure from the concept of a Hexateuch in favour of a unified literary connection from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings is fundamental to the modern understanding the Deuteronomistic History hypothesis. North's theory suggested a single author/editor, the Deuteronomist, who edited earlier traditions and constructed a complex perspective of Israel's history, including a sequence of successive eras, to explain the final catastrophe.

Since North's initial publications, significant critiques have prompted substantial revisions. North revised his theory to propose that the prayer of Solomon in 1 Kings 8 underwent redaction by several authors/editors. Cross (1974:247-287) suggested a theory of double redaction. He asserted that Deuteronomy was initially written/redacted in the time of King Josiah and then redacted again after the exile by incorporating post-Josiah portions of 2 Kings and sections addressing the exile into earlier Deuteronomistic works.

In the early 1970s, Rudolf Smend and Walter Dietrich proposed a different revision, keeping North's notion of exilic origins but dividing it into different compositional layers: DtrH, followed by The Prophetic Deuteronomist (DtrP) and The Nomistic Deuteronomist (DtrN) with additional legal additions like DtrN1 and DtrN2. However, recently, some doubts have been raised about the existence of the Deuteronomistic History. Critics, including Wurthwein and Auld, questioned the label "Deuteronomistic," suggesting that the earliest portions of the texts are found in Kings rather than Deuteronomy.

Rösel (2000:195-211) comprehensively analysed various Deuteronomistic leitmotifs and concluded that no coherent ideology exists. According to Rösel (2000:195-211), the presence of a single and uniform Deuteronomistic History should be abandoned. Eynikel suggested that the works within the Deuteronomistic History were independent blocks written separately, originating from different books compiled later (Knoppers 2000:119-34). Noll (2007:311-45) rejected the historical aspect of the Deuteronomistic History and the concept of Deuteronomism, proposing instead a Deuteronomic debate, where historical writers responded positively and negatively to Deuteronomy's development of thought.

The book of Deuteronomy is a vital part of the Deuteronomistic History. Whether or not a single author wrote the Deuteronomistic History, it appeared to have been edited by one person with a consistent focus on explaining the exile and condemning foreign worship. Knoppers has identified signs of unity within the Deuteronomistic History, such as the pattern of prophecy-fulfilment, the division of Israelite history into distinct periods, and other clues like the use of divine wrath expressions and the portrayal of intermarriage with Canaanite nations as reasons for Israel's downfall (Knoppers 2000:119-34). The argument assumes the presence of a coherent royal ideology expressed in the texts from Deuteronomy to Second Kings, which may be associated with the Deuteronomistic History. The current analysis explored specific passages to demonstrate the Deuteronomistic History's viewpoint on kingship.

The law of the King in Deuteronomy 17:14-20 outlined limitations on the king's authority, including restrictions on acquiring horses for a professional cavalry, constraints on accumulating wealth, and prohibitions on practising polygamy. Additionally, the Judahite king was depicted as a pious individual committed to

studying and following the law by the Levitical priests, with no allowance for exalting himself over others. The origins of these differences have been debated. Levinson (2001:511-34) suggested that Deuteronomy emerged as a protest against King Manasseh by court scribes supporting Hezekiah's reforms.

Dutcher-Walls (2014:103–107) dated Deuteronomy to Josiah's reign, aiming to prevent Judah from drawing Assyria's attention. Knoppers (2000:119-34) proposed that Deuteronomy reflected the concerns of scribes, officials, and priests in Jerusalem's temple court, while Römer (2007:69) questioned its pre-exilic nature. Knoppers (2000:119-34) challenged Römer, arguing that the Deuteronomist, by portraying Solomon's violations of the law of the king positively, does not explicitly criticise the monarchy. Römer contended that the law of the king is a narrative device added to the Deuteronomistic History, while Knoppers (2000:32-34) insisted that it is pre-exilic and contributed to a Deuteronomistic royal ideology.

In their analysis of how the Deuteronomists used the king's law, scholars such as von Rad (1967:50-52) have argued that the Deuteronomistic additions included verses 18-19. This was partially attributed to the reference to the law as a book, which is a common feature in assumed Deuteronomistic additions, and its positive role for the king in a list of prohibitions (Gerbrandt 1986:89). However, Knoppers (2000:119-34) questioned this, pointing out that, except for Josiah, the authors of Samuel-Kings showed little interest in whether kings read the Torah scroll. Josiah's public reading contrasted with the private study suggested by verses 18-19 (Knoppers 2000:119-34). The debate between Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic thought was underscored by the broader disagreement on the role of the king. According to Levinson (2001:511-34), the Deuteronomistic perspective envisioned an expanded role for the king, who served as the final court of judicial appeal, defender and presider over cultus, war leader, provider of economic relief, and held the title of *Yahweh's* son.

The book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomist agreed that the king came to power through popular requests and divine approval. The request for a king was very similar in both Deuteronomy and the books of Samuel-Kings. They also agreed that after receiving the request for a king, *Yahweh* had the right to choose who would become king. An important aspect of kingship ideology that both Deuteronomy and the

Deuteronomist share is its conditionality. The kingship code stated that the king's obedience was crucial for extending his reign and his descendants' rule over Israel.

Infidelity to *Yahweh's* commands could have led to the loss of the throne of Israel/Judah, signifying a significant change in the royal ideology of pre-exilic Judah. In the Deuteronomistic History, this conditionality became evident soon after the establishment of kingship. In 1 Samuel 13, when Saul built an altar at Gilgal to offer a burnt offering, Samuel reproached him. The significance of Samuel's decree was somewhat unclear, mainly because Saul's construction of an altar in verse 14:35 went without comment (Gerbrandt 1986:87). Another critical point raised by Gerbrandt is that the king was ultimately responsible for the religious practices.

The Deuteronomistic History is often associated with King Josiah, but its main focus is on King David. The rise and fall of David has been of great significance, especially in the depiction of kingship in the Deuteronomistic History and the covenant established with David in 2 Samuel 7. This covenant involved building a house for *Yahweh* and establishing a line of successors for David. However, Kruse (1985:139-64) pointed out that this covenant does not establish kingship but establishes the Davidic Dynasty exclusively for David.

While the covenant is eternal, it warned David's descendants against abusing this unique and non-transferable privilege. The conditional nature of the Davidic Covenant became apparent in 1 Kings 2, where David advised Solomon. The success of the Davidic dynasty depended on the faithfulness of future kings to *Yahweh* and his commands. This covenantal change was reminiscent of the king's law and the divine charge to Joshua. The kings were encouraged to learn the written law of Moses, study it regularly, and never stray from it. The entire Deuteronomistic perspective on kingship revolved around the law, as kingship originated from, is governed by, and can be lost due to disobedience to *Yahweh's* law.

In summary, the Deuteronomistic royal ideology, rooted in the pre-exilic period, can be outlined as follows:

- The people, through legal means, requested to be ruled by a monarch, and Yahweh blessed this request.
- The monarch ruled over *Yahweh's* people indefinitely but conditionally, as this was contingent on obedience to *Yahweh's* command in the law of Moses.
- The monarch's reign persisted if they followed Yahweh's commands, as the law of Moses outlined.
- The monarch ensured Israel's faithfulness to *Yahweh* by centralising the cult and eliminating foreign worship. Deuteronomistic royal ideology found legitimacy in *Yahweh's* law and the popular request for a monarchy.

2.12 Speculative theories

Larsen (2013:14-15) discussed different theories about using the royal Psalms in Ancient Israel's New Year Festival. Mowinkel proposed that during the festival, there was a theatrical portrayal of the ascent of *Yahweh* to his heavenly throne, with worshippers taking an active part in this cultic drama. As *Yahweh* ascended, rejoicing Israelites played the role of his heavenly hosts, mirroring his "thousands upon thousands of chariots" (Ps 68:18). Eaton (1970:59-61) suggested that procession participants symbolised "the company of heaven" gathered at the feet of *Yahweh* seated on his heavenly throne (Ps 29:1). Borsch (1972:75-77) and other scholars proposed that as part of the enthronement festival rituals, the Davidic king was envisaged to ascend to heaven similar to *Yahweh's* ascent.

Just as *Yahweh* victoriously ascended his holy mountain to be enthroned in the highest heaven, texts suggested that the king was "raised" or "lifted" on high, signifying his climb of the holy mountain preceding his enthronement as king. In the heavenly realm, the king was enthroned either on God's throne or a throne at God's right hand, initiated into heavenly secrets and granted wisdom. Widengren suggested that the ruler served in the temple, symbolising Eden, God's garden, on the holy mountain. This ancient royal ideology portrayed the king as the "guardian of the Garden of God" and "God's anointed". This paradise-like setting was reflected in the temple's architecture,

including the temple basin symbolising the "Water of Life" and the sacred grove representing the "Tree of Life".

2.13 Conclusion

This chapter examined the literature on Psalm 2, specifically focusing on its royal ideology. The researcher introduced the seemingly contrasting ideas of Psalm 2 as a royal Psalm and a form of "prophetic rebuke". However, it was concluded that both of these ideas affirm the classification of Psalm 2 as a royal Psalm, and this understanding was not limited to Psalm 2 being an enthronement Psalm. Therefore, the terms "royal Psalm" and "enthronement Psalm" were used interchangeably within this study. This chapter delved into biblical ideology, focusing on royal and imperial ideology as presented in Psalm 2. This chapter examined royal ideology in the context of the ANE and discussed the concepts of royal adoption and divine sonship to describe the relationship between *Yahweh* and His chosen king.

Chapter 3: Synchronic analysis

3.1 Introduction

The heading of Psalm 2 in the KJV translation expressed the Hebrew word *rāsh*, meaning "a noisy commotion," as "Why do the heathen rage?". This served as an introduction to the central question of the Psalm, which concerned the futile rebellion of the "raging" nations against the Lord and his "anointed" (Tate 1990:45). The word *rāsh* provided the backdrop to the climactic exhortation in verse 10, "Now therefore, O kings, be wise, be warned, O rulers of the earth" (Tate 1990:46). This was a call to the kings and judges of the earth to pay attention to the parable of the following of the righteous and the wicked that is to be found in Psalms 1 and 2.

Psalm 2 is one of the royal Psalms, which celebrated various aspects of Israel's monarchy. It is traditionally understood as a Psalm of David when he was anointed as king. Its placement in the *Psalter* right after Psalm one, according to the dialectic structure of the *Psalter*, allowed it to be an emblem of the strong contrast that permeates the *Psalter* between the righteous and the wicked (Bratcher & Reyburn 1991:123). Revelation 2:1-6 can be interpreted as a direct echo of Psalm 2:1 in John's message to the angel of the church in Ephesus, "I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear evil men but have tested those who call themselves apostles but are not, and found them to be false" (Bratcher & Reyburn 1991:124). This resembles the just king who must deal with the rebellious vassal. This may suggest that the Psalm might have served an instructional purpose for the righteous or the "kingly" leader in Israel's history.

The Hebrew word "Psalm" (*mizmor*) means a song set to music, and the word "*Psalter*" comes from the Greek *salterion*, meaning a song to be sung to a harp (Clifford 2002:78). The book of Psalms contains the complete range of human emotion found in prayer and praise. The Psalms made a grand claim - a healthy emotional life must be joined with a critical understanding of experience in life. Of the 150 Psalms, almost a third can be categorised as songs of praise for God's grace and blessings, often with Psalm 150 serving as a doxology or finale (Clifford 2002:79). There are Psalms of trust and confidence, which can be a testament to the praise of God's greatness and goodness even amid adversity.

3.2 Purpose of the analysis

The current analysis had two primary purposes. First, it demonstrated synchronic methods outlined by Saussure and discussed by Hong. Second, it sheds light on how the entire biblical story is reflected in the completed Psalm. The researcher analysed the finished form of the canonically held Masoretic Text to achieve these goals and always interpreted one part of the *Psalter* concerning all other parts. The researcher focused on the fundamental presupposition of the Hebrew faith, which was grounded in the covenant made through God's servant, David. This covenant was the basis of what was to be God's world empire, providing worldwide blessing to His people. Throughout the interpretation, this idea is related to the Psalms, considering that the Psalm, in what it affirms or denies, is a subset of a much broader drama.

In his book "Cours de linguistique générale," published posthumously from lecture notes by his students in 1916, Ferdinand de Saussure, widely regarded as the pioneer of modern linguistics, introduced the terms "synchrony" and "diachrony" (Hong 2013:522). De Saussure (1916:78) explained that these terms represented two distinct approaches to studying language. Hong (2013:525) gave the following explanation:

Synchronic linguistics will be concerned with logical and psychological connections between coexisting items constituting a system as perceived by the same collective consciousness. Diachronic linguistics, on the other hand, will be concerned with relationships between sequences of things not perceived by the same collective consciousness, which replace one another without themselves constituting a system.

Hong (2013:525) asserted that biblical scholars began using synchrony and diachrony in the same manner as de Saussure. Biblical scholars did not utilise these terms as replacements for the terms "structural" and "historical" when historical critics borrowed the words to redirect historical investigation. The modern uses of "synchrony" and "diachrony" were initiated due to the rapid growth of biblical scholarship. When studying literature, diachronic methods investigate the text's evolution over time, while synchronic approaches focus on the text itself, analysing its artistry and relationships within the final product (Hong 2013:526). The researcher examined the synchronic and diachronic dimensions while analysing Psalm 2. This chapter (Chapter 3) showcases the synchronic dimensions of Psalm 2.

The poetic structure of Psalm 2 comprises four strophes, forming a chiasm A-B-B¹-A¹, which are discerned as distinct sense units through speaker changes (Alter 2007:36). Verses 1-3 delineated the nations' uprising against *Yahweh* and his chosen king. Verses 4-6 provided insight into *Yahweh*'s perspective as he viewed their resistance with contempt and anger, confirming the establishment of his anointed king in Zion. Verses 7-9 contained the declaration of the covenant made by the king with God upon his accession. Verses 10-12 encompassed the author's discourse, advising the rebellious rulers to show reverence to *Yahweh* and his king, cautioning them against the consequences of rebellion, and extending blessings to the obedient (Alter 2007:38).

The current research explored how the original reader would have interpreted and comprehended Psalm 2 and its significance (Brueggemann 1995:18). To achieve this objective, Psalm 2 is examined on a macroscopic and microscopic level. On a macroscopic level, Psalm 2 is situated within its broader context (Book I of the *Psalter* and as a royal Psalm) (Childs 1979:25). Additionally, Psalm 2 is comparable with Psalm 1, as these two Psalms together form an introductory unit to the first book of the Psalms (Brueggemann 1995:20). The structure of Psalm 2 forms a chiasm, which aids in understanding the poem at a deeper level. Throughout the research, references are made to the ancient Hebrew language to provide insight into the perspective of the original reader of the Psalm (Alter 2007:39).

The current analysis focused on the grammatical forms and linguistic devices used in the Psalm. These grammatical forms and linguistic devices were compared with other Old Testament texts, particularly Psalms. A significant portion of the analysis involved linguistic studies and comparisons with other ancient literature to illustrate how the theology of Israel differed from that of contemporaneous culture (this can be seen in the rest of this chapter)(Alter 2009:xx-xxxv).

