PATRONAGE AND CLIENTAGE BETWEEN GOD, ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS: A SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION OF PSALM 47

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ABSTRACT

The author of Psalm 47 appears to be occupied with the relationship of three role-players, namely God, Israel and the nations. The relationship of the three role-players is investigated by employing a social-scientific and semantic investigation into terminology used in Psalm 47 referring to patronage and clientage as the form of the relationship between them. A brief overview is also given of how patron-client/vassal relationships functioned in the ancient Near East. The result of this study is that Psalm 47 clearly contains a universal perspective on the relationship between God, Israel and the nations and that God serves as the universal patron over Israel and the nations, with the nations being subject to the patronage of Israel.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this article is to investigate the nature of the relationship between three role-players, namely God, Israel, and the nations in Psalm 47 by identifying and explaining terminology that occurs in the poem that refers to patronage and clientage, and how patron-client/vassal relationships functioned in the ancient Near East. This study is done by means of a social-scientific investigation of the poem in its social context, in order to understand the behaviour of the different role-players in the psalm. A semantic investigation is also undertaken with reference to the following words and phrases: תקע (to clap one's hands, verse 2), רוע and תרועה (to shout/blast of war, verses 2 and 6), ירא (to fear, verse 3), מלך גדול (Great King, verse 3) and מלך (to rule, to be king, verses 3, 7 and 9), דבר (to subjugate, verse 4), בחר (to choose, verse 5), נחל (inheritance, verse 5), שׁופר (ram's horn, verse 6), כסא קדשׁ (holy throne, verse 9), נדבי עמים (the nobles of the nations, verse 10), and מגני־ארץ (the shields of the earth, verse 10).

The main goal of this article is to gain a better understanding of the relationship between God, Israel and the nations as depicted in Psalm 47. This

study builds on a complete intratextual analysis of Psalm 47.[1] This study attempts to indicate how information about social values can help us to understand the content of the psalm better.

SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC CRITICISM AND THE EXEGETICAL PROCESS

"Social-scientific criticism of the Bible is that phase of the exegetical task which analyzes the social and cultural dimensions of the text and of its environmental context through the utilization of the perspectives, theory, models, and research of the social sciences" (Elliott 1993:7). It is therefore a sub-discipline of exegesis. Social-scientific criticism approaches biblical texts as if they are meaningful configurations of language that have as their intention to communicate an implicit or explicit message between the composer(s) and audience.[2] This process specifically studies the social aspects of a text's form and content, the conditioning factors and intended consequences of the communication process, the correlation of the text's linguistic, literary, theological or ideological and social dimensions, and the manner in which the text reflects a specific social and cultural context (Elliott 1993:7-8). A text is therefore considered to have been designed as a vehicle of social interaction. Elliott (1993:11)[3] gives the following examples of questions one would pose to

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1 For a complete intratextual/synchronic/literary-exegetical analysis of Psalm 47 see Schäder (2008:6-49).

2 Interpretation of texts (especially ancient texts) should be a holistic exercise that takes into account that all texts function on three levels, namely the intra-, inter-, and extratextual levels (Lotman 1972:81-91; Prinsloo 1992:230-231). The terms intra-, inter-, and extratextuality are used based on semiotic literary theory's basic premise that texts are determined by a number of codes that are essentially social in character. Effective communication only takes place when sender and receiver share common codes. By conducting research on all three "levels" of a text, the researcher should be able to come to a more complete or "holistic" understanding of that text (cf. Prinsloo 2001:488).

3 Social-scientific criticism has been critiqued by some in terms of the following: Is the nature and quantity of the available data sufficient to conduct a true sociological investigation? Is it possible to do sociology when there is no possibility of live observation or to verify one's findings? How can one elicit reliable data from texts that do not share the same social-scientific agenda as us? The danger of anachronism

a text in order to study it social-scientifically: "Did people really think and act that way and, if so, why? Do these exegetical conclusions square with ancient patterns of belief and behaviour? Are the statements of the text as suggested by exegetes in fact coherent with the actual perceptions, values, worldviews, and social scripts of the communities in which these texts originated? Or, put more generally, does the Bible really mean what it is taken to say?"

Even though the core Mediterranean social values are embodied in honour and shame,[4] what is of particular interest in this study is the relationship

exists as social-scientific interpreters make use of models drawn from the observation of modern religious and cultural phenomena. There is also the danger of reductionism – to make religious phenomena out to be a social phenomenon. In order to prevent this social-scientific criticism should always be used as part of a larger exegetical endeavour. The critique has also been uttered that the ideological roots of sociology developed from "post-Enlightenment atheistic positivism". Awareness of this bias can help the reader use social-scientific criticism as a tool for understanding religion, without deconstructing or demythologising it (DeSilva 2000:126-128).