The poetic structure of Psalm 2 consists of four strophes, forming a chiasm A-B-B¹-A¹. These strophes are distinct and units with speaker changes. Verses 10-12 contain the author's discourse, advising rebellious rulers to show reverence to *Yahweh* and his king, cautioning them against the consequences of rebellion, and extending blessings to the obedient. Additionally, the structure of Psalm 2 forms a chiasm, which helps one understand the poem more deeply. Throughout the research, references

were made to the ancient Hebrew language to provide insight into the perspective of the original reader of the Psalm (Dobbs-Allsopp 2014:78-98).

3.3 Genre

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow His precepts have a good understanding. To Him belongs eternal praise”. - Psalm 111:10

Several scholars have stated that the Psalms are a study of wisdom and are meaningful because they encourage the ordinary person to meditate and, in turn, relive the rejuvenating factors of divine power (Wilson 2002:64). Psalms teach humans to choose between good and evil (Tate 1990:27). In other words, the Psalms teach wisdom and a way of life. When walking down the path of evil, one must not fear the shadow of death, for the future is in heaven with wings spread (Willis 1990:33).

Scholars have been investigating the critical factors for the followers of Jesus and Christianity. They have tried to understand how these followers can seek blessings from Jesus, the son of divine power (Wilson 2002:65). It seems unlikely that Psalm 2 is an enthronement Psalm because the chosen king appears to have already been established and set in his place (Willis 1990:34). The strongest argument for Psalm 2's genre is that it should be classified as a cry of resistance. Willis (1990:33) proposed a two-fold interpretation of the Psalm that does not involve the king's enthronement. His argument is as follows (Willis 1990:34):

It encourages the king and allies to face a rebellion or war bravely. It attempts to mock rebels attempting a rebellion or opponents of war. The text's purposes are found in other extra-biblical accounts such as Enuma Elish, the Egyptian story of Sinuhe, and Homer's Iliad. These extra-biblical accounts record instances where one side of a battle mocks the other to rally their troops

The rhetoric of defiance also occurred in other biblical and parallel texts, especially in 1 Samuel 17:45: “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a Javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied”. 2 Chronicles 13:10, 12 also depicted a very close comparison to Psalm 2 in terms of the results of disobedience to the Lord:

"But as for us, the Lord is our God, and we have not abandoned him...See, God is with us at our head, and his priests have their battle trumpets to sound the call to battle against you..."

3.3.1 Context and structure

The Psalm's intricate structure has sparked various interpretations regarding its divisions (Gillingham 2020:45-47). Most scholars have accepted the following division: an initial declaration by the king, the words of the nations, the words of God, and finally, an oracle from the Psalmist (Purcell 2020:102-105). This Psalm has been labelled as an "enthronement Psalm" and is said to focus on the ideology surrounding the king of Israel (Sutton 2021:78-80). The Psalm aimed to explain how the king's rule at that time reflected God's reign (Sutton 2020:55-57). The overall setting of the Psalm remains ambiguous. It is often linked to the exile or post-exilic period due to its close relationship with other Psalms, such as 72 and 132 (Măcelaru 2022:65-67). These Psalms, known as "royal Psalms," sought to encourage the current and future kings of Judah who would rule after the exile (Williams 2020:90-93).

Psalm 2 comprises works dating from the Davidic era to the Persian and Hellenistic periods (Williams 2020: 120-123). It is one of the most well-known Psalms and is frequently mentioned in the New Testament, indicating its association with the arrival of the Messiah. This research delved into the Psalm's contents and context and its influence on the development of ancient royal ideology. Willis (1990:35) argued that Psalm 2 should be categorised as a Psalm of defiance or resistance, which was used before battles to ridicule others and affirm the kingship of Judah. Willis (1990:35) mentioned different contextual kingships that this Psalm might portray (from the monarchical period after Solomon, Hezekiah, or Alexander Janaes). However, a thorough study of keywords in Psalm 2 suggests that the Assyrian-Judean conflict was the most probable historical context for this cry of defiance.

Although there are various perspectives about the intention of Psalm 2, the common thread is that of royalty (Wilson 2002:66). Psalm 2, as a Psalm of defiance, enforced the royal ideology of rebuking those who do not submit to the authority of *Yahweh* and His chosen king. The chosen king must be the enlightened one who fulfilled all the wishes and desires of his devotees and people in his kingdom (Wilson 2002:67). Psalm 2 is part of the introductory section of the *Psalter* and is known as a "royal

Psalm" not only due to its formal characteristics but also because of its theme (Tate 1990:28). It is believed to have been written for royal coronations, specifically to celebrate the anointment of a king from David's lineage. However, it is unclear whether it was intended for a specific event or general use (Willis 1990:36). Although the Psalm's immediate relevance to tangible kingship decreased after the exile, its essential message evolved into a source of hope, focusing on the possibility of a future Davidic monarch (Wilson 2002:68).

3.4 Macroscopic analysis of Psalm 2

The following section is an analysis of Psalm 2 as a Davidic psalm. This section considers the macrostructure of the Psalm.

3.4.1 Book I

The Psalms have been divided into five books. Book 1 consists of Psalms 1-41, Book 2 contains Psalms 42-72, Book 3 comprises Psalms 73-89, Book 4 includes Psalms 90-106, and Book 5 contains Psalms 107-150 (Constable 2022:88-90). Book 1 mainly consists of Davidic Psalms and is also called "the book of personal experience" (Constable 2022:88-90). Psalm 2 is one of two Psalms, the other being Psalm 95, identified as Davidic in the New Testament. The author of Psalm 2 is revealed to be David by the New Testament apostles in Acts 4:25-26:

25 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: 'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

26 The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.

3.4.2 Comparing Psalm 1 and 2

Book 1 of the *Psalter* is introduced by Psalms 1 and 2 (Hu 2012:326). Psalm 1 begins with "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly," while Psalm 2 ends with "Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him" (Cole 2013:20-25). Thus, the first Psalm begins with a blessing, and the second Psalm ends with a blessing. The same Hebrew word for "blessed" is used: אֲשֶׁר. Psalm 1 ends with a threat, "But the way of the ungodly shall perish," while Psalm 2 begins with a threat, "Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing?"

The two Psalms' themes correspond regarding wisdom and folly (Cole 2013:20-25). Both Psalms contain themes of righteousness and wickedness. In Psalm 1, this righteousness and wickedness are related to the individual. However, in Psalm 2, wickedness is related to rulers and nations, while righteousness is related to the rule of God's righteous Messiah.

3.4.3 Psalm 2 as a royal Psalm

The Psalms have been classified into different genres. A genre "refers to a group of texts that share similar mood, content, structure, or phraseology" (Hu 2012:327). The different genres of Psalms involve lament, thanksgiving, pilgrimage, wisdom, imprecatory, enthronement, and royal Psalms. The royal Psalms were a reminder that God is king and uses earthly kings to accomplish His will.

Gunkel and Begrich (1998:20–23) asserted that the royal Psalms included Psalms 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132, and 144:1-11. Gunkel and Begrich (1998:20–23) stated that Psalm 2 forms part of "poems which were sung at the king's enthronement or at the annual royal festival". These royal Psalms that bore a religious stamp were typical among the ancient peoples as the king always had some relationship with the deity, and in this case, God.

3.4.4 Form and structure

Psalm 2 can be divided into four parts. The Psalm showcased different voices:

Verses 1-3: rejecting the Lord and his chosen king.

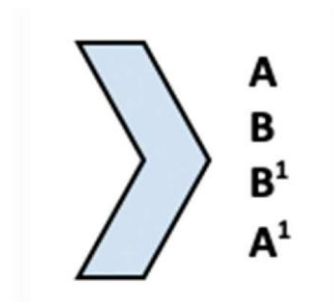
Verses 4-6: the Lord's reaction to the wicked rulers.

Verses 7-9: the anointed king speaks and confirms his position and what the Lord has promised him.

Verse 10-12: the mighty rebellious kings and rulers are called to give up their wickedness and subject them to the Lord.

The Psalm ends with a proclamation that those who trust the Lord will be blessed. A chiasm is a rhetorical device that directs the reader's attention to the centre of the unit, where the central idea or turning point is located. (Assis 2002:273). A chiasm can form the structure of an entire Psalm, which is the case with Psalm 2. Psalm 2 contains four stanzas with three verses. Each group of three verses has its theme, thus forming its own “leg” in the chiasm.

*Figure 1: SEQ Figure **
ARABIC 1: Diagram of chiasm
(Stafford n.d.)



By observing Figure 1, the conclusion can be made that Psalm 2 is a two-point chiasm. The effect of this chiasm is to draw the reader's attention to the central verses of the Psalm. The original reader would have focused on the theme of the installation of God's anointed as King in Zion (verses 6-7). One must look for common words and ideas that frame the Psalm to identify a chiasm. In this case, the “leg” of the chiasm called ‘A’ and ‘A¹’ have the following common words:

מְלָכִי – “the kings”, verse 2.

מְלָכִים – “kings”, verse 10

אֶרֶץ – “of the earth”, verse 2

אֶרֶץ – “of the earth”, verse 10

The “leg” of the chiasm called ‘B’ and ‘B¹’ have the following common idea of the Lord that is speaking:

יִדְבָּר - “He shall speak”, verse 5. “He” is referring to (אֲדֹנָי) Adonai in verse 4.

הָיָה אָמַר – “YHWH has said”, verse 7.

The chiasm clarifies that both the earth and heaven are involved in the Psalm. Thus, it makes sense that the Psalm can be understood from an earthly and heavenly perspective (Cole 2000:20–30). Psalm 2 applies to Davidic kings. Psalm 2 verse 2 states, “The kings of the earth rise up, and the ruler’s band together against the LORD and against His anointed, saying”.

מָשִׁיחַו – “Anointed” with pronominal suffix third person masculine singular *i* meaning “his”, thus, “His anointed”. This word is also literally translated as “Messiah” (*māshīah*). “His anointed” referred to King David as the Lord anointed him through the prophet Samuel. This can be viewed in 1 Samuel 16:3: “So **Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him** in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the **Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David**. Samuel then went to Ramah”.

3.5 Text, translation, and thematic overview

Psalm 2 is an extraordinary piece of poetry and theological literature in the *Psalter*. It includes a variety of literary styles such as defiant proclamations, royal compositions, personal and communal laments, hymns of praise, and ritualistic chants (Mays 1994:98). This diversity of genres highlights the Psalm's multifaceted role in both personal devotion and communal worship. The themes in Psalm 2, like much of the *Psalter*, transition from lamentation to celebration, reflecting a movement from mourning to joyous exultation (Gerstenberger 1988:45). The structure of the Psalm, with its vivid imagery and authoritative declarations, suggests that it may have been used in liturgical settings, especially in the anointing and enthronement of kings.

Psalm 2 showcases a royal figure often associated with King David. This figure is called *Yahweh's* anointed, which has significant messianic implications in Jewish and Christian traditions. The Psalm can be interpreted as a response to the rebellious nations and their leaders who defied God's chosen king, setting the stage for a cosmic confrontation between divine authority and human insubordination. The text of Psalm 2, as presented in the NIV and the Westminster Leningrad Codex (WTT), reveals a dynamic interplay between human rebellion and divine sovereignty.

Psalm 2 (NIV)

Why do the nations conspire, and the people plot in vain?

The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers band together against the Lord and his anointed, saying,

"Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles".

The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

"I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain".

I will proclaim the Lord's decree: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have become your father.

Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.

You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery".

Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.

Serve the Lord with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling.

Kiss his son, or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

The WTT Hebrew text provides a foundation for understanding the nuances of the Psalm, particularly in its original linguistic and cultural context:

Psalm 2 (WTT)

1. לָמָּה רָגִשׁוּ גוֹיִם וְלֵאמֹר יְהוָה-רִיק:
2. יִתְצַבּוּ מְלָכֵי-אֶרֶץ וְרוֹזְנִים נוֹסְדוּ-יַחַד עַל-יְהוָה וְעַל-מְשִׁיחוֹ:
3. נִגְנְתָהּ אֶת-מוֹסְרוֹתֵימוֹ וְנִשְׁלִיכָהּ מִמֶּנּוּ עַבְדֵּימוֹ:
4. יוֹשֵׁב בַּשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׁחָק אֲדֹנָיִי יִלְעַג-לָמוֹ:
5. אֵץ יִדְבֹּר אֱלֹהֵימוֹ בְּאֶפֶס וּבַחֲרוֹנוֹ יִבְהַלְמוֹ:
6. וְאֲנִי נֹסַכְתִּי מֶלֶךְ עַל-צִיּוֹן הַר-קֹדֶשׁ:
7. אֲסַפְרָה אֵל חֵק יְהוָה אֲמַר אֵלַי בְּנֵי אֲתָה אֲנִי הַיּוֹם יִלְדְתִּיךָ:
8. שָׁאַל מִמֶּנִּי וְאֲתֶנָּה גוֹיִם נַחֲלֶתָהּ וְאַחֲזֶתָהּ אֶפְסֵי-אֶרֶץ:
9. תִּרְעֶם בְּשֹׁבֶט בְּרֹזֶל כָּכְלִי יוֹצֵר תִּנְפָצִם:
10. וְעַתָּה מְלָכִים הַשְׁכִּילוּ הוֹסְרוּ שִׁפְטֵי אֶרֶץ:
11. עֲבֹדוּ אֶת-יְהוָה בִּירְאָה וְלִילִי בִרְעָדָה:
12. נִשְׁקוּ-בָר פֶּן-יִאָּגֶף וְתִאבְדוּ דָּרֶךְ כִּי-יִבְעַר כְּמַעַט אֶפֶס אֲשֶׁרִי כָל-חֹסֵי בּוֹ:

This dual presentation of the text allows for a comprehensive examination of its linguistic features, theological themes, and historical context.

3.6 Thematic and Structural Analysis

Psalm 2 is divided into four distinct stanzas, each contributing to the overall story of divine sovereignty and human rebellion. These stanzas were carefully structured to convey the central themes of the Psalm, including the futility of opposing God's chosen leader, the certainty of divine judgment, and the ultimate victory of God's will.

3.6.1 Strophe 1: The nations rebel (2:1-3)

The Psalm begins with two rhetorical questions that express the Psalmist's amazement at the boldness of the nations conspiring against *Yahweh* and His anointed king. These questions emphasise the futility and absurdity of the nations' rebellion. The use of the imagery of "nations conspiring" and "people plotting in vain" highlights the collective and intentional nature of this rebellion, which is not only directed against a human king but against *Yahweh* Himself (Smith 2007:42).

3.6.2 Strophe 2: Lord's response (2:4-6)

The second strophe shifts the setting dramatically from earth to heaven. In this scene, *Yahweh* (the divine king) responds to the rebellion with derisive laughter. This laughter does not come from amusement but from scorn, emphasising the futility of human attempts to challenge divine authority. *Yahweh's* laughter was followed by a stern rebuke, highlighting His uncontested sovereignty and the inevitability of His will being accomplished. The statement, "I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain," is a powerful affirmation of *Yahweh's* sovereign choice and the centrality of Zion in His divine plan (Wilson 2002:75).

3.6.3 Strophe 3: Decree of the son (2:7-9)

The third stanza shifts the focus from *Yahweh* to his anointed king, who proclaims the divine decree. The declaration, "You are my son; today I have become your father," establishes the king's unique relationship with *Yahweh*, characterised by divine sonship. This metaphorical sonship signifies the king's participation in *Yahweh's* divine authority and mission. The promise of the nations as the king's inheritance and the ends of the earth as his possession underscores the universal scope of his reign and the comprehensive nature of his authority. The imagery of breaking the nations with a rod of iron and dashing them like pottery is a stark reminder of the consequences of opposing *Yahweh's* anointed (Gerstenberger 1988:57).