4 "Honor is a claim to worth that is publicly acknowledged. To 'have honor' is to have publicly acknowledged worth. To 'be honored' is to be ascribed such worth or be acclaimed for it. Shame, as the opposite of honor, is a claim to worth that is publicly denied and repudiated. To 'be shamed' is always negative; it means to be denied or to be diminished in honor. On the other hand, to 'have shame' is always positive; it means to be concerned about one's honor. All human beings seek to have shame, no human being cares to be shamed" (Plevnik 1998:106-107). Honour, which is primarily a group value, must be maintained and defended and males must achieve honour in public contests (Plevnik 1998:107). "The contest begins with a challenge (almost any word, gesture, action) that seeks to undermine the honor of another person and a response that answers in equal measure or ups the ante (and thereby challenges in return). Both positive (gifts, compliments) and negative challenges (insults, dares) must be answered to avoid a serious loss of face" (Plevnik 1998:111). "Thus, Israel's claim to honor is its special relationship to the Lord (Isa 43:1-7), the evidence that God is on the side of Israel (Ps 44:1-8). This claim depends on evidence for God's continued interest in his chosen people. National defeat proves God's abandonment with resultant shame for Israel (Ps 44:13-16). The victors may also mock the God of Israel, who seems to them to be powerless to save Israel. In the face of misfortune, Israel becomes confused and questions either its own integrity before the Lord (Ps 44:17-22) or the Lord's continuing support and election of Israel (Ps 44:9-16) or both (Isa 59:1-19). The prophets have often pointed out Israel's sins as the cause of the Lord's displeasure (Isa 2:6-3:26), hence, the cause of their being shamed" (Plevnik 1998:108). The prophets often mention disobedience as a reason for God's rejection (Ps 44; 69; 109:28-29), as well as the

between the role players in Psalm 47 as an example of patron-client relationships.

PATRONAGE AND CLIENTAGE

Elliott (1996:144, 148) describes patronage and clientage as "dependency relations, involving the reciprocal exchange of goods and services between socially superior 'patrons' and their socially inferior 'clients'". Patron-client relationships are, therefore, relations of personal loyalty and commitment entered into voluntarily by individuals of unequal social status[5] (Elliott 1996:148). Patronage is a mutually beneficial relationship between a client, whose needs have been met, and a patron, who receives grants of honour and benefaction in turn.[6]

The most prevalent example of a patron in the Bible is when someone is

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reliance on the wrong allies (Plevnik 1998:109). "The righteous person's claim to honor is evidence of special relationship with God because of reliance on God's help (Ps 54; 55). A calamity points in the opposite direction and allows one's enemies full rationale for derision, hatred, and denial of God's concern. The sufferer must then demonstrate the opposite: insist on his own righteousness, confess his guilt before the Lord, and appeal for help to the Lord's steadfast love ... God's punishment of one's enemies is likewise evidence of honor due to special relationship with God (cf. Ps 35:4; 69; 70:2; 71:13; 83:16-17)" (Plevnik 1998:108-109).

5 "The influence of the patron could be enlisted to secure for the client a diversity of 'goods' including food, financial aid, physical protection, career advancement and administrative posts, manumission, citizenship, equality in or freedom from taxation, the inviolability of person and property, support in legal cases, immunity from expenses of public service, help from the gods, and, in the case of provincials, the status of *socius* or friend in Rome" (Elliott 1996:148). Elliott (1996:148-149) also writes on the services provided by the client that "He or she owes the patron a variety of services (*obsequium*) and is obligated to enhance the prestige, reputation, and honor of his or her patron in public and private life. For example, the client favors the patron with daily early-morning salutations, supports his political campaigns, pays his fines, furnishes his ransom, supplies him information, does not testify against him in the courts, and gives constant public attestation and memorials of the patron's benefactions, generosity, and virtue".

6 "The patron-client relationship is a social, institutional arrangement by means of which economic, political, or religious institutional relationships are outfitted with an overarching quality of kinship or family feeling" (Malina 1998:151).

referred to as "father", but is not someone's biological father. The title refers to the role and status of the patron. The patron is like a father and the clients are like grateful and loving children. It appears that this is not a relationship based on human equality and that these relationships were highly exploitative of nature. Another example of a common form of patron-client relationships is between landowners and some of their tenants (Malina 1998f:151-153; cf. Botha 2001:193).

According to Malina (1998c:89), grace or favour can be seen as the outcome of patronage. Clients seek the patron's favour. "To give in, to yield to someone, bestow freely refers to acting like a patron. There is a 'debt of gratitude' involved in giving. In essence one can say there were no 'free' gifts in the ancient world. All 'gifts' implied obligations to the giver, including gifts from God" (Malina 1998c:90). Gratitude can be described as "the debt of interpersonal obligation for unrepayable favours received". This debt of gratitude is "steadfast love". In patron-client relationships people are bound to each other in terms of "ongoing generalized reciprocity". This debt of interpersonal obligation is a covenant or contract between people of unequal social stance[7] (Malina 1998d:92-93). Patronage is "'justice' rooted in generalized reciprocity" (Malina 1998f:151). The patron had no obligation towards his client(s) to grant favours and by giving them access to his resources was an act of grace on his part (Botha 2001:193).[8] The term "faith" is also common in patron-client relationships. It refers to either "dependability"[9] or "trust"[10] (DeSilva 2000:115). It "primarily means personal loyalty, personal

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7 "The superior party gives life to or sustains the life of the inferior one; persons thus are said 'to receive mercy' … For such gifts the inferior one owes, especially honor … Such honor entails practical support as well as full respect" (Malina 1998d:92-93). DeSilva (2000:99) notes that relationships of reciprocity also occur between people of the same social stance (equals). Such a relationship is called "friendship."

8 "Grace points to the renouncing of one's claim to honour as precedence to gain a privileged relationship to God" (Botha 2001:193).

9 "The patron needed to prove reliable in providing the assistance he or she promised to grant. The client needed to 'keep faith' as well, in the sense of showing loyalty and commitment to the patron and to his or her obligations of gratitude" (DeSilva 2000:115).

10 "The client had to trust the goodwill and ability of the patron to whom the client entrusted his or her need, that the patron would indeed perform what he or she promised, while the benefactor would also have to trust the recipients to act nobly

commitment to another person, fidelity and the solidarity that comes from such faithfulness" (Malina 1998b:74).

Foster (2006:38-41) defines ברית (covenant) as "a chosen relationship of mutual obligation guaranteed by oath sanctions". "Chosen" reflects the fact that a relationship is created, made, established, given, or entered into. Family members do not constitute a "covenant" by birth. A "relationship" is similar to kinship and this aspect is usually highlighted in ancient Near Eastern treaty-literature. These texts usually refer to the "covenant" between an overlord and a vassal. They would address each other in the context of father and son, or their relationship would be like that of two brothers. In terms of "mutual obligation", the parties may be of unequal status but their responsibilities towards each other are inescapable. When covenant concepts are used in international treaties, the commitments are specified in detail. These commitments were guaranteed by oaths and were enforced by the gods.[11] An oath is not symbolic words and ritual. In many contexts "oath" and "covenant" are synonymous with each other. According to Foster (2006:43) a "covenant" was made between people in the ancient Near East and not with the gods. Although the gods are involved in covenant relations, their involvement is limited to being witnesses and enforcers. The word ברית (covenant) does not always appear in texts where there are examples of these types of relationships. This is where the relation between patronage and covenant becomes applicable, as both have a reciprocal nature and there are expectations between both or all parties involved. Olyan (1996:204-208) indicates that there are points of contact between covenant relations and honour and shame.

> Treaty partners in Old Testament times had the obligation to honour and to love each other, while in non-covenantal social contexts it was only persons of inferior status who consistently honoured their superiors... To honour a loyal treaty partner confirmed publicly the strength of existing covenant bonds; to diminish or shame someone who was a loyal covenant partner would communicate at least a loss of status... There was a strong

and make a grateful response" (DeSilva 2000:115).

[11] The gods are summoned to enforce the commitment in either words or symbols. This can be explicitly or implicitly done (Foster 2006:40).

> competition for position in a hierarchy of vassals in their relationship to a suzerain. A suzerain had the obligation to love all his vassals (as they had the obligation to love him), but he could distinguish between them by means of honour. He could honour one vassal more than another (Botha 2001:194).
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> In religion, honour resulted when a deity substantiated the claim of his or her client about a special relationship with the deity. Well-being and prosperity would amount to substantiation of a claim of a special relationship between the worshipper and God. Bad fortune would question such a claim" (Botha 2001:192).

Malina (1998a:14) states that "God also wields 'steadfast love' or 'mercy' toward those with whom he is in covenant". He also defines steadfast love as "a technical term referring to the debt of interpersonal obligation one has due to having entered a covenant; it is a form of solidarity between covenant members". Pilch (1998:31) indicates that God is the most common subject of the verb "to show compassion" rather than it being a human. God is free to show compassion to whomever he wishes and however he wishes. Many of the occurrences of "compassion" are linked with "mercy" and is "situated in the context of God's covenant promises" and "in the Hebrew Bible compassion is most commonly ascribed to or desired from conquerors or other powerful figures".

To love someone is to be attached or bonded to that person. The difficulty with "loving" God is that there is no activity or doing involved.[12] Mediterranean persons constantly have to be motivated to action (Malina 1998e:127). Deist (1997:7-10) wrote on אהב (love) that it describes the responsibility of a superior to care for a subordinate. In this regard he distinguishes between the love of the relationship between men and women, parents and children, and of superiors and subordinates. He distinguishes this love from that of friendship, אהב (friend), between equal partners. Deist's discussion of אהב in the religious sphere is important as he distinguishes between three types of relationships in which love plays an important role: (1) God to (his) people: the love of God to

[12] The Mediterranean cultures stress being over doing as their primary value preference (Malina 1998e:129).

people as individuals or as groups is frequently attested to.[13] This love primarily denotes the relationship of a superior and subordinate and can be explained in terms of patron-client relationships. (2) The people to God: the love of people to God indicates the love of a subordinate for a superior. (3) People to people: the love between people is usually commanded and can also imply the care for the less fortunate and poor (Deist 1997:10-15).