3.6.4 Strophe 4: Warning and blessing (2:10-12)

The final part of the Psalm emphasises the theme of divine judgment and serves as a warning to the kings and rulers of the earth. It urges them to "serve the LORD with fear" and "celebrate his rule with trembling," highlighting the seriousness of the decision they face. The Psalmist also advises the rulers to "kiss the son" as a sign of submission and loyalty to avoid incurring the wrath of *Yahweh* and the resulting destruction. The closing beatitude, "Blessed are all who take refuge in him," offers hope and emphasises that divine protection and blessing are available to those who acknowledge *Yahweh's* sovereignty and submit to His anointed king (Mays 1994:102).

3.7 Literary analysis

Ancient texts and literature are usually analysed with a focus on three main aspects. The primary focus is on the structure and themes present within the text. With this Psalm in mind, the question of Davidic authorship plays a significant role in establishing the unity and credibility of the text (Loecherbach et al. 2020:56). This perspective is not solely based on the statement in verse 7 or similar statements that imply the divine sonship of the king. Instead, it is supported by numerous shared features in the Old Testament and other ANEern writings about kingship prophecy and customs (Färber & Jatowt 2020:112).

There are common characteristics within the ANE context, such as the interplay between a king and his prophet, the king's coronation ceremony, and other pertinent cultural factors. Some commentators have formulated their conclusions based on preconceived notions without considering these contexts. They tend to interpret any conflicting evidence as proof of later modifications to a text that initially referenced prophecy or similar phenomena (Chen et al. 2021:89). The evidence overwhelmingly suggests that throughout Psalm 2, the anointed one of *Yahweh* is a king. This is strongly supported by verses 6-7, where *Yahweh's* king is depicted as sitting on his holy hill, Mount Zion (Mariani et al. 2022:134). The researcher has previously discussed the identification of this king as David.

3.8 Structure

The following section gives an analysis of the structure of Psalm 2 and dissects the language used to determine the author of the book.

3.8.1 Introduction

The kings did not directly speak to the Psalmist; instead, their words were reported by the narrator to the Psalmist (Chen et al. 2021:89). This means that the speaker's change in verses 6-7 is not a shift in perspective. Instead, the speech begins in verse 6, God's response to the kings, with an implicit action location. Verses 6-9 can be compared to the response of the heathen in their counsel and way at the Tower of Babel (Mariani et al. 2022:134). With this reading, the entire Psalm can be structured in a chiastic manner:

A Efforts to expel *Yahweh's* king and *Yahweh's* response and derision

B The report of the decree

C Address of the kings

B¹ The decree

A¹ Election of *Yahweh's* king, its declaration to the other kings, and the resultant blessing and terror (Donthu et al. 2021:98).

3.8.2 Language and rhetoric

The vocabulary in this text is centred around the theme of kingship. The words "anointed" (v. 2), "King," and "ruler" set the stages at the beginning. Towards the end of the Psalm, there are terms such as "rebels" (v. 2), "wroth" (v. 5 cp 1 Sam 18:8,30), "wrath" (v. 5,11), "proclaim" (v. 7 from 2 Sam 15:10), and the mention of "ruler" about "rulers" (v. 2). These words largely contribute to the denunciation of these rulers (Goldingay 2009:45). However, amidst this, one cannot overlook the presence of words like "decree," "I will tell" (v. 7), "The Lord hath said" (v. 6), and "Thou art" (v. 7 cp Pss 8:4,80:17,110:4), which suggests a certain self-absorption in adversity exhibited by the king (Gillingham 2020:123).

This prophecy serves as a counterpart to the plot against the king. It boldly declares that the plot stems from impotence and is destined to fail, despite any superficial appearance of success it may have had in the past (Brueggemann 2001:78). The speaker's use of paralinguistic irony in this prophecy is undoubtedly intentional, as it is directed squarely at his enemies (Alter 2011:92). Regrettably, the exact meaning of the tenses used in the rebels' speech remains unclear. Without contextual knowledge of the possibly indicative futures in the rebels' speech in verse 2, one can only rely on the most probable interpretation of the discourse (although not necessarily the address). This interpretation contrasts the rebels' impotence and attempted rebellion in verses 2-3 and the king's announcement of the divine decree (Waltke & O'connor 2011:58) Bowman has identified a 'diachronic polemic' between the king and the later redactors of the Psalm, who sought to apply it to the Davidic dynasty in their own time (Hobbs 2020:88).

In verses 6, 7, and 8, the text directly addresses David, imploring him to acknowledge God's decree (Alter 2009:65). Some readers may have seen allegorical references to the Maccabean struggle against the Syrians in passages such as "I will tell the decree"

and "let us burst their bonds" (Harrington 2016:134). However, it would be incorrect to interpret verse 2 as a general affirmation. The concept of Israel's divine sonship and the choice and deliverance of its king, as found in passages like Psalms 89:19-29, 27b-37 and 2 Samuel 7:14, is a result of reflection on the implementation of the original teachings (Knight 1982:44). This reflection occurred at a time when Israel had attained significant power among the nations. In line with the old ideal, the king seemed to have emerged as the successor to Moses and Joshua (Neumann 2023:29).

3.9 Theological and messianic implications

Psalm 2 can have significant theological and messianic implications. This is particularly important in portraying the anointed king as a representative of *Yahweh* and a participant in His divine rule. The Psalm depicts the king as *Yahweh's* "son" and promises a universal kingdom, pointing towards fulfilling the Davidic covenant and establishing an eternal kingdom. In the context of the *Psalter*, Psalm 2 serves as an introduction to the royal Psalms, which celebrate the kingship of David and his descendants as a reflection of *Yahweh's* sovereign rule over all creation (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:88).

In the Christian tradition, Psalm 2 has been interpreted as a messianic prophecy, pointing to the ultimate fulfilment of the Davidic covenant in the person of Jesus Christ. The New Testament writers frequently cited Psalm 2 to emphasise Jesus' divine sonship, His role as the Messiah, and the establishment of His eternal kingdom (Acts 4:25-26; Heb 1:5). The Psalm's universal scope and its promise of divine judgment and blessing resonate with the New Testament's portrayal of Jesus as the King of kings and Lord of lords, whose reign extends over all nations and whose authority is unchallenged (Rv 19:15-16).

In conclusion, Psalm 2 is a powerful testament to divine sovereignty, human rebellion, and the ultimate triumph of God's will. Its rich theological and messianic implications continue to resonate across both Jewish and Christian traditions, offering profound insights into the nature of God's rule and the role of His anointed king in the unfolding of redemptive history.

3.10 Conclusion

This research aimed to understand how the original reader would have interpreted Psalm 2. Located in the first book of the *Psalter*, also known as The Book of Personal Experience, Psalm 2 would have been read alongside Psalm 1, introducing the first book of Psalms. Psalm 2 can be classified as royal, likely intended to be sung at the king's enthronement or annual royal festival. The structure of this Psalm forms a two-point chiasm, drawing the reader's attention to the installation of God's anointed as king in Zion. The Psalm's original meaning remains uncertain, as poetry can hold different meanings for readers (Botha 2005:16).

Chapter 4: Diachronic analysis

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters established that Psalm 2 does not take up the theme of enthronement because the chosen king had already been established and set in his place. However, this introductory component of the *Psalter* restates the divine proclamation conveyed during the Davidic king's ascension to the throne. This proclamation emphasises the supremacy of *Yahweh*, the God of Israel, and the appointment of the Israelite deity as the supreme ruler over all nations. This interpretation is supported by scholars when contextualised within the historical narrative of the Israelite monarchy and the subsequent Babylonian exile (Smith 2010:76).

Psalm 2 holds significant importance within the biblical canon. It was chosen as the initial secondary scripture within the *Psalter* due to one specific interpretive reason. Early postbiblical tradition interpreted the entire *Psalter* as the story of David. In this reading, Psalm 2 served as a fitting preface, introducing the entire book as a form of royal propaganda written to support the Davidic monarchy. However, the interpretation of the *Psalter* shifted within the church. It no longer solely focused on the story of David but became a general theological resource (deClaissé-Walford 2023:45).

The church quickly appropriated the *Psalter* as a book of prayer and praise, applying it to Jesus Christ in light of the events from the gospels. In both the Jewish and Christian canons, Psalms 1-2 have been intentionally paired to present two perspectives on the "righteous" and their relationship with God. Psalm 1 straightforwardly affirms a worldview in which the righteous are rewarded, and the wicked are punished (Goswell 2020:89). The retribution perspective is achieved by closing the Septuagint (LXX) hallelujah Psalms with a Torah Psalm, which reinterprets the level of righteousness in Jeremiah 11 in terms of Torah obedience.

Additionally, an editorial note in the Masoretic Text further emphasises the broad sapiential theme of Psalm 2:1. The tension between the specific contextual sense and the broader canonical sense of these two Psalms has led to numerous interpretations of Psalm 2, specifically within Judaism and Christianity (Gillingham 2020:112).

Although a comprehensive hermeneutic on Psalm 2 within the canonical context has not been extensively explored in modern scholarship, the most influential interpretations have often been those that creatively appropriate the *Psalter's* royal material (McIntyre 2022:53).

These interpretations of Psalm 2 often reflect the historical or theological context outside the text. It would be impossible to list all the different interpretations of Psalm 2 throughout history, from the Early Church to modern faith and life. Instead, one should seek the broader thematic paradigm in each historical period and acknowledge that different elements of Psalm 2 have been employed historically or theologically. To analyse tradition's acceptance of Psalm 2, the entire *Psalter* should be examined for any intertextual indications of how this Psalm has been used. Certain periods may require further specific examination to delve into the topic in more depth (James 2020:67).

From the time of the original setting, the Psalm has been read within the Jewish community as messianic. Because of the nature of Hebrew prophecy and its fulfilment, these two senses need not be mutually exclusive. The typological quality of the Old Testament history is that events and people foreshadow and reiterate later events that can allow for a double fulfilment of the oracle. It can be said that the immediate referent of the Psalm is an idealised Davidic king. This is expanded in the section that was focused on kingship (see Chapter 2) (McCann 2023:38). This king, however, foreshadows the ultimate king of the Davidic line, the one in whom all the promises find their fulfilment in Christ (Porter 2007:104).

While history does not provide any data with which one can date the Psalm, most scholars are convinced that the occasion is set against the backdrop of Absalom's rebellion. If this Psalm were written with the event in mind, it would place Psalm 2 in the pre-exilic period (Hallo & Younger 2003:22). Absalom's rebellion was a significant threat to David's kingship. Thus, if the Psalm is attributed to this event, it should be understood as a written polemic to rebuke the rebellious vassals and encourage the loyal counterparts of the king. However, it was more likely a generic threat to the stability of the Davidic kingship. This could apply to several situations both within and after the time of David (Waltke et al., 2014:15).

If the term 'the nations' is to be understood as a technical term for the gentile world outside Israel, then it is likely that the author's setting was in the post-exilic era. This is certainly the view that has been taken in the Targum. The mention of a Davidic king could stir up hopes of autonomy among the Persian-appointed governor (Baugham 2021:78). After the fall of the Davidic dynasty and its loss of functional significance, Psalm 2 could have taken a messianic dimension in the collective consciousness of the Israelite people. This transformation made the Psalm a symbol of hope, as the people began to look forward to a future "anointed one" - a successor of David's lineage - who would rescue them from oppression.

The Talmudic tradition categorised the 150 poetic compositions in the Book of Psalms into five distinct books, which mirrors the five-fold structure of the Books of Moses. While it is difficult to determine the exact dating of individual Psalms, references to events such as the Babylonian captivity, prominently seen in Psalm 137, suggested that the final compilation of the Psalms took place after 587 BCE (Westermann 1980:76). The editorial process likely occurred within the first century BCE, before the completion of the LXX's translation of the Second Psalm.

Psalm headings were added later to the 116 Psalms, providing valuable information about their authorship, themes, musical notations, and occasions. Many Psalms in the first book, including Psalm 2, have been attributed to David (Brueggemann 2014:43). These initial Psalms may have served as introductions, setting the stage for the compositions that follow. This is suggested by the occurrence of the word "blessed" in both Psalms 1:1, 2:11, and the word "*hagga*," which means "meditation" (v. 1:2) and "conspiracy" (v. 2:1) in the NIV translation (Craigie 2004:56).

4.2 Background to Psalm 2

The historical context is crucial for understanding the Psalm, but it is a topic of debate among scholars of different critical perspectives. Much of the historical background is known through later biblical writings (Day 1998:67). *Yahweh's* promise to the king represented a transfer of authority from *Yahweh* to the king, who was regarded as *Yahweh's* son and thus the ruler of all creation (Miller 1986:89). This was considered a natural progression of a king's rule, as the king, upon being recognised as a divine son (regardless of moral character), was believed to usher in a golden age for his

people (Day 1998:68). The son's rule was expected to reflect the divine rule of the father, so the people of Israel idealised the reigns of David and Solomon as times of perfect prosperity and well-being for Israel.

The most significant portion of Psalm 2 occurs in verses 7–9, in which *Yahweh* declares to the king (Miller 1986:90): "You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance and the ends of the earth your possession. Then you shall break them with a rod of iron, shatter them to pieces like a potter's vessel". This is *Yahweh*'s decree based on the king's inauguration, during which he becomes *Yahweh*'s son. In the Psalm, the king is asking *Yahweh* to fulfil the promise. This should be read in the context of the ANEern coronation oracles, where the god would tell the king what he was to do as his representative among the people (Day 1998:69).

In ANEern cultures, including Israel, there was a belief that on the birthday of a king, the goddess, who was considered the king's spiritual mother, would give birth to the king. This belief is discussed in the Ugaritic texts. The gods considered the king's spiritual father would have relations with the spiritual mother, thus becoming the king's father. This background belief is reflected in the Bible in various subtly polemical rejections and modifications (Miller 1986:91). The background of Psalm 2 is complex and varied due to the variety of subunits within the Psalm and the extensive use of participles, which did not always consistently indicate temporal sequence (Day 1998:70). However, the Psalm was initially used as part of a coronation liturgy to reenact *Yahweh*'s words to the king ritually. The original use of Psalm 2 is evident from the Psalm's content within the framework (Miller 1986:92).

4.3 Political situation

In Psalm 2, one sees a reflection of a time when various nations posed a threat of rebellion. Led by an unknown figure known as the "anointed one," these nations aimed to challenge the chosen king appointed by *Yahweh*. However, the Psalm emphasises that the king chosen by God is supported by their deity and ridicules the ambitions of the rebels and their leaders (Fredrickson 2020:45). This situation aligned with the historical context of the Israelites during the era of a united monarchy. During this

period, King David faced the danger of rebellion from vassal princes under Philistine control (Strickland 2022:67).