According to Els (1997:279), אהב (love), expressing God's love, appears most frequently in the theological circles of the Deuteronomist, Hosea and Jeremiah. Yahweh's love is depicted as one of the most important bases of the covenant, as portrayed in Deuteronomy. Els (1997:280-281) lists the characteristics of God's love as follows: it has a spontaneous quality; it is selective; it is voluntary; God's love is undeserved, but can be claimed; God's love seeks moral fellowship with Israel and cannot be separated from his righteousness; it is exclusive; God's love is expressed in judgment and forgiveness in terms of Israel's sin and the Old Testament speaks primarily of God's love for Israel and it is not explicitly stated that God loves other nations, but it is implied.

Obedience was not the condition for the establishment and maintenance of the covenant, but the result of it (Linington 2002:688; cf. Cross 1998:15). When patron-client relationships broke down and reciprocal expectations were not met, the potential result could be war. Prisoners of war were bound by iron fetters on their hands, feet and neck with the sole purpose of making escape for a disgraced captive impossible (Keel 1997:69).

From the above discussion it becomes apparent that the semantic domain of patronage and clientage includes grace, favour, reciprocity, faith, covenant relationships, love, mercy, loyalty, obedience, friendship and kinship.

A SEMANTIC INVESTIGATION OF TERMINOLOGY WHICH CAN ENLIGHTEN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS IN PSALM 47

The focus of this study will now shift to a semantic investigation, in order to

[13] An example of God's love for an individual can be found in 2 Samuel 12:24. An example of God's love for the group(s) is Deuteronomy 4:32; 23:5; 33:3.

understand the meaning of some of the terminology used in Psalm 47, and to indicate how they enlighten the patron-client relationships between the role-players in Psalm 47.

תקע (TO CLAP ONE'S HANDS, VERSE 2), רוע AND תרועה (TO SHOUT/BLAST OF WAR, VERSES 2 AND 6)

In cognate languages, תקע refers to the blowing of a trumpet. It can also describe the forceful linear movement of, for example, the pounding or thrusting of an object into another. In poetic literature, however, it is used to denote the sound of clapping hands. It could represent expressions of joy or even the joy over the downfall of a nation, such as Assyria in Nahum 3:19. The striking of hands also signifies the action of pledging oneself to another party, as is the case in Job 17:3. Such a sound could be made in a cultic context to signal the people of Israel to assemble. The sounding of a trumpet was also a war signal, such as the case in Joshua 6 during the battle of Jericho.[14] In Psalm 47:2 Israel commands the nations to clap their hands which can be considered the manner in which Israel requires the nations to pledge themselves to God, by subduing themselves willingly by taking on the position of God's client.

The basic meaning of the root רוע is "to shout" but the term can also refer to the loud sound of a signal, either a trumpet or human voice. A variety of reasons or circumstances could lead to people shouting, but above all shouting was characteristic of rejoicing[15] or a war cry. The shout can be accompanied by the

[14] Klingbeil (1997:330) writes on Joshua 6 that "Here the blowing of the trumpets in combination with the shouting of the people serves as a weapon in the surprise attack on the seventh day, and is linked directly to the falling down of the city's walls (6:20)". In Judges 7:18-22 the trumpets are used to create panic amongst enemies. The blowing of the trumpets transforms Gideon's battle against the Midianites into a war of God. In eschatological literature, the blowing of the trumpet is used to herald the Day of the Lord (Joel 2:1, Zechariah 9:14). The use of תקע to refer to the cultic blowing of the שופר at Qumran (4QCat 1:13) is interesting, as is Herodotus' use of the G equivalent of תקע to describe the clanging sound of a metal shield during warfare (Klingbeil 1997:329-330).

[15] In Isaiah 44:23 the heavens, the depths and the mountains are exhorted to sing and shout when Yahweh delivers his people. In Zephaniah 3:14 Zion-Jerusalem is to sing, shout and rejoice when Yahweh takes away the judgement against her. In verse 15 Yahweh is called the king of Israel and it is possible that a royal acclamation is to be implied. When the ark was rescued from the Philistines, in 1 Samuel 4:5-6, and

blowing of a שׁופר (Ringgren 2004:412). A war cry is raised at the moment of attack or during a battle.[16] It is not clear whether רוע and תרועה means simply "noise of battle" in general or whether they refer more specifically to a call to arms accompanied by the sound of the horn or trumpet[17] (Ringgren 2004:413). There are also examples of the double use of תרועה,[18] as well as examples of a military signal or trumpet blast being used in a purely cultic context[19] (Ringgren 2004:413, 414). תרועה is also used to hail a king.[20] Cultic shouts of rejoicing

returned to the Israelite camp, they gave a mighty shout of joy. When David brought the ark to Jerusalem, this was done with shouting and the sound of a trumpet (2 Samuel 6:15, 1 Chronicles 15:28). After the return from Babylon, the rebuilding of the temple was begun with a great shout of joy (Ezra 3:11, 13). In Job 8:21 "laughter" parallels "shouting". In Job 38:7 it is written that God was hailed with shouts of joy by the morning stars and the "sons of God" when the foundations of the world were laid (Ringgren 2004:414).

16 Examples are at the fall of Jericho in Joshua 6:5, 10, 16 and 20 (verses 5 and 20 state that the shout was accompanied by a trumpet blast), when the army goes out to attack the Philistines in 1 Samuel 17:20, and Abijah's war against Jeroboam in 2 Chronicles 13:15. In Amos 2:2 the destruction of Moab is associated with תרועה and שׁופר. According to Zephaniah 1:16 the day of Yahweh is "a day of the שׁופר and תרועה" (as is also the case in Joel 2:1). Jeremiah 4:19 also associates שׁופר with "the alarm of war". In Job 39:25 the warhorse smells the battle and hears the sound of the trumpet and shouts of battle from afar (Ringgren 2004:413).

17 The Babylonian king raises his voice (קול) as the תרועה in Ezekiel 21:27 (Ringgren 2004:413).

18 In Numbers 10:1-10 the two silver trumpets are depicted as being blown to summon the congregation to assemble at the tent of meeting and also serves as an alarm to signal for departure during the wilderness period. Later it functions to summon the people for defence against attacking enemies. Alarm trumpets are also mentioned again in Numbers 31:6 in the context of a battle with the Midianites and in 2 Chronicles 13:12 where the priests use trumpets to summon the Israelites to battle (Ringgren 2004:413-414).

19 In Leviticus 25:9 the sabbatical year is proclaimed by the sounding of the trumpet (תרועה שׁופר) on the tenth day of the seventh month. Leviticus 23:24 calls the first day of the seventh month a "sabbath observance, a commemoration with trumpet blasts" and a "holy convocation" (Ringgren 2004:414).

20 A king is greeted with a royal acclamation, such as "Long live the king!" as was the case in 1 Samuel 10:24 where Saul was chosen as king and greeted likewise by his people. According to Zechariah 9:9 the king of the age of salvation will also be acclaimed by shouts of joy. When Yahweh's kingship is described, the second Balaam oracle describes Israel as shouting a royal acclamation in Numbers 23:21 (Ringgren 2004:414).

often occurred in contexts where Yahweh's kingship was acclaimed. Ringgren (2004:413, 414) gives Psalm 47 as an example of such an instance, as this signal is also connected with a battle or warfare and the verb is often used in battle narratives. It was often the priests who gave such a signal to initiate a battle.[21] The signal can also indicate a response to victory or defeat.[22] This verb is rarely used to indicate a mournful or alarmed sound. When used as a joyful exclamation in response to God, it is often used as a call to worship at the beginning of hymns[23] (Longman 1997b:1082-1083; Ringgren 2004:413-414). Thunder is also considered as Yahweh's רע (shout) (Ringgren 2004:413).

In the context of Psalm 47, the joyful shouting may indicate Israel and the nations' reaction to God's universal kingship. This is the typical reaction of a client who did not have the means to repay the favour of his patron – the patron's honour would be acclaimed. In verse 6 Yahweh's ascent with a shout (of joy) also supports the notion of him being acclaimed as Universal King over all the nations.

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[21] 2 Chronicles 13:12, 15. In Numbers 10:9 we read that Aaron and his sons are charged with the responsibility to sound the trumpet to signal the beginning of war.

[22] "The prophets pick up language of warfare in their description of God, who fights on behalf of his people when they are obedient to him, but who fights against them when they reject him as their God. Isaiah (42:13) pictures God marching out 'like a warrior' against his enemies. As he goes out, he gives a 'shout' that signals the beginning of battle" (Longman 1997b:1082). Ringgren (2004:413) writes that Isaiah 42:13 depicts Yahweh as a warrior who raises a battle cry and shouts aloud, whilst challenging his enemies to battle. In Psalm 108:9-10 Yahweh shouts a war cry (רוע) against the Philistines. The context in Psalm 108:9-10 has to do with a show of power and it could be possible that this is a shout of triumph. Jeremiah 50:15 is also suggestive of a shout of triumph, for Babylon has fallen. The shouts of the Philistines in Judges 15:14 should in turn be viewed as a signal of attack, for they rush Samson whilst shouting. Also note that the Day of the Lord is a day of battle that is depicted where an alarm or "battle cry" is associated with this event. See Joel 2:1 and Zephaniah 1:16 (Longman 1997b:1082). It is interesting that the verb רוע and the noun תרועה occur exclusively in the War Scroll of the Dead Sea scrolls, in the context of battle, where the scroll refers to the shouts of the gods and humans (1QM 1:11). The priests are depicted as sounding the war alarm on trumpets and the Levites on horns. It is mentioned that there is a signal for the duration of the battle and that at the end of the battle the war alarm dies away and the priests sound the "trumpets of the slain" (Ringgren 2004:415).