The Psalm's title references David and the activities of "kings of the earth and their rulers," which accurately represent a king in the later stage of the Old Testament's political development. The Psalm implies a scenario where the oppressed nation of Israel continues to hope for a worldwide kingdom, aiming to replace their status as vassals (Reed 2020:89). The Psalm depicts *Yahweh*'s decree as granting dominion over the nations, or an inheritance, to the king and his son in response to their request. This situation can only describe a king like David, except for brief periods under Solomon and Jehoshaphat during the early stages of Israel's monarchy (Rahn 2020:112). The historical setting indicated in II Samuel 11-20 and 1 Chronicles 17 is believed to be the backdrop for this Psalm (Wrenn 2021:76). During this time, *Yahweh* granted David dominion over all the nations after a war of aggression aimed at establishing his rule in Jerusalem.

4.4 Religious background

The Babylonian exile significantly impacted Israel's national and religious identity, leading to a loss of its political status. However, this period also provided an opportunity for Israel to reflect deeply on its failures, both in religious and political terms. The humbling experience of exile prompted a renewed search for explanations about divine justice and mercy (Becking 2021:56). This ultimately led to the gradual consolidation of the extensive and diverse Hebrew Scriptures. Although it took several generations, the seeds of developing a pure and distinct religion were planted during the exile and would not face serious threats again (Chirayath 2021:87).

The final version of Psalm 2 demonstrates a process wherein the Jewish people successfully separated themselves and their God from external influences, gaining a clearer understanding of their unique heritage. Israel's pursuit of a national identity was closely connected to their search for a satisfactory religious identity. This posed a dual challenge, as Israel needed to establish a religious identity distinct from other nations and detached from their past (Strine 2021:101).

The temptation for Israelites to revert to the religious practices of their nation's origins was strong, as it was easy to attribute the fertility of the land to the ancient Canaanite

gods or believe that alliances with neighbouring people were necessary for protection. These circumstances often led to the blending the Yahwist faith with other contemporary religions, resulting in syncretism (Feldt 2021:122). However, Israel's political circumstances greatly influenced its ability to create a distinct religion. During periods of political dominance, there was often a rejection of the older faith and previous alliances, followed by attempts to reinterpret their newfound sense of deliverance about their understanding of God (Klein 1979:45).

4.5 Date and authorship

A recent theory suggested that Psalm 2 originated during the Babylonian exile. According to Albertz (1994:63–65) the Psalm was meant to offer encouragement and serve as a prophecy, suggesting that despite being oppressed by foreign rulers, Israel would ultimately triumph over Babylon and endure eternally. This belief was based on the historical reality of when foreign nations ruled over Israel. The Psalmist implies the heathen nature of the ruling kings, and it is a recurring theme that their reign was in vain. The ineffectiveness of their power is evident in verse 1, where their plots have been deemed futile (Gillingham 2020:76). In Jeremiah 18:12, the word "label" suggests that the Lord has decreed the destruction of the rebellious rulers' plans. This sentiment is reinforced in verse 4, where the divine figure in heaven laughs, aware that their plans would soon crumble. In verse 9, the heathen kings are warned that their attempts to free themselves from the Lord's authority would only destroy them.

The date and authorship of Psalm 2 have been subject to extensive debate. In the previous century, there was an argument proposing a Maccabean setting for the Psalm. The absence of anointing ceremonies in the Persian and Hellenistic empires supported this viewpoint. This was further emphasised by the mention of heathen opposition in verse 1, suggesting that Israel was surrounded by such nations only during the Maccabean era. Furthermore, the Psalmist is called "the Lord's Anointed," a term commonly associated with Jewish kings. Consequently, it was believed that Jonathan Maccabee was the most plausible candidate for authorship, the first Jewish king officially recognised as such. Historical evidence also indicated that Jonathan Maccabee faced resistance from the Seleucids during his campaign against Bacchides (Verde 2022:101).

The date of authorship for Psalm 2 is vital for understanding its historical context. However, dating falls under historical analysis due to the ambiguity and lack of general historical references within the Psalms. Clues in the text (through word studies) are used to reconstruct the historical setting in this analysis section. Willis described Psalm 2 as a cry of defiance but does not specify a particular historical setting. By examining a few keywords within Psalm 2, one can conclude that it is likely placed within the historical context of the Judean-Assyrian conflict (Heschel 2023:45).

One of the strongest supports for placing Psalm 2 in an Assyrian context is the word "rod". The Hebrew word for rod is שֹׁבֵט, which in this context is neither a rod nor a staff but a sceptre. This means that it would be used as a symbol of authority. This word is interesting because it is usually referenced to Assyria when used in the context of a divine son or son-ship. When thinking about texts concerning a divine son, one automatically thinks of Isaiah 9. In Isaiah 9, a king was born who would end oppression by breaking the yoke, bar, and rod of their oppressors. Given the Immanuel passage that precedes chapter 9 and the context of Proto-Isaiah, it becomes clear that the divine ruler was Hezekiah, and the rod he would break was that of the oppressive rule of Assyria. Just one chapter later, in chapter 10, Assyria is explicitly referred to as "the rod of my anger" (v. 5). In chapter 10, verse 15, *Yahweh* punished the rod that he used for its haughtiness, stating, "Shall the axe vaunt itself over the one who wields it, or the saw magnify itself against the one who handles it? As if a rod should raise the one who lifts it..." (Kugel 2020:57).

The correlation of the word "rod" in association with the divine king or son motif always references Assyria as the one who is the rod of oppression; if they are using the rod of oppression, their rod of oppression would be broken. If Psalm 2 is indeed a cry of resistance or defiance, then the argument is that the sceptre of authority would switch hands to *Yahweh*'s begotten son, Hezekiah, who is the one to shake off the chains and fetters of his oppressors. This reversal of authority epitomises resistance; the roles have been reversed, and Assyria would be under the Israelites' authority in the end. A more complete history of the Syro-Ephaimic war, Hezekiah's dealings with Sennacherib, and the invasion of Judah is given in the historical context section of this exegesis (see the following subsection) (Wilcock 2023:29).

The second word that must be critically examined is the Hebrew word ָנָס , used in verse six. The popular translation of ָנָס is "installed". Therefore, verse six is rendered, "I have installed my king upon Zion, My holy mountain". However, to render ָנָס as "installed" would not be accurate. The correct translation would be rendered ָנָס as "to pour out a liquid". The LXX translated ָנָס as κατεσταθην , which is a passive verb. The LXX reads $\text{ἐγὼ δὲ κατεσταθην βασιλεὺς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ σίων ὄρος τοῦ ἁγίου αὐτοῦ}$, which is translated as, "But I have been set up as king by him upon Zion, his holy hill". This differs significantly from the Masoretic Text because not only is ָנָס rendered as "installed," but the LXX renders the speaker as the king referencing himself instead of *Yahweh*, who pours out his king on Mount Zion (Sommer 2023:42). If one is to forgo the LXX's translation, then one can make comparisons to other ANE texts about divine procreation. It is possible that Psalm 2 was created as religious propaganda to protect the ideals of a religious community and uphold themes of the king's divinity.

4.6 *Sitz im Leben* – Historical context

The following section examines the setting in which the text emerged. This helps to situate and understand the purpose of the text within its context.

4.6.1 Introduction

When categorising the Psalms, Gunkel (1933:155) applied the text to its "*Sitz im Leben*," which refers to its setting in life. Gunkel, along with other scholars, believed that Psalm 2 was originally a song to be sung during the coronation of a king, such as David. Scholars, such as Kraus (1993:59), postulated that Psalm 2 derives from an enthronement ceremony or an annual festival celebrating the king. In the ANE, the death of a king could spark a rebellion from foreign kings, so a royal Psalm such as this one would be necessary to prevent such rebellions.

Biddle's English translation of Mowinckle's Psalm Studies (Perdue 2014:514) postulated that most Psalms were never personal prayers but were written for ritual use. Therefore, a coronation ceremony is a strong possibility. The ANE would have been familiar with enthronement festivals as an annual ceremony would have been a tradition for the Jebusites of Jerusalem, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, and the Assyrians. If this were the case, Psalm 2 would have been recited annually at the

Judean enthronement ceremonies. As the situation depicted in Psalm 2 was involuntary, Psalm 2 likely originated in a real historical situation (Gillingham 2020:83).

The concept of the divine-human relationship is present in the ANE context, where similar perceptions of the bonds between their kings and gods existed. In Mesopotamia, rulers sometimes held priestly roles, forging a unique connection with the gods. References to the sacred nature of kingship also emerge in Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Canaanite sources. In Egypt, kings were perceived as manifestations of the gods themselves, and their divine relationship was cemented upon their ascension to the throne. While Israelite kings were not seen as divine, their kingship was sacral, denoting their representation of God (Walton 2017:226).

After establishing a period in which Psalm 2 could be written, it is essential to elaborate on the historical situation surrounding it to fully understand how Psalm 2 would function as religious propaganda through its procreation narrative. Essentially, two-period aspects need to be juxtaposed to understand the passage. There needs to be a clear understanding of the Judean-Assyrian conflict resulting in the Judean contact with Assyrian recreation ideology and the formation of Psalm 2.

4.6.2 Rise of Assyria and the Syro-Ephraimite War

To understand Hezekiah's conflict with the Assyrians, it is vital to grasp the situation surrounding his reign, returning to Ahaz's (his father's) reign. Assyrian power was the strongest of all the nations of the ANE (Smith 2005:23). The height of Assyria's power could be said to have started with their king Tiglath-Pileser III (or Pul as in 2 Kgs 15:19) (Johnson 2008:47). Because of the threat towards their homeland, king Pekah of Israel and king Rezin of Aram (Damascus), who were both in the first stages of vassalage circa 738 BCE, decided to rebel against Tiglath-Pileser and entreated king Ahaz for help (Brown 2010:61).

Ahaz, who saw no grounds for getting himself and Judah involved, declined their offer because the outcome would not be favourable for those who stood against Tiglath-Pileser III. Upon hearing the news of Ahaz's unwillingness to rebel against Tiglath-Pileser, Pekah and Rezin decided to unite their efforts against Ahaz and attack Judah (Provan et al. 2003:34). Contrary to the urgent advice of the prophet Isaiah, Ahaz sent

a contribution to Tiglath-Pileser to gain help against his would-be attackers (Smith 2005:28).

Tiglath-Pileser, eager to end any coalition against him, attacked Rezin and Pekah from the north. The allies against Judah were forced to take their armies away from Judean territories to fight an uneven match against the Assyrian dominating forces (Johnson 2008:52). Isaiah's prophecy in chapter 7 of Isaiah turned out to be valid against Rezin and Pekah because he predicted their demise before the birth of Hezekiah, Ahaz's son and the one known as Immanuel in Isaiah Chapter 7 (Brown 2010:66). Because of the loss against Assyria, Damascus was forced to assimilate into Assyrian territory, and king Pekah was deposed and replaced by Hoshea (White 2012:39).

Hoshea's reign was short-lived when he decided to rebel against Tiglath-Pileser's successor, Shalmaneser V. This essentially led to the fall of Israel in 722 (Smith 2005:31). Sargon II was the one accredited with the destruction of Israel. However, it is to be taken as fact that the city fell under Shalmaneser just before his death (Johnson 2008:55). All this information is vital because it sets Judah as a different state to Assyria. Because of Ahaz's tribute to Assyria to gain help fighting off an attack from the allied Rezin and Pekah, the vassalage it created sets the backdrop for Hezekiah's reign (Brown 2010:70).

4.6.3 Reign of Hezekiah in Judah

With the kingdom of Judah being a foreign kingdom to Assyria, it is necessary to focus on the reign of Hezekiah to see the exact social situation under which Psalm 2 was written (Smith 2015:34). The reign of Hezekiah could be divided into three parts:

- The re-establishment of a national Yahwistic cult;
- The success against a Philistine campaign and;
- The Siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib of Assyria (Johnson 2016:22). Greater prominence was given to the last section rather than the first two, although all three are essential to contextualising Psalm 2 (Brown 2017:45).

After the cultic impurities of his father Ahaz, Hezekiah decided to reinstate the worship of *Yahweh* in Judah. He did so by removing the high places and sacred pillars,

cleansing the temple, and creating opportunities for the proper worship of *Yahweh* (Smith 2015:37). Although the Bible gives personal religious reasons for Hezekiah's cultic reform, the political reasons are of greater interest. By emphasising the centrality of the temple in worship, Hezekiah increased the king's power and authority by consolidating the ties between the royal court and the temple. By creating unity between the royal court and the temple, Hezekiah set the stage for his divine appointment as a son of God (Johnson 2016:25).

Hezekiah's second major accomplishment concerning his reign was his success against the Philistines. II Kings 18:8 stated that Hezekiah smote the Philistines as far as Gaza (Brown 2017:48). Some have said that he went further than that and took Ekron to destabilise Assyrian control. Because the Assyrians had already campaigned against Assyria in 734, this allowed Hezekiah to exploit a weak Philistine territory. All of this was a plan to establish and reconstitute the kingdom of David and Solomon across all of Israel (Smith 2015:40). It is because of Hezekiah's defeat of the Philistines that the author of Psalm 2 wrote, "...rulers take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed, saying, Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us. He who sits in heaven laughs, the Lord scoffs at them" (White 2018:56). However, these words are not meant for Hezekiah's enemies, the Philistines, but are confidence builders after conquering the Philistines in preparation for rebellion against Assyria (Brown 2017:51).

After conquering the Philistines and overtaking Ekron, Hezekiah began to have negotiations with the Egyptians in preparation for a rebellion against Sennacherib of Assyria, the son of Sargon II, after his death (Johnson 2016:29). It is evident that during the shifting of international alliances, Hezekiah picked up royal procreation ideology from his negotiations with the Egyptians. During Hezekiah's kingship, the Egyptians experienced the 25th dynasty, the most prominent Egyptian dynasty since the new kingdom, and it was filled with religious and cultural renewal (White 2018:59).

Epics such as the Decree or Blessing of Ptah upon Rameses II and III would have found a place in the new Dynasty and may have been made known to Hezekiah. An example of such a blessing includes (Smith 2015:43):

I am your father who begot you among the gods, all of your body is from the gods....and I implanted you in your august mother, for I know that you are my champion...I fashioned you as when Re shines forth, and I have exalted you before the gods.

This is very similar to the later verses of Psalm 2, which say, “You are My son, today I have begotten you ask of me, and I will surely give the nations as your inheritance” (Brown 2017:54).

Johnsen (2014:6) wrote that according to Walton (2006:65), the Egyptian king was almost entirely in the divine realm, the Mesopotamian king was firmly in the middle, and the Israelite king was almost entirely in the human realm. However, given information about the proposed circumstances under which Psalm 2 was written and the re-reading of the Masoretic Text, one would have to argue against Walton. This would make it utterly probable that during this heated time of international negotiations, the Psalm's author decided to elevate King Hezekiah as a divine son (White 2018:62).

The results of Hezekiah's rebellion against Assyria, despite the cry of defiance of Psalm 2, ended in catastrophe (Smith 2015:46). In 701 BCE, Sennacherib laid siege to Jerusalem, and with his capital destroyed, Hezekiah surrendered and gave a considerable tribute to Sennacherib (Johnson 2016:32). Although the Deuteronomic historians described the surrender of Jerusalem as a victory because the city survived, it is evident that Hezekiah ultimately did not win the battle despite the cry of resistance in Psalm 2 (Brown 2017:57).

4.7 Geographic perspectives

Psalm 2 is an intense and dramatic poem that starts with a sense of rebellion and murmuring before shifting to a warning tone. Despite the expected outcome, the power struggle within the poem remains unresolved and unbalanced, creating an underlying tension. This tension is heightened through the deliberate use of parallelism, repetition, and chiasm in each verse. Additionally, the poem depicts the hostile attitude of the surrounding nations (Collins 2014:89).