[23] Psalm 47:2; 95:1, 2; 100:1.

יראּ (TO FEAR, VERSE 3)

Burger (1989:76) writes that the fear of Yahweh and obedience to his law are closely associated. Whoever fears Yahweh fits into the order he has created, and this confers prosperity. The ancient Israelites knew that their deeds, good or evil, brought retribution which was determined by Yahweh, as Yahweh determines the connection between act and effect (Burger 1989:83). In the wisdom psalms the term "Yahweh is to be feared" is generally used to denote the relationship or respect of an inferior person to a superior, as with a patron-client relationship. Fear of Yahweh means awe of Yahweh (Burger 1989:81-82). Although a patron acted out of grace, the violation of reciprocity (not returning what is due to the patron) could result in dishonouring the patron which would be enough cause for him to seek retribution and revenge. Kraus (1988:468) stresses that Yahweh's fearfulness makes resistance to him impossible. A number of texts in the Hebrew Bible also bear witness to the fearsomeness of Yahweh[24] (Schaper 1994:269; see also Fuchs 1990:290-315).

Fear of God is evoked by his holy nature which is identical to his numinous nature. An encounter with God's presence, his holiness or hearing his voice, was dangerous and possibly deadly. Fear, especially fear of death, is thus a normal reaction when someone experiences the divine (either through revelation, a theophany, a dream or a vision.). Therefore, when God reveals himself directly to a messenger, the messenger is calmed in order to eradicate the fear of God[25] (Fuchs 1990:300, 301, 306). In Psalm 47:3 Yahweh Almighty's fearsomeness is due to his power as Great King over all the earth.

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[24] The root יראּ (to fear) is used 72 times in the Psalter (Psalms 3:7; 15:4; 22:24, 26: 23:4; 25:12, 14: 27:1, 3; 31:20; 33:8, 18, 34:8, 10; 40:4; 45:5; 46:3; 47:3: 49:6, 17; 52:8; 55:20; 56:4, 5, 12; 60:6; 61:6; 64:5, 10; 65:6, 9; 66:3, 5, 16; 67:8; 68:36; 72:5; 76:8, 9, 13; 85:10; 86:11; 89:8; 91:5; 96:4; 99:3, 102:16; 103:11, 13, 17; 106:22; 111:5, 9; 112:1, 7, 8; 115:11, 13; 118:4, 6; 119:63, 74, 79, 120; 128:1, 4; 130:4; 135:20; 139:14; 145:6, 19; and 147:11) of which six of these instances occur in Korahite psalms (Psalms 45:5; 46:3; 47:3; and 49:6, 17). Cf. Exodus 15:11, Deuteronomy 7:21, 2 Chronicles 20:29, Zephaniah 7:11, Nehemiah 1:5 and Daniel 9:4 (Delitzsch 1893:98; Kraus 1988:468).

[25] Examples are Exodus 20:20; Judges 6:23; Daniel 10:12, 19.

מלך גדול (GREAT KING, VERSE 3) AND מלך (TO RULE, TO BE KING, VERSES 3, 7 AND 9)

Melek refers to all monarchical rulers of city-states, lands, territories and tribes. The metaphoric epithet "king" is also used in connection with the God of Israel (Nel 1997:956). According to Nel (1997:958) *melek*-rulership in Israel had its roots in the political system of the Canaanite cities of the Middle and Late Bronze age and one may assume that it developed from a charismatic type of militaristic leadership to a dynastic kingship with a central administration.

> The conception of Yahweh as King in the Yahweh-King-Psalms has a typical Israelite content and does not merely mean that Baal of the Canaanite cult is replaced by the name Yahweh. In critical opposition to Canaanite myth, Yahweh became king of the world and the gods. He triumphed over the powers of chaos (Nel 1997:962).

The Deuteronomistic and Chronistic traditions depict the establishment of the kingship in Israel as a sacral occasion,[26] for example Yahweh elected David and established a covenant with him (Nel 1997:959). What makes Israel's perception of their king unique in comparison to that of their neighbours is that the king of Israel was not deified. The reference to the king as "son" of God is often explained as covenantal terminology used for the legal adoption of the regent as a son by God (Nel 1997:960). He has his place at God's right hand (Psalm 110). Nel (1997:961) writes that "the conception of Yahweh's kingship is more prominent in the cultic lyrics and is closely related to the theology of Zion". This accounts for its dominant occurrence in the Psalms.[27]

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[26] "Samuel anointed Saul and David and thus emphasized the choice of Yahweh (cf. 1 Sam 9 and 16). It was Yahweh who established the kingdom of Israel, as he made Saul, David, and Solomon king … At the time of the exile, Ezekiel laid emphasis on the divine leadership of God and reinforced the theocratic ideal" (Nel 1997:958-959).