Geographically, the land of Israel occupied a strategic position, bridging Egypt to the south and Mesopotamia to the north/east. A significant portion of trade and travel

routes traversed through this region, leading to instances where Egyptian and Assyrian/Babylonian armies would plunder the land on their way to confrontations with each other. While the Israelite kingdom reached its zenith during Solomon's reign, characterised by relative peace due to treaties with neighbouring empires, it frequently served as a political pawn that wielded limited influence (Walton 2006:143).

Examining the ANE's beliefs about deity and kingship is crucial, especially in Psalm 2, which deals with the gentile nations' opposition to the God of Israel and the Davidic king. Ancient belief systems attributed gods' active involvement in human affairs. The validation of kingship, as the intermediary connecting the human and divine realms, had particular significance, signifying divine favour towards both the king and the people. Therefore, the portrayal of the Israelite God's activities in Psalm 2 was meaningful to its contemporary audience, indicating divine intervention in the world's affairs. However, other nations believed their gods were more potent than the God of Israel, given Israel's status as a minor nation. As a result, they aimed to appease and honour their gods before others (Albertz 2003:76).

The initial strophe of Psalm 2 unveiled the rulers of the nations, mirroring the roles of the gods they embodied. They "take counsel together" against *Yahweh* and question his authority (2:1-2), aligning with the ANE conception of a polytheistic pantheon of gods who convened in a divine assembly, each with designated cosmic responsibilities. In contrast, Israel's God claimed exclusive power and authority, existing apart from the cosmos as its creator and sustainer. He is characterised by holiness and justice, inspiring emulation among humans, while his anger is triggered by their failure to worship him (Dumbrell 2017:94).

Psalm 2 alluded to the Davidic covenant established in 2 Samuel 7:12-16, wherein *Yahweh* committed to showing the dominion of David's heir and their relationship was framed within a father-son metaphor. Parallel to this covenant, Psalm 2 employed comparable language to depict the king's relationship with *Yahweh*: "His [God's] anointed" (v. 2), "my king" (v. 6), and "You are my son, today I have begotten you" (v. 7). The "decree of *Yahweh*" (v. 7) referenced the Davidic covenant, with "today" denoting the day of the king's coronation. The initiative for this relationship stems from *Yahweh*, underlining his sovereignty over the Israelite king's rule (Levin 2018:112).

4.8 Royal ideology within Psalm 2

Granerød (2010:323–336) suggested that in Psalm 2:6, there was a reflection of Egyptian royal ideology where a god procreates a human king. Granerød (2010:323–336) posited that semantically, the original text might have indicated the emission of semen, similar to “Ptah's Decree to Ramesses” (c. 13th-11th centuries BCE). However, a more common or less controversial translation is “to install” the king, which can be seen as a theological correction to potentially offensive anthropomorphism in the original Hebrew text.

Willis (1990:35) argued that the context of Psalm 2 and the Old Testament established that verse 7 referred to the king's enthronement on Mount Zion, not a literal procreation and birth. This would imply that *Yahweh's* “son” was the same person as *Yahweh's* “anointed one”. The enthroned king was regarded as *Yahweh's* son because of the intimate relationship they were perceived to have. This title has been applied to David in Psalm 89:26-27, to Solomon in 2 Samuel 7:14 and 1 Chronicles 22:10; 28:6, and to Hezekiah in Isaiah 9:6. It was, therefore, a natural description for the king's ascension to the throne of Zion, the divine procreation or birth, and for the king to be seen as the heir to *Yahweh's* “heritage”, which included all the nations of the world (Ps 2:8).

Stewart (2010:11) wrote that phrases in Psalm 2, such as “my king” (2:6) and “my son” (2:7), described the Israelite monarch concerning God. The opening verse introduces a conflict that is destined to fail (2:1-3) as it is directed against *Yahweh* and His anointed one (2:2). The anointed one has been installed as a king in Jerusalem (2:6), a claim referring to a Davidic king as Jerusalem is linked to the Davidic monarchy (1 Kgs 11:32, 3; 62 Chron 6:6). This king has the assurance of a divine decree concerning his status as the Son of *Yahweh* (2:7). Cole (2013:86) stated that Psalm 2 disclosed a father-son relationship where the son quoted words by the Father: ‘The Lord said to me, “You are my Son”’. This declaration of sonship was immediately followed by a description of the son's inheritance, consisting of all the world's nations.

Töyräänvuori (2016:274) stated that the text of Psalm 2, a royal Psalm, is connected to Egyptian royal ideology as stated by Granerød (2010:323–336), who raised the argument that God physically procreated the king. Granerød (2010:323–336) highlighted that “In Biblical scholarship, Psalm 2 is often considered as one of the

indispensable sources for the reconstruction of the idea of kingship – and perhaps divine kingship for that matter – in ancient Israel”. Töyräänvuori (2016:274) echoed this sentiment. Granerød (2010:323–336) found a link between Psalm 2, 2 Samuel 7, and the prophetic texts. He also named 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 89 as the main Biblical witnesses to the king’s “divine sonship”. Hosea 11:1 and 1 Chronicles 17:13, 22:10, and 28:6 may also be considered part of these texts (Töyräänvuori 2016:274).

In his work "The King as Exemplar," Jamie Grant, following Larsen (2013:18-19), shared the perspective of Starbuck regarding the Psalms. Schreiner (2013:27–32) argued that although the Psalms may have initially been created for specific individuals or occasions, they have taken on a more general character over time. Starbuck (2021:1-9) pointed out a noticeable trend toward democratising royal ideology even before the exile. Starbuck cited examples such as Hannah's prayer (1 Sam 2:1-10), where a non-royal person uses a royal hymn, and the Deuteronomistic idea of the king as the exemplary upholder of the Torah.

Starbuck (2021:1-9) further commented on a significant transformation that seems to have occurred during the exile, stating that the Davidic monarchy was rendered obsolete for the foreseeable future. Furthermore, the temple's destruction and the dispersion of *Yahweh's* people also took place. In Isaiah 55:3-5, the divine blessings once reserved for David and his successors now apply to the Israelite community. The one-time representative for Israel now embodies the entire community. The shift goes beyond the people collectively assuming the role of 'king'; the ancient promises are reinterpreted toward the entire community.

Mays (2011:91–94) suggested that, from the Deuteronomistic perspective, the monarch's primary responsibility was always to have a copy of God's law (Deut 17:18) and to live by it throughout their lifetimes. He argued that the perfect ruler should have embodied the ideal Israelite model. Miller maintained that the intentional placement of Psalms 1 and 2 at the beginning of the Hebrew *Psalter* should be understood in the context of this "Deuteronomic law of the king". He explained that aligning these Psalms

connects the person ("יִשָּׁ") in Psalm 1:1, who follows the Torah, with the royal figure in Psalm 2, and vice versa. He pointed out:

The combined introduction of Psalms 1 and 2 introduces ambiguity in their interpretation. The subject presented to us is the king confronting adversaries. Yet, it's also the 'is contending with the wicked, signifying anyone who lives by the Lord's Torah and therefore belongs to the righteous innocent depicted in these Psalms. Consequently, these Psalms shouldn't be read exclusively about rulers.

4.9 Conclusion

Psalm 2 is a powerful text that combines theology, politics, and history. It begins with a portrayal of rebellion but ultimately emphasises God's omnipotence and the instalment of His anointed king. With divine authority, this king commands the monarchs of the earth to acknowledge His rule and bless those who do so. The Davidic themes found throughout the Psalms collection are introduced in Psalm 2 in the context of the *Psalter*. It looks forward to the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of God's kingdom. Psalm 2 inspires deep reflection and devotion due to its rich imagery and theological depth (Dumbrell 2017:94).

In this chapter, the researcher demonstrated that Psalm 2 has multiple layers of meaning. It is a royal Psalm that is rooted in the cultural background of the ANE, affirming *Yahweh's* supremacy and the authority of the Davidic king. Its implications extend into the New Testament, where its prophetic fulfilment in Jesus and its significance in the end times are highlighted (Levin 2018:112). Through its intricate interplay of historical context, theological depth, and messianic overtones, Psalm 2 remains a testament to the enduring narrative of divine kingship and redemption (Collins 2014:89).

Chapter 5: Theology – some aspects

5.1 Introduction

LeMon (2014:56) stated that Psalm 2 presents a significant assertion: God upholds order through a chosen righteous messiah during challenges. The Psalm communicates this theme through an intricate structure with three distinct voices - God's, the rulers of the earth, and the anointed king who speaks on behalf of God and addresses other rulers. To fully comprehend the psalm, it is essential to consider its various components carefully.

The first three verses of the psalm describe a world where God has established order through a divinely appointed king. However, the world is in turmoil, with the rulers plotting rebellion against God's authority. Terms such as "nations" (*goyim*) and "people" (*ummim*) in verse 1 suggest a collective effort to overthrow God's order. The rebellion is not just against God but also against God's chosen one (v 2b), God's messiah. Anointing, through the pouring of costly oil, signifies a change in status, aligning the anointed one with God for a particular function, whether prophetic, priestly, or kingly. The nations' fury is directed at the anointed king due to the unique connection between God's power and the king (LeMon 2014:57).

According to Goldingay (2006:93-95), the second section of Psalm 2 (vv. 4–6) depicts God's reaction to the rebellious nations with laughter and a proclamation of His sovereign decree. The third section then transitions to the king's response (vv. 7–12) to the world's turmoil. The king, positioned in Zion, acts as God's representative, addressing the strife among the nations. In verses 7–9, the king quotes God directly to assert his divine right to rule, embracing the title of God's son with the associated privileges. In the ANE, kings often claimed divine sonship to legitimise their authority, a practice prevalent in Jerusalem, where kings were seen as *Yahweh's* sons. The exaggerated portrayal of the king's military power in verse 9 aligns with ANE literary conventions. The Psalm presents an internal tension, where verses 1-3 depict God and His anointed as having complete control, while verses 8-9 suggest that the king's dominion is not yet fully realised.

Craigie (1983:62-63) noted that, historically, the kings of Jerusalem did not preside over vast empires. However, Psalm 2 envisions a future where the powerful rulers of the earth pay homage to *Yahweh*. This portrayal contrasts the limited historical reality with the Psalm's grand vision of a universal reign. When viewed within its ancient Judean context and reinterpreted in the light of the New Testament, particularly concerning Christ's reign, the Psalm highlighted the tension between the current state of the world and the ultimate fulfilment of God's order. Despite the chaos, the Psalm conveys that God's response is embodied in the anointed king, who blesses those who seek refuge in Him (v. 11).

Kidner (1973:49-50) argued that Psalm 2 celebrates the undeniable supremacy of God and the authority bestowed upon His Messiah over rebellious humanity. The rebellion against God is portrayed as futile since God has already decreed His will and endowed the Messiah with power and authority. The Psalm asserts that the outcome is predetermined in any conflict between God and His Messiah versus rebellious humanity—God triumphs through His anointed king. There is no distinction between serving God and serving His Messiah; rebelling against the Messiah is equivalent to rebelling against God. The Psalm comprises four parts:

- Verses 1-3 describe humanity's rebellious actions against *Yahweh* and His king;
- Verses 4-6 show God's response, ridiculing the rebellion as pointless since His decision has been made;
- Verses 7-9 declare the Messiah's divine mandate, granting him dominion over the earth;
- The final section (vv. 10-12) warns rebellious humanity to submit to God by serving His Messiah to avoid destruction.

Alter (2007:6-7) identified a four-part structure in Psalm 2, arranged in an ABBA pattern that centres on *Yahweh* and His Messiah. Like Psalm 1, this structure underscores the importance of God's decree in contrast to the rebellious actions of humanity. The text advises against focusing on the world's evils, emphasising that God's righteousness deserves more attention and reflection. Alter points out that dwelling on negativity drains spiritual energy and hampers one's ability to contribute positively to the world through wisdom and righteousness. This perspective

encourages a realistic optimism grounded in the certainty of God's righteous rule, which differs from naive optimism by recognising the transient nature of adversity and placing trust in God's enduring justice.

Craigie (1983:66-67) highlighted the importance of the Psalm's concentric structure, which aligns with its overall message. This structural feature subtly emphasises the centrality of God and His Messiah, overshadowing the rebellious masses of humanity. Craigie related this structural insight to the core message of the Psalm: despite the nations' uproar, their efforts are ultimately meaningless, encapsulated by the Hebrew term "*riq*," which signifies emptiness or futility. This understanding reinforces the idea that God's sovereign rule is unchallenged and that the world's tumult is ultimately insignificant in the grand scheme of His plan.

Goldingay (2006:97) discussed how dwelling on the world's negativity can drain spiritual energy, drawing undue attention to the evils around us. The structure of Psalm 2, which emphasises God's righteousness and sovereignty, reminds us to refocus our attention on God's goodness. Goldingay suggested that the commotion in the world often revolves around trivial matters, and by dwelling on these, people waste emotional energy that could be better spent on engaging with God's righteousness and spreading wisdom in the world.

Brueggemann (1984:41-42) interpreted the rebellion in Psalm 2 as a symbolic or idealised representation of humanity's ongoing resistance to divine justice. Rather than linking it to specific historical events, Brueggemann viewed this rebellion as emblematic of the human tendency to reject God's laws in favour of self-governance. The unrest and turmoil described in the Psalm illustrate a broader rejection of Messianic authority and an attempt to redefine justice according to human terms. This resistance, however, is ultimately portrayed as futile in the face of God's sovereign will and the authority of His anointed king.

Psalm 2, as interpreted by Lee (2017:51), encourages the reader to focus on God's enduring goodness and righteousness instead of being consumed by negativity and worldly upheavals. The Psalm reminds us to prioritise God's righteous rule and not be consumed by the transient commotion of the world. While the Psalm referred to the second coming, it also mentioned a type of victory and protection for the early church

that resembles the second coming (Francis et al. 2020:132). This Psalm demonstrates how the *Psalter* goes beyond personal experiences and specific events. Interestingly, the author never truly experienced significant victories over other nations, as Israel's power peaked during Solomon's reign and after David's death (Cuany 2020:195). However, this was only a minor fulfilment compared to the great triumph depicted in this Psalm.

The main objective of this research was to explain the theology of Psalm 2. Some may view it as a coronation or enthronement Psalm focused solely on the king's doctrine. However, it is a royal Psalm that explores the contrast between the raging nations conspiring and rebelling against the Lord and His Anointed One and the inevitable victory of the latter (Burgos 2021:47). This Psalm is the most frequently cited Psalm in the New Testament. It is referenced twice in the book of Acts (4:25-26; 13:33), and Paul presents it as a fundamental principle of eschatology in his sermon at Antioch in Pisidia (Ac 13:32-34).

The book of Revelation mentions the Psalm eight times in connection with the second coming and the kingdom's establishment (Gillingham 2020:204). The power of this Psalm lies in constructing a doctrine of the kingdom; it presents humiliation of the king and the guaranteed future triumph (Neumann 2023:98). This Psalm represents the pinnacle of hope in the *Psalter*, reflecting the Old Testament's emphasis on hope (Harris 2023:76). Its strength lies in the supremacy of revelation over circumstantial experiences, as it depicts an impossible triumph in the face of immense hostility and weakness (Hamilton 2021:150).