[27] "S. Mowinckel … and his followers explained the predication of Yahweh as *melek* as an expression of cult and myth. The Yahweh *mālak* formula is seen as a call of enthronement during the enthronement ritual as part of the New Year festival … The original *Sitz im Leben* of the formula was held to be a New Year festival, in which the dying and triumphant reinstalling (enthronement) of the God-King is celebrated. The triumph of the ruling god over the powers of chaos was a central notion in this

Ezekiel emphasises the divine leadership of God and reinforced the theocratic ideal during the time of the exile. During the postexilic period the expectation of the reinstalment of the Davidic dynasty declined (Nel 1997:959). The conception of Yahweh as King does not only occur in premonarchic texts in the Old Testament but due to similar attributions to the gods of Canaan one is lead to believe that the concept of Yahweh as King is older than the monarchy (Nel 1997:961).

> The kingship of God thus originated from the conception of the foundation of God's throne in primordial time (eternity) and consequently was linked to the presence of his throne on Zion in the temple. The temple was the symbolic space of the presence of Yahweh's kingship … The cultic presence of Yahweh as King in the temple of Zion explains the prominence of its conception in the cultic texts of the OT, in particular the so-called Enthronement Psalms. … The kingship of Yahweh does not only include Israel, but Yahweh is King over the entire world (Ps 47:8) and over all nations (Ps 47:9; Jer 10:7; Zech 14:13-17). The universalistic conception has developed in Israel's later history into a messianic hope and promise (Isa 43:14-19; 52:7-9) (Nel 1997:963).

It is important to note that the temple in Jerusalem functions as the earthly counterpart of God's heavenly dwelling. Psalm 47:6 may indicate an ascent up to God's earthly sanctuary. In the temple heaven and earth come together (Anderson 1972:363; Kraus 1966:351). It is therefore necessary to consider that the procession to Zion is at the same time an ascent to heaven.[28] On psalms containing the Divine Warrior theme, Ballard (1999:88) writes that the tradition-history probably arose from the concept of the inviolability of Zion. The temple was a place where Israel could experience the presence of God, and it also physically represented the deity.[29]

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cult ceremony. Although no direct Israelite evidence gives proof of such a festival, the analogies with the Babylonian New Year festival (Akitu festival) seems, according to this school, to be proof enough" (Nel 1997:961).

[28] On עלה as "to ascend (to heaven)" see Genesis 17:22, 35:13 and Judges 13:20 (Kraus 1988:468).

[29] Keel (1997:179-180) writes that temples were constructed in such a manner that in

Frequent reference is made in the Psalter to the kingship of God or Yahweh.[30] Ridderbos (1958:52) indicates two distinctions: God is the King of creation,[31] but he connected to Israel as King in a particular manner.[32] God is referred to as "Great King," which is similar to the Hittite practice of referring to the monarch as "Great King" in the introductory sections of vassal treaties (Craigie 1983:349). It is also a known expression from Ugaritic and Akkadian sources (Sabourin 1969:218-219) as the title "Great King" was also a popular designation used for Assyrian Kings.[33]

In Psalm 47 God is depicted as the Great King ruling over all his vassals. The nations in turn become Israel's more immediate vassals. Craigie (1983:350) states that "the actual occasion for the acknowledgement would have been some ceremony in Jerusalem, where Israel and its vassals were pledged to God, the great King …" The reference to "our King" in Psalm 47:7 is the manner in which Israel specifically refers to the close relationships it has with God as its covenant partner. In verse 9 the reign of God appears to be extended over the nations as well, as they are considered to be just as Israel in God's eyes. Psalm 47 is therefore concerned with Yahweh as the ultimate Great King (Anderson 1972:362; Kittel 1922:174; Van der Ploeg 1973:291).

דבר (TO SUBJUGATE, VERSE 4)

The use of דבר (to subjugate) in Psalm 47 implies that Yahweh conquers or subdues other gods or nations on behalf of Israel. דבר can be translated as "to turn/drive away, persecute" in the *pi'el*, "to be persecuted" in the *pu'al* and "to subjugate" in the *hiph'il* (Howard 1997:912).

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times of need they could serve as places of refuge. "When the suppliant of Ps 32:2 prays to Yahweh to be for him an unassailable fortress … his conception may have been inspired by the huge temple structure on Zion. The description of Yahweh as "a strong tower against the enemy" (Ps 61:3b) may be similarly understood. The tower may suggest a part of the acropolis (Ps 48:13; cf. Judg 9:51; 2 Chr 14:6) or some isolated tower in open country".