5.2 Messianic prophecy

In Psalm 2, three sections focus on the details of the Messiah (king) and his relationship to the nations and the world. The first section, verses 1-3, describes the nations raging and rebelling against the Lord and his anointed one. The second section, verses 4-9a, depicts God's response to the rebellion of the nations and the installation of his king in Zion, the holy mountain. The third section, verses 9b-12, supports the ruling of the Messiah over the entire world. In this analysis, the researcher focused on the second section, verses 4-9a.

This section depicts an adverse reaction to the rebellion of the nations and illustrates God's intervention in establishing his king on earth. In doing so, God discloses the decree of the Lord, which involves the appointment of his king, a messianic figure. It is essential to note the shift from referencing the anointed one to God's king and emphasising the messiah.

5.3 The anointed one (messiah)

The use of the perfect tense for *yātsab*, representing the actions of the kings, suggests that the rebellion has already occurred. However, this act of rebellion mirrors the original defiance. To establish a monarchy in Israel, a human king is required, and God, as the king of Zion, can only operate within the framework of divine right given to the king. God supports His chosen one, granting him his royal role and sustaining him (McIntyre 2022:108). Thus, the king becomes the central focal point and representative of the Israelites in their connection to *Yahweh*—a historical truth for the Davidic dynasty. In Psalm 2, the figure from whom the earthly kings are encouraged to seek wisdom ultimately refers to the son of David, who is also the future successor (Hobbs 2020:134).

Nevertheless, the emphasis on the kings distinguished them from their subjects and the nations and contrasted their current state of humiliation and oppression with the glorious inheritance and promised world dominion that awaited them (Eaton 2003:72–73). Some interpretations state that the text indicates Christ's foreseen future from an earlier time, while others state it is a vision of future events. Christ understands that the text is a decree about an unfulfilled reality (Burgos 2021:114). Tertullian addressed Christ, stating, "Ask of me," as the Father speaks to Christ, the Son who has inherited and accomplished His Father's power. Tertullian further emphasised Christ's right to glory as a man who earned it through great struggle and toil. He mentioned Christ's descent from a sublime place to earn His royal status and how the Father promised all this to the Son: "Ask of me and I shall give thee..." (Tertullian Against Praxeus, see Fredrickson 2020:55).

The close association between the nation and the son is highlighted in verse 7, where the king is referred to as the son of God. This concept is rooted in 2 Samuel 7:14, where the king is identified as God's son (McKenzie 1995:304). As a Davidic king and

ruling monarch, he could declare himself the Lord's anointed and enforce national judgments (1 Chron 16:22; Ps 20:6; Lam 4:20). However, concerning the 'statutes and judgments' that both he and Israel are to follow, the Lord commands in Ezekiel 43:11-12 that these be shown to a holy man on behalf of the Lord. Thus, by shedding its political and religious identity to become a purely spiritual kingdom, the 'anointed one' advances to a stage where the 'statutes and judgments' transform into a universal law. This law is enforced with an iron rod over all nations (vv. 9-10; Ps 72) – a role ultimately fulfilled by the final Davidic figure.

5.4 King of Zion

Zion is often used as another name for Jerusalem. However, the theology of the Old Testament held a more profound significance beyond just being a city or a location on a map. Primarily, it symbolises where God interacted with humanity (Goldingay 2003:45). It is as essential as the city where Melchizedek and Abraham lived. It is the place where the temple was built and the everlasting covenant with David was established (Petter 2021:78). This covenant, characterised by its inclusivity, allows us to conclude that the Old Testament prophets, to some extent, grasped a theology centred around Zion (Brueggemann 2002:102), with certain prophets having stronger connections to Psalm 2 than others (Gordon 2016:135). Zion is a symbol of God's abode where God's people experience protection, safety, and God's presence.

5.5 Universal reign of the Messiah

The Psalmist describes the coronation of God's chosen king and addresses the futile attempts of nations and people to conspire against the Lord and his anointed one (McIntyre 2022:34). The uprising of nations brings together rulers and kings in their plot against the Lord and his anointed (Smith & Akin 2022:56). By asking a rhetorical question in the second verse, the Psalmist emphasises the pointlessness of rebellious efforts made by nations against the Lord and his anointed. This conspiracy holds significant implications, reflecting humanity's initial rebellion after the flood, as portrayed in Genesis 11:1-9. Thus, it is a recurring theme in biblical theology with eschatological implications (Tremper Longman 2014:78).

The second verse emphasises the unity among the rebellious parties through the convergence of verb forms. The use of "conspire" and "plot" alongside "take their

stand" and "gather together" highlighted this solidarity (Weiser 1962:113–114). In the second section of the Psalm, verses 4-6 describe the Lord's response to the rebellion of nations. It portrays the Lord, who sits enthroned in the heavens, finding amusement in the situation and scoffing at the rebellious nations (Koontz 2021:45). This language vividly portrays the emotional detachment and derision with which the Lord views the uprising (Oswald & Kraus 1993:124–126).

Verses 5-6 describe actions and words as the Lord angrily rebukes the nations and terrifies them with wrath. Using anthropomorphic language to describe the divine anger and wrath contrasts the derision depicted in verse 4. This contrast confirms the severity of the divine judgment that will be executed at the appointed time (Brueggemann 1985:42–44). The Lord's decisive action is revealed through His declaration in verse 6, where God announces the installation of His king on Zion, His holy hill. This emphasises Zion's unique and sacred nature as the place where the fulfilment of the Davidic covenant will occur, ultimately resulting in the rule of the messiah-king over all nations (Wilson 2002:102–105).

When analysing the rebellions of nations, it is essential to note that the Psalmist strongly believed that Israel's political dominance in the world would benefit everyone. However, when examined from the perspective of Christ's universal kingship in the New Testament, the Psalm takes on a deeper meaning. Viewed considering Christ's later revelations, it also assesses all the opposing forces to the kingdom of God in the history of salvation (Richter 2021:129).

The pagan rulers unknowingly misinterpret events, but their rebellion is undeniably foolish and infuriates humankind and God. Their efforts are in vain and will not succeed. Some may argue that this portrayal of pagan politics is exaggerated based on biblical and human history. Readers may understand that the Psalmist expressed his nationalistic desires for Israel's foreign policy and interpreted events from that perspective. It may also be interpreted as the Psalmist blaming the heathens for international misunderstandings between Israel and other nations (McIntyre 2022:34).

The text suggests that neither of the options is entirely fair in this context. The Psalm explicitly addresses the open defiance against God by the heathens. Absalom's ambitions are too intertwined with insincere, pious professions to align with the

representation given in Psalm 2. Therefore, it is more appropriate to consider the described situation as an ideal illustration of how the heathen always appeared to Israel: the embodiment of impiety and hostility towards God (Goldingay 2006:95-96). This can be seen as a divine comedy. The heathen, along with their kings and rulers, indeed devise a futile plan; they gather to demonstrate the unity of their design and their genuine opposition to *Yahweh*, his anointed and the world's Messiah. They endeavour to assert complete autonomy against *Yahweh* and reject the divine command (Longman 2014:27-29).

The traditional identification of the Psalm with the rebellion of Absalom is appealing, but it seems forced when historical references are interpreted in verses 1-3. Interpreting it as the Absalom rebellion focuses too much on David's kingdom and too little on the kingdom of *Yahweh* (Browne 2022:102). The scene described in verses 1-3 presented a disproportionately absurd picture. The princes of the earth and their rulers are depicted as tumultuously conspiring to overthrow the authority of *Yahweh* and his anointed. While the Psalmist has actual events and individuals in mind, their exact identification is challenging (Koontz 2021:45). There is no known situation from David's time in biblical history that exactly matches the description, which requires the reader to make educated decisions about the historical context and background (Emanuel 2022:60).

5.6 Messiah's inheritance

In verses 7-9, *Yahweh* explains what the messiah will gain due to the rebellion from nations. The decree stated: "You are my son; today, I have become your father. Ask of me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance and the very ends of the earth as your possession. You will rule them with an iron sceptre; you will shatter them like pottery". This statement clarifies that the messiah will have authority over the nations and the earth in response to their disobedience (Kidner 1973:50-51). This gift assures that all will be reconciled under the king's submissive rule as he now takes on the role of the son of God (Brueggemann 1985:42-44).

This Psalm offers hope in a world consumed by conflict. It assures that the Messiah will fulfil the decree, making the current circumstances more manageable. The first verses (1-3) capture the height of rebellious human outcry against *Yahweh* and His

anointed, representing the darkest moments in history. This bleak state catalyses a divine outpouring of wrath and the subsequent coronation of the king (vv 5-9), signifying a turning point towards a future where conditions are transformed (Eaton 2003:72–74). While an inheritance defined primarily by absolute rule and judgement may not seem enticing to a world already familiar with such conditions, one can witness the portrayal of the king as a warrior-king, entering battle with firm assurance of triumph (vv 9-12).

It is important to note that the progression described in the Psalm is not linear, and there are signs of a shift towards peaceful diplomacy (Wilson 2002:101-102). The invitation is extended to the kings of the earth to seek grace and to avoid condemnation in light of an already accomplished act (vv 10-12). Thus, the ancient text presents a complex portrayal of the Messiah's role as a ruler, encompassing both authority and the potential for reconciliation (Wilson 2002:101-102).

5.7 Worship and obedience

The call to worship and obedience forms a crucial part of the Psalms. However, modern interpretations of the Psalms have deviated from their original meaning. According to Brueggemann (2002:150-151), the contemporary Church has tried to make the Psalms more appealing to modern audiences, leading to the rejection of the kingship of Christ by the kings and rulers of this world. As a result, the Psalms are sometimes seen as irrelevant. This study was dedicated to examining how these two Psalms were interpreted within the covenant community for the life and worship of believers.

Brueggemann (2002:150-151) argued that many biblical theologians focus on analysing the text but struggle to connect it to today's world. Psalm 2 depicts a plot to overthrow the dominion, resulting in disbelief and ridicule of the Lord and his anointed. Ultimately, it portrays the nations accepting the Son as their ruler with a rod of iron. This brief passage provides insight into the theological and exegetical methods found in Psalms 1 and 2, which may not be present in a traditional systematic theology text. The interpretation notably lacks a detailed theology of the Psalm for worship and daily Christian living.

5.8 Hope and assurance

For a New Testament actualisation, Johnstone argued that the Psalm focuses mainly on Christ's reign and authority, especially compared to its original Jewish audience. According to Johnstone, Christ's authority benefits believers considered co-heirs in His future kingdom (vv 8-9). The "rod of iron" mentioned in the Psalm symbolises strong shepherding and protection rather than oppression, as it was used to protect the flock from wild animals. This provides security for the faithful, indicating that they will not suffer the same fate as rebellious kings and nations but will be preserved and gathered as the true nation of God, a common theme in the Old Testament. The main difference is that this gathering includes all believers, not just a select group of ancient Jewish people (Goldingay 2006:101-103).

The concept of the "son" serves as both a warning and a comfort to the rebellious nations. It warns them that they have exalted themselves against the supreme king and His appointed ruler. At the same time, it comforts believers by showing that ultimate salvation is possible, even for those once enemies of God (Goldingay 2006:101-103). Brueggemann (2002:150-151) further expanded on this by emphasising that God's victory is certain (v 8, compared with Dan 2:44), and the only way to ensure safety is to take refuge in Him (v 12).

5.9 Conclusion

Psalm 2 presents a profound theological assertion regarding the relationship between God, His anointed king, and the rebellious nations. The Psalm underscores the futility of human defiance against divine authority, portraying God as both sovereign and derisive towards those who challenge His order (LeMon 2014:56). The text outlines a scenario where the rulers of the earth conspire against God and His anointed, only to be met with divine laughter and a decree that establishes the king's authority over the nations (LeMon 2014:59). This depiction of God's response not only affirms His control over worldly affairs but also highlights the messianic expectation embedded within the Psalm. The anointed king, often understood in the ancient context as a Davidic ruler, is portrayed as the divine representative whose authority is granted and sustained by God, pointing towards a future messianic fulfilment (Burgos 2021:47).

Furthermore, the Psalm reflects a theological tension between the present reality of worldly chaos and the ultimate establishment of God's order through His anointed. While the nations' rebellion suggests an ongoing struggle against divine authority, the Psalmist affirms that God's decree has already secured the victory of the anointed king, who is depicted as possessing a universal reign over all nations (Gillingham 2020:204). This messianic vision transcends the immediate historical context, offering a prophetic glimpse into the eschatological hope for a future where God's reign is fully realised. The Psalm, therefore, serves as a coronation hymn and a declaration of divine justice and the inevitable triumph of God's kingdom, echoing throughout both the Old and New Testaments as a central tenet of biblical theology (Hamilton Jr 2021:150).

Chapter 6: Synthesis

6.1 Introduction

This study conducted an in-depth exploration of Psalm 2 and its connection to royal ideology in the ANE, examining the interplay between the Psalm's text and the cultural, religious, and political contexts of ancient Israel and its neighbouring civilisations (Smith 2002:45). The analysis emphasised the various roles of the Psalm, including its ceremonial use, its function as a royal Psalm, and its thematic consistency with the concept of divine kingship in the ANE (Wilson 1985:138–143).

The study has explored the royal ideologies reflected in Psalm 2, situating it within the broader context of ANE kingship traditions. By employing both synchronic (examining the text at a single point in time) and diachronic (tracing its development over time) approaches, the researcher has underscored the Psalm's deep roots in Israel's cultural and religious life while reflecting on its interactions with surrounding cultures. The divine-royal themes found in Psalm 2 echo those of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Canaan, yet they are distinctly monotheistic, reflecting Israel's unique theological perspective (Johnson 2008:78).

The research indicated that the royal ideology depicted in Psalm 2, while not unique, mirrors a common cultural norm across the ANE, where kingship was often associated with divine attributes. The king in Psalm 2 is portrayed as a political leader and a figure of profound theological and cosmic significance (Wilson 2010:123). This study reinforced the notion that the royal ideology of the Davidic kingdom shared commonalities with other ANE kingdoms yet was distinctively adapted to fit within Israel's monotheistic framework (Brown 2012:56).

The analysis also demonstrated the dynamic interaction between divine sonship and royal authority concepts. Psalm 2 presents the king as *Yahweh's* chosen son, highlighting a covenantal relationship that transcends mere political leadership to encompass a divine mandate (von Rad 1962:131-134). This divine sonship signifies the king's adoption as *Yahweh's* representative on earth and his responsibility to uphold divine justice and lead the nation according to *Yahweh's* laws.

The concept of divine sonship in Psalm 2 is not merely a political statement but also an ideological and theological assertion. The depiction of the king as *Yahweh's* anointed son symbolises a special relationship that imparts cosmic significance to the monarchy and aligns the king's authority with divine will. This integration of royal and divine spheres is unique to Israel's royal ideology, setting it apart from other ANE counterparts.

6.2 Research problem

In Psalm 2, there is a one-dimensional portrayal of the Davidic king. Despite his weaknesses, he is described as a man "after God's own heart". However, in later writings about David, such as Chronicles, less emphasis is placed on his weaknesses as his character is depicted as growing in piety (Robert 2012:116). Gerstenberger (1988:47) questioned why most commentators on Psalm 2 present a scenario of the Israelite king ruling the world. Weiser (1962:111) showed that in Psalm 2, the king claims world dominion, the dominion of the "whole world".

Clines (1938:6) further explained that the Psalm embodies the Israelite belief in *Yahweh's* lordship over the entire world and its history. This perspective may be the Psalmists, but it does not explicitly mention *Yahweh's* universal dominion (Clines 1938:6). Although the promise of giving nations as an inheritance is made, it does not imply that *Yahweh* owns or rules over the nations. The Davidic king must "ask for them".

According to Clines (1938:6), the Psalm anticipates that the king will ask for these things. Furthermore, *Yahweh* will assist the Davidic king in foreign wars and deliver his enemies into his hands. What is clearly stated is that the king does not have a peaceful property transfer in mind. The Psalm speaks of shattering enemy nations like a pot. This language implies acts of war, not just peaceful advancement and dominion.

This study explored the influences of ANE culture on Israel's royal and imperial ideology, particularly within Psalm 2. The researcher focused on Psalm 2 as a royal Psalm and examined the text's elements reflecting Israel's imperial ideology. The goal was to understand the Psalm's meaning in its original context. To do this, the researcher considered the placement of the Psalm within Book 1 of the *Psalter* and analysed how it relates to the Davidic kingdom and Psalm 1.

6.3 Aim and objectives

Chapter 1 outlined the study's motivation, research problem, approach, hypothesis, chapter division, and terminologies/orthography.

In chapter 2 of the research, a literature review was provided to summarise and describe the concept of royal ideology within the context of the ANE. The review drew on parallels in ancient cultures closely related to Israelite religious practices and environment, such as Egypt, Canaan, Mesopotamia, Assyria, and Babylon. The study explored the concept of royal ideology in Israel, focusing on the Old Testament, Psalms, and specifically on Psalm 2.

In Chapter 3, The researcher analysed Psalm 2 in a synchronised way. The chapter starts with an introduction to identify the genre of Psalm 2. The researcher then examined the text and translation of the Psalm, including its division into stanzas and structure. The researcher conducted a stanza-by-stanza poetic and linguistic analysis to better understand the king's role. This was concluded with a synthesis at the end of the chapter. This synchronised study formed the foundation for the structural understanding and exposition of the relevant Hebrew text. Additionally, it served as the basis for a more detailed study of the literary components to enhance the current understanding of the Psalm.

Chapter 4 of this study provided a detailed analysis of Psalm 2 from a diachronic perspective. The chapter began with an introduction that examines the historical context of the Psalm, or *Sitz im Leben*, before exploring its cultic and literary background. The chapter focused on Psalm 2's relationship to other texts within its immediate and broader context, including Psalm 1 and an analysis of Books I-III. Finally, the chapter concluded with a synthesis of the various elements discussed.

Chapter 5 of this study examined the theology of Psalm 2 as presented by various scholars and explored it as a metaphor for the Davidic ideology and its theological symbolism.

Chapter 6 offered a summary of the research findings. It included an in-depth analysis of the study's results, a recap of its conclusions, and an exploration of its hypothesis.

Additionally, this chapter presented concluding remarks, potential implications, and recommendations.

6.4 Methodology

The researcher conducted a synchronic and diachronic analysis of Psalm 2 in this literature and exegetical study. This section aimed to examine the textual features of the Psalm, analysing its structure and addressing interpretational issues related to its *genre* and setting. These problems have been integrated with the synchronic section of the study.

Additionally, the researcher performed a diachronic analysis and used an intertextual perspective to explore the similarities between Psalm 2 and other historical texts. The researcher investigated what distinguishes Psalm 2 from other royal Psalms. This part of the study examined the compilation and editing of Book 1 of the *Psalter* to determine the role and position of Psalm 2 as a royal Psalm. In the history of biblical interpretation, there have been eras when a particular mode of interpretation prevailed. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Historical Criticism dominated the landscape of biblical interpretation (Barton 2020:9–13). However, there was a paradigm shift in the twentieth century when postmodern values began to take centre stage.

There was a debate about which exegetical method was more credible when interpreting biblical texts. This debate stemmed from the shift away from the absolute ideas of modernism and the claims of Historical Criticism. The diachronic approach represents the historical-critical method and argues that a text is best understood when considering the history of its origins and development (De Villiers 2006:24). On the other hand, the synchronic approach works with the text in its final form without focusing on the history behind the text (De Villiers 2006:824). Literary criticism and narrative criticism are part of the synchronic approaches.

Scholars have concluded that interpreting biblical texts does not require an either-or approach but an inclusive "and-and" decision. They suggested that reading the text using a diachronic and synchronic approach is beneficial for a more thorough understanding. Gesundheit (2013:10) proposed that a literary and critical approach complements the traditional and historical-critical approach. This study combined

synchronic and diachronic approaches following the *Gesundheit* approach. The following sub-section elaborates on the social scientific method of exegesis.

Psalms 2 is known as a "royal Psalm". However, Kim (1985:143) pointed out that there has not been a systematic study on the order of the royal Psalms in Book I-V. His study aimed to comprehensively understand the developments related to Psalm 2 within the Hebrew Bible and other historical sources through a literature review. The study utilised literature, exegetical, and synchronic and diachronic literary historical analysis.

Botha (2017:4) asserted that literature is a method of communication. All methods of communication require a sender and a recipient to understand the message. To understand and interpret the text correctly, the meaning must be conveyed through a common language understood by both the sender and the receiver. Prinsloo (2008:50) argued that for effective communication, the message recipient must be aware of both the language (the text) and the context from which the communication is derived. Therefore, the analysis of the text must consider both the textual and contextual aspects (Botha 2017:14). A holistic approach must consider all contextual and textual elements when conducting research; therefore, incorporating both synchronic and diachronic analysis will demonstrate understanding of the text.

6.4.1 Literature review

This section provides an expanded overview of the literature review, examining the royal ideology in Psalm 2 concerning the ANEern kingship.

6.4.1.1 Expanded overview of literature review

Chapter 2 of the study provided a comprehensive literature review that explored the concept of royal ideology as depicted in Psalm 2 and its connection to ANEern kingship. The chapter started by placing the Bible in its historical and cultural context in the Near East, where the surrounding civilisations shaped the understanding of kingship in Israel. Scholars such as David Noel Friedman challenge traditional views of biblical history, proposing an interpretation recognising the Bible's literary nature, which contains diverse and sometimes conflicting perspectives.

The chapter discussed the absence of a "unified biblical view" on kingship, reflecting ancient Israel's complex and often contradictory attitudes toward monarchy. Some biblical texts presented kingship as a divine institution reflecting God's will, while others depicted it as a necessary evil influenced by Israel's interactions with neighbouring nations. This duality is particularly evident in the treatment of the Davidic dynasty, which is both celebrated and critiqued within the biblical narrative. The study intended to explore these conflicting views by comparing biblical texts with Ugaritic and Assyrian sources, offering a more nuanced understanding of anointed kingship in Palestine.

The chapter primarily explored the different interpretations of Psalm 2 over time. For example, using a cognitive linguistic approach, De Bruyn (2013:193-209) found that early Christian scholars often interpreted Psalm 2 as an allegory, seeing it as a prophecy about the Messiah's arrival. On the other hand, John Calvin viewed the Psalm as God speaking directly to David, focusing on its immediate historical context rather than its messianic significance. The chapter also discussed the debate about whether Psalm 2 should be seen as "Messianic" or understood within the context of its time, reflecting historical events and the political realities of the Israelite monarchy.

The chapter examined the concept of divine kingship in the ANE, focusing on Mesopotamia and Egypt. In these cultures, kingship was often viewed as divinely sanctioned, with the king serving as either a god on earth or as the chosen

representative of the gods. The chapter explained how Mesopotamian kings were seen as living gods, and their authority was symbolised through monumental architecture and religious rituals that reinforced their divine right to rule. The temple-palace complex, for example, served as a political centre and a symbolic representation of the king's connection to the divine realm. This concept is reflected in the biblical portrayal of the Davidic kingship, where the king is frequently depicted as the anointed of *Yahweh*, chosen to maintain divine order on earth.

The text explored the role of royal propaganda in spreading and reinforcing royal ideology. In Israel, as in other ANE societies, monumental art, architecture, and literary works were instrumental in legitimising the king's rule. The chapter discussed how constructing the Solomonic temple and other public buildings visually and symbolically affirmed the king's power and divine mandate. This was compared to similar practices in Egypt and Mesopotamia, where kings would commission statues and inscriptions that depicted them as the earthly embodiment of divine authority.

Psalm 2 is part of the royal Psalms, a collection that discusses the theology of the Davidic Kingdom. These Psalms emphasise the unique position of the Davidic king as *Yahweh*'s chosen representative on earth, focusing on themes of divine election, covenant, and kingship. The chapter explored different interpretations of Psalm 2, including its use in coronation ceremonies and its significance for the end times. Scholars debate whether the Psalm refers to a historical king, possibly David, or a future Messiah, with its references to Zion and the Davidic covenant pointing to a connection to Jerusalem and the Davidic line.

The chapter also delved into the concept of *Yahweh* as king, which aligns with the earthly kingship of Israel's monarchs. *Yahweh*'s kingship is portrayed as both a divine reality and a theological ideal, with the king's authority as an extension of *Yahweh*'s rule. This relationship is central to Israelite royal ideology, where the king is frequently referred to as the "son of God," indicating a unique filial relationship that legitimates his rule. This notion of divine sonship was compared to similar concepts in the ANE, where kings were often considered as adopted sons of the gods or even as gods themselves.

The discussion of the king's relationship with God in Psalm 2 is further expanded by examining how this relationship is portrayed as one of divine wisdom and sonship. The king is depicted as the chosen mediator between God and humanity, governing according to divine wisdom and maintaining a close connection with *Yahweh*. The chapter paralleled Psalm 2 and Proverbs 8, suggesting that both passages depicted the king's reception of wisdom and royal authority as part of his divine election.

The chapter ended by comparing Israelite royal ideology with the broader ANE. It suggested that although neighbouring cultures influenced Israel's royal theology, it was uniquely adapted to fit Israel's belief in one God. This adaptation is expressed in Psalm 2, which combined elements of ANE royal ideology with the unique theological framework of the Israelite religion. This highlights the divine choice and covenantal relationship between *Yahweh* and the Davidic king.

In summary, chapter 2 offered a detailed exploration of the scholarly discussion concerning Psalm 2 and its position within the context of ANEern royal ideologies. It established the foundation for the following chapters by emphasising the intricacies and subtleties of kingship in ancient Israel and its theological significance, particularly about the Davidic dynasty and the idea of divine kingship.

6.4.2 Synchronic and diachronic analyses

The following section provides a brief overview of this thesis's synchronic and diachronic study, giving further brief insight into the theological aspects of Psalm 2 and its emphasis on Royal Ideology.

6.4.2.1 Synchronic analysis

A synchronic analysis of a text involves examining different linguistic elements within the text without considering the historical development. According to De Saussure (2013:104), language is the main focus in a synchronic study of a text. Botha (2017:17) explained that synchronic reading explores various language levels, such as grammar, vocabulary, and poetic features, without allowing unrelated historical information to influence the findings (Talstra 1995:196). Therefore, a synchronic analysis isolates the use of language within the text.

6.4.2.2 Diachronic analysis

The primary focus of diachronic analysis of a text is to study its historical development (Botha 2017:18). When analysing a text diachronically, the researcher considers the historical events that influenced the changes in the language studied today. This approach looks at how the text was produced and considers the language and historical and cultural contexts, redactional history, and placement within a larger textual context (Botha 2017:18).

6.4.2.3 Aspects of theology

Psalm 2 emphasises the uselessness of human rebellion against divine authority, showing God's plan to establish His rule through His chosen king. The Psalm depicts the rebellious nations conspiring against God and His anointed one, trying to overthrow the divine order. However, their efforts are futile, as God responds with laughter and derision, emphasising His unchallenged authority. In verses 4–6, God confirms His decision to enthrone His chosen king in Zion, symbolizing the centre of God's plan for humanity. This appointment of the king underscores God's power and purpose, confirming that human opposition cannot change divine sovereignty (Goldingay 2006:93-95).

The middle section of the Psalm (vv. 7–9) featured the king declaring his divine sonship, legitimising his authority over the nations. This idea of kings as sons of God was common in the ANE and is deeply rooted in the Davidic tradition, where kings were considered representatives of God's rule on earth. As the Psalm progresses, the king's authority is depicted as extending over all the rebellious nations, symbolising the universal reign of the Messiah (Craigie 1983:62-63). This portrayal of the Messiah's reign is not solely connected to Israel's historical monarchy but anticipates a greater fulfilment in the eschatological kingdom of God, where Christ rules over all nations (Gillingham 2020:204).

Psalm 2, when viewed through a New Testament lens, anticipates the coming of Christ as the ultimate fulfilment of the Davidic kingship. The rebellion of the nations is seen as a symbolic representation of humanity's rejection of divine authority throughout history, a theme explored by Brueggemann (1984:41-42). However, the Psalm concludes with a call to submit to God's anointed one, offering hope for those who

seek refuge in Him. This messianic prophecy serves as a reminder of God's ultimate victory over the forces of chaos, with the Psalmist assuring believers that the Messiah's reign is inevitable and eternal.

6.5 Study outcomes

This section discusses the implications of Psalm 2 in the broader context of the ANE, also elaborating on its theology and its impact on kingship.

6.5.1 Introduction

This study delved into a detailed exploration of the royal ideology of the Davidic kingdom as depicted in Psalm 2. It placed this depiction in the broader context of the ANE traditions while emphasising its unique adaptation to Israel's monotheistic worldview. Using both synchronic and diachronic analytical methods, the researcher uncovered the standard features of royal ideology in the ANE as represented in Psalm 2 and investigated the implications of these findings for understanding the role of the Davidic king in Israelite theology and politics.

6.5.2 Synthesis of findings:

1. The Integration of ANE royal ideologies into Israelite thought:

The study showed that the ideology of royalty in Psalm 2 is a complex and nuanced blend of ANE concepts of kingship. In the broader context of the ANE, kings were often viewed as divine or semi-divine figures, with their authority and legitimacy directly tied to their relationship with the gods. For example, in Egypt, the Pharaoh was worshipped as a god-king, and similar ideas were prevalent in Mesopotamia, where kings like Hammurabi were seen as representatives of the gods on earth. Psalm 2 reflects these widely held beliefs, particularly in its portrayal of the Davidic king as *Yahweh's* chosen son, tasked with ruling the nations and upholding divine order. However, unlike the polytheistic framework of its neighbouring cultures, Israel incorporated these ideas within a monotheistic paradigm, where *Yahweh* alone is the supreme ruler, and the king serves as His chosen instrument.

Integrating ANE royal ideologies into Israelite thought was not simply a matter of passively borrowing ideas but an active process of adaptation and redefinition. The

study showed how Israelite scribes and theologians reinterpreted these foreign concepts to fit their unique theological context. In their context, the king's legitimacy did not stem from his divine nature but from his covenantal relationship with *Yahweh*. This reinterpretation allowed Israel to assert its theological distinctiveness while engaging with the ANE's broader cultural and political currents.

6.5.3 Synchronic analysis and literary structure

The synchronic analysis provided a detailed examination of the literary structure of Psalm 2. It revealed how the Psalm's language and imagery convey the king's divine mandate and authority. The Psalm is structured around a series of declarations and promises emphasising the king's close relationship with *Yahweh* and his role as the ruler of all nations. The study showed that the Psalm's use of metaphorical language, such as the imagery of the king breaking nations like pottery, reinforces the idea of the king as *Yahweh*'s chosen instrument for enforcing divine justice and order.

In addition, the analysis emphasised the role of the Psalm within the broader context of the Book of Psalms, particularly its connection with Psalm 1. Placing Psalm 2 right after Psalm 1 established a thematic connection between an individual's adherence to divine law and the king's responsibility to uphold that law on a national and international level. This connection emphasises the importance of the Davidic king in both Israel's religious and political spheres, presenting him as the exemplary ruler and the ultimate enforcer of justice and righteousness.

6.5.4 Diachronic analysis and historical context

The diachronic analysis traced the historical development of Psalm 2, situating it within the broader history of Israel and its interactions with neighbouring cultures. The study found that Psalm 2 likely emerged when Israel was increasingly engaged with the empires of the ANE, such as Egypt and Assyria. This political and military interaction context influenced the Psalm's language and themes, particularly its emphasis on the king's authority over the nations and his role in defending Israel against foreign enemies.

The study also analysed the position of the Psalm within the editing and compilation of the *Psalter*, especially in Books I-III. This analysis showed that Psalm 2, along with other royal psalms, was probably used in liturgical settings, such as coronation

ceremonies, to confirm the king's divine authority and to encourage the people's loyalty to the Davidic dynasty. The Psalm's focus on *Yahweh*'s support for the king in war and conflict reflects the historical realities. The Psalm focused on Israel's struggles for survival in a hostile environment, where the king's military and diplomatic victories were considered direct evidence of *Yahweh*'s favour.

6.5.5 Theological implications of divine kingship

The study explored the theological implications of divine kingship in Psalm 2, providing significant insights into the role of the Davidic king in the Israelite religion. The concept of the king as *Yahweh*'s son and chosen ruler is central to the Psalm's message, reflecting a theological worldview in which the king serves as the earthly representative of divine authority. This idea of divine sonship, while similar to concepts in the ANE, is uniquely adapted in Israel to emphasise the king's responsibility to uphold the covenantal relationship between *Yahweh* and His people.

The study also emphasised the apocalyptic aspects of Psalm 2, especially in its later interpretation within Jewish and Christian traditions. The Psalm's depiction of the king as the supreme ruler of the nations was reimagined by early Christians as a prediction of the Messiah, with Jesus being viewed as the embodiment of the Davidic kingship. This apocalyptic interpretation of the Psalm has significantly influenced the evolution of Christian theology, particularly in its perception of Jesus as the divine king who will ultimately establish God's kingdom on earth.

6.5.6 Comparative analysis of scholarly interpretations

The study compared different scholarly interpretations of Psalm 2, revealing a wide range of views on the Psalm's meaning and significance. Some scholars, like Calvin, interpreted the Psalm primarily in its historical context, viewing it as a reflection of the Davidic monarchy and its theological foundations. Others, such as De Bruyn and Willis, emphasised the Psalm's prophetic and messianic dimensions, interpreting it as foreshadowing the coming Messiah and his universal rule.

The comparative analysis gave a comprehensive overview of the various interpretations of Psalm 2 over time, showing its enduring relevance in Jewish and Christian traditions. The findings suggest that Psalm 2 is a key to understanding the

relationship between divine kingship and human authority in ancient Israel and the broader religious and cultural contexts of the ANE and beyond.

6.5.7 Conclusion and implications

The study emphasised the importance of Psalm 2 in shaping Israelite royal ideology and its influence on the ANE. The Psalm shows a mixing of cultural elements and unique Israelite theological concepts, creating a distinct view of kingship that has had a lasting impact on Jewish and Christian thought. The study's findings added to the ongoing scholarly discussion on how Israelite and ANE royal ideologies were related, offering new insights into how these ideas were changed and adapted in ancient Israel.

In conclusion, this study deepened the current understanding of Psalm 2 and its place within the *Psalter*. It contributed value to biblical studies, ANE history, and theology. By examining the Psalm through both synchronic and diachronic lenses, the research offered a more nuanced and comprehensive view of how royal ideology functioned in ancient Israel and how it continues to resonate in religious thought today.

6.6 Future research directions

The findings of this study suggested several possible future research directions. One potential avenue is to further explore the connections between royal Psalms and texts from the ANE, especially regarding how these Psalms were used in different liturgical and political contexts. Another area of interest could involve a more detailed examination of the theological implications of the king's divine sonship in the Israelite religion, comparing it with similar concepts in other ANE cultures and evaluating its influence on later Jewish and Christian theology.

Furthermore, the study indicated that a comprehensive analysis of the entire *Psalter*, emphasising the themes of kingship, covenant, and divine justice, may provide additional insights into the evolution of Israelite royal ideology. Future research could also investigate how these themes were reinterpreted in the post-exilic period and how they still influence present-day religious and theological debates.

6.7 Hypothesis

6.7.1 Introduction

The hypothesis for this study was as follows:

The ideology of the Davidic kingdom, as depicted in Psalm 2, exhibits universal characteristics deeply rooted in the broader traditions of the ANE but uniquely adapted to Israel's monotheistic worldview. A royal ideology can be seen in the ANE, as represented in Psalm 2, using synchronic (examining the text within its final form) and diachronic (tracing the development and historical context) methods. There is an intersection of Israelite and ANE royal ideologies that have implications for understanding the role of the Davidic king in Psalm 2.

The proposed hypothesis suggested that the ideology of the Davidic kingdom, as described in Psalm 2, incorporates universal characteristics rooted in ANEern traditions while uniquely adapting to Israel's monotheistic worldview. This hypothesis is well-supported by existing scholarship, which has long acknowledged the significant influence of ANE cultures on Israelite religious and political ideologies. The concurrent examination from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives was well-suited for investigating this intersection, as it allowed for a comprehensive analysis of both the text's final form and its historical development.

6.7.2 Universal characteristics

The ANE was a cultural and religious melting pot where ideas about kingship, divinity, and governance were shared and adapted across various civilisations, including Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Canaan. By identifying shared features within Psalm 2, such as the divine adoption motif or the king's role as a mediator between the divine and human realms, the study effectively situated the Davidic ideology within this broader cultural milieu. This comparison strengthened the argument that Israelite royal ideology did not develop in isolation but was part of a broader tradition of kingship in the ANE.

6.7.3 Unique adaptation to monotheism:

The study's hypothesis recognised the influence of ANEern traditions while highlighting how these ideas were adapted to fit into Israel's monotheistic beliefs. This is important because it shows how borrowed elements were reinterpreted within Israel's unique relationship with *Yahweh*. An example of this adaptation can be seen in Psalm 2, where the concept of divine kingship is integrated with the idea of *Yahweh*'s exclusive sovereignty, creating a distinctively Israelite royal ideology.

6.7.4 Methodological strengths

The proposed use of synchronic and diachronic methods offers a robust analytical approach. Synchronic analysis revealed how the text of Psalm 2, in its final form, communicates the Davidic ideology, while diachronic analysis traced the historical evolution of these ideas and their interaction with surrounding cultures. This combination of methods ensured a nuanced understanding of the text, recognising its immediate literary context and broader historical background.

6.7.5 Implications for understanding the Davidic king

The study aimed to enhance the current understanding of the portrayal of the Davidic king in Psalm 2 by examining the intersection of Israelite and ANEern royal ideologies. This analysis provided insight into how the Psalm incorporates ANE traditions and distinct Israelite identity, deepening the current understanding of Israelite kingship's theological and political aspects.

6.8 Conclusion

The hypothesis formed a strong foundation for the study, providing a clear direction for the research. The study can contribute to the scholarly understanding of Psalm 2 and its position within the broader ANE cultural and religious landscape. The study explored the universal and unique aspects of the Davidic ideology within the ANE context.

6.9 Recommendations

This section explores potential areas for future research and delves into the emerging themes that warrant further investigation.

6.9.1 Comparative studies of royal ideologies

Future research should focus on the comparative study of divine kingship across the ANE. This research should examine texts from Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Canaan to gain broader insights. Adopting a cross-disciplinary approach that integrates archaeological, literary, and theological analyses is recommended. Such an approach can enhance the current understanding of these complex ideologies. A comparative study has the potential to uncover the nuanced expressions of kingship across the ANE, revealing shared cultural values and distinct theological concepts. Furthermore, it can promote interdisciplinary collaboration, bringing together insights from archaeology, philology, and theology. Additionally, exploring how royal ideologies influenced social hierarchies and communal identities could provide a deeper understanding of their impact on ancient societies.

6.9.2 Archaeological investigations

Future studies should consider archaeological findings that shed light on the practical aspects of ancient kingship and religious rituals. Excavations revealing temple architecture, royal inscriptions, and ceremonial artefacts offer valuable insights into the material culture that both influenced and was influenced by royal and divine ideologies (Mazar 1992:45–46). The significance of archaeological evidence in corroborating and broadening the comprehension of ancient texts cannot be overstressed. Discoveries such as royal inscriptions, temple reliefs, and ceremonial objects provide tangible contexts for the ideologies expressed in Psalm 2. These findings can enhance historical knowledge and establish a deeper connection to the past by linking textual analysis with material culture (Mazar 1992:45–46).

6.9.3 Linguistic and literary analysis

In Psalm 2, there is potential for uncovering layered meanings of key terms associated with kingship and divinity through a focused linguistic study of the Hebrew text and its parallels in ANE literature (Cross 1997:189). Additionally, an in-depth examination of the Hebrew language used in Psalm 2, paying particular attention to terms related to kingship and divinity, is advocated (Cross 1997:189). A literary analysis that delves into poetic structures, motifs, and rhetorical strategies could further illuminate the Psalm's aesthetic and theological depth (Foster 2021:95). When combined with a literary analysis of poetic structures and motifs (Foster 2021:100), this approach can deepen the appreciation of the Psalm's artistic and theological significance. By analysing the text's construction and rhetorical techniques, researchers can discover new layers of meaning and better understand its religious and cultural importance.

6.9.4 Theological implications

The study emphasised how ancient models of kingship can contribute to modern conversations about leadership and authority within Christian communities (Wright 2012:101-103). The theological principles of Psalm 2, especially its representation of divine sonship and kingship, offer valuable material for current theological contemplation. This challenges and enriches modern ideas of leadership and authority (Wright 2012:101-103).

The model of kingship described in Psalm 2 combines political sovereignty with spiritual stewardship under divine authority. This paradigm, rooted in ancient traditions, remains relevant in current discussions within Christian communities. In today's world, where leadership is often associated with secular authority and characterised by power, control, and political manoeuvring, Psalm 2 encourages Christian communities to reconsider leadership through divine stewardship and a covenantal relationship with God (Brueggemann 1997:195-197).

The portrayal of the king as *Yahweh's* anointed ruler, who governs with justice and righteousness under divine guidance, starkly contrasts contemporary leadership models that prioritise efficiency, pragmatism, and often a utilitarian ethos. This ancient concept critically examines leadership practices within churches and Christian

organisations. It suggests a model emphasising servanthood, accountability to divine standards, and a commitment to the communal good (Stott 2010:75).

Psalm 2 also gives valuable insights for studying the church's nature and function, known as ecclesiology. It provides a theological foundation for understanding ecclesial authority as the church addresses challenges of unity, mission, and cultural engagement. The Psalm depicts kingship grounded in divine sonship, serving as a theological anchor for comprehending ecclesial leadership. This shifts the conversation from organisational structures to the core of ecclesial identity, reflecting the kingdom of God on earth. Leaders are seen as stewards rather than sovereigns, called to shepherd the community in ways that reflect God's justice, mercy, and love, embodying Christ's servant leadership (Blanchard & Hodges 2008:48-50).

The ideas presented in Psalm 2 regarding royal ideology have significant implications for leadership paradigms within Christian communities. Initially, it advocates redefining leadership based on divine calling and empowerment rather than human qualifications or charisma (Stott 2010:75). This approach encourages humility and dependence on God for wisdom and guidance in leadership roles. Additionally, it emphasises the communal and covenantal nature of leadership, where leaders are integral parts of a faith community and are accountable to both God and each other for the spiritual and material well-being of the community (Stott 2010:75). Lastly, it challenges leaders to nurture a deep personal relationship with God, acknowledging that their authority and effectiveness stem from their identity as God's anointed, called to fulfil His purposes in the world.

6.9.5 Interfaith dialogue

The similar themes of kingship in the Hebrew Bible and ANE cultures provide an opportunity for interfaith dialogue, fostering greater understanding and respect among different religious traditions. By exploring these parallels, one can promote unity and collaboration (Maxwell, 2011:121). Psalm 2 and other ANE texts that depict divine kingship offer a platform for meaningful discussions among followers of the Abrahamic faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—and adherents of other ancient religions. Through studying these common motifs, diverse religious communities can deepen their mutual understanding and respect, ultimately promoting unity and cooperation (Maxwell, 2011:121).

These dialogues seek to explore a common spiritual heritage that goes beyond individual religious identities. The motif of kingship, critical to understanding the relationship between the divine and humans in many religious traditions, is a bridge, encouraging participants to examine how this concept has influenced their spiritual stories and theological thoughts. In Judaism, the Messiah is often imagined as a king who will guide the people towards peace and justice. Christianity views Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of the Jewish messianic prophecy, establishing a heavenly kingdom (Edwards 2023:75). Although Islam does not emphasise kingship in the same way, they recognise Jesus as a prophet and holds great respect for the Hebrew prophets and their teachings on kingship and divine rule. This inter-religious study reveals theological similarities and a shared desire for divine guidance and just leadership in human affairs.

The dialogue can focus on kingship themes, encouraging participants from different faith backgrounds to actively listen to each other's interpretations and perspectives. Such discussions can help break down stereotypes and prejudices, promoting mutual respect and understanding. By acknowledging the richness and diversity within these ancient themes, communities can gain a deeper appreciation for each other's faith experiences. In an era marked by religious polarisation and misunderstanding, this dialogue offers an alternative narrative emphasising commonalities rather than differences (Edwards 2023:78).

Interfaith dialogue focusing on common themes of kingship can result in tangible outcomes like unity and collaboration. By emphasising shared spiritual and ethical values, religious communities can come together to work on initiatives for social justice, efforts to promote peace, and projects to build stronger communities. This cooperative approach can help foster greater societal harmony, showcasing the potential of interfaith engagement in tackling global challenges.

6.10 Final remarks

The study has highlighted the crucial role of Psalm 2 in reflecting and shaping the royal ideology of ancient Israel. By exploring its connections with ANEern kingship traditions, this research contributed to understanding the ancient world's complex interplay between religion, politics, and culture. As scholarship continues to uncover

new perspectives and evidence, Psalm 2 will remain a vital text for historical inquiry and contemporary theological reflection.

The study suggests that future research may investigate how the themes of Psalm 2 are relevant to modern religious and political ideologies, particularly in shaping contemporary notions of leadership, authority, and divine sovereignty. Furthermore, analysing the reception of Psalm 2 throughout history, from early Jewish and Christian interpretations to its impact on modern theology and politics, could offer further insights into its lasting significance. Ultimately, Psalm 2 demonstrates the enduring influence of ancient texts in engaging with the lives and societies of future generations, challenging and inspiring them to rethink their connection with the divine and each other.

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