30 Cf. Psalms 5:3; 7:8; 9:8; 10:16; 22:29; 24:7; 44:5; 68:25; 74:12; 84:4; 92:9 and 93-100 (Ridderbos 1958:52).

31 Examples are Psalms 47:8; 103:19, 21; 1 Chronicles 29:11 (Ridderbos 1958:52).

32 Examples are Exodus 15:18; Numbers 23:21; Deuteronomy 33:5; Judges 8:23; 1 Samuel 8:7, 12:12; 1 Chronicles 28:5 (Ridderbos 1958:52).

33 Cf. 2 Kings 18:19 (Anderson 1972:362).

Freeman (1996:459) writes that a number of Egyptian, Assyrian and Persian monuments contain illustrations of the custom of conquerors treading on the vanquished.[34] The leaders of a nation's enemies were captured and executed to cause complete chaos and destruction of a country's administrative system. This would have been the worst case scenario if a vassal could not persuade his patron to another course of action by offering him a large tribute. In Psalm 47 Israel serves as the intermediary between God and the nations; by calling on the nations to exhort God, they attempt to convince the nations to subdue themselves to God in a peaceful manner. Verse 4 also serves as a reminder that Israel can accomplish nothing without God aiding them in their pursuit, not even vanquishing their enemies. For subduing their enemies under them Israel's proper response towards God as patron would be to acclaim his honour by praising his name and by submitting themselves to the covenant stipulations in thanksgiving.

בחר (TO CHOOSE, VERSE 5)

In verse 5 "our inheritance"[35] and "the glory of Jacob"[36] (two parallel aspects) refer to the inheritance that Israel received, namely the Promised Land (Anderson 1972:363; Briggs & Briggs 1969:399; Buttenwieser 1938:352; Delitzsch 1893:99; Du Preez 1997:314; Gunkel 1986:203; Kraus 1988:468; Schaper 1994:270). The word בחר is closely connected to the concept of the divine election in the Old Testament (Nicole 1997:638). The reference to the nations being gathered together as with the nation of the God of Abraham is the result of God's promise of a land to Abraham in Genesis 12 being fulfilled. The impression is given that Israel acknowledges the status of the nations as also being descendants of Abraham.

In comparison to the nations, Israel is God's main client in Psalm 47. Thus there is a distinction between the status of Israel and the nations. It is only in verse 10 that there is no longer a difference between "us/we" (Israel as "in-

[34] To physically trample on an enemy's neck was an ancient Near Eastern treatment of captured kings and is a symbolic representation of complete subjugation (Freeman 1996:119).

[35] Cf. Numbers 32:19-32 and Lamentations 5:2 (Van der Ploeg 1973:291).

[36] Cf. Amos 6:8, 8:7; Nahum 2:3.

group") and "you" (the nations as "out-group").

נחל (INHERITANCE, VERSE 5)

The generally accepted literal meaning of נחל is its reference to the division of the land within Israel's kinship structure, and it signifies the permanent allotment to various families, clans and tribes. There is a "triangular" usage which signifies the land as Israel's inheritance, the land as Yahweh's inheritance, Israel as Yahweh's inheritance and Yahweh as Israel's inheritance (Wright 1997:77). This allotted land was the place of a family's security, to which one returned after battle and where one was eventually buried. It was not owned by the present generation, but held "from the fathers" for the sake of posterity, thus the land remained in family patrimonies for many generations. In Israel's kinship structure, the extended family or the "father's house" was the basic unit of the clan and the tribe. The land of Canaan is viewed as the inheritance of the whole Israel and is associated with the divine promise to Israel's ancestors (Exodus 32:23, Joshua 1:6, Psalm 105:11; cf. Deuteronomy 4:21, 26:1). Living in the Promised Land naturally brought with it certain responsibilities, such as doing no evil and obedience to the covenant demands (Wright 1997:77-78). Yahweh's sovereignty over the nations was such that he could promise to return them to their own inheritances after the Babylonian exile if they turn to him (Jeremiah 12:14-17). Wright (1997:78-79) writes that the ultimate purpose of this was that the nations would eventually belong to the people of Abraham themselves, while citing Psalm 47 as an example.

שופר (RAM'S HORN, VERSE 6)

The term שופר most likely refers to a horned instrument to sound the alarm at an enemy's approach during war, to summon the armies of Israel to take up arms, and to signal an attack or to call one off (O'Connel 1997b:68).

> For cultic events, the *šôpār* was used for heralding the Jubilee year (Lev 25:9) and new moons (Ps 81:3[4]), for proclaiming fasts and assemblies (Joel 2:15) or solemn oaths (2 Chron 15:14), and for heralding the movements of Yahweh or the ark (2 Sam 6:15 = 1 Chron 15:28; Ps 47:5[6]; 98:6). Such cultic uses may relate to the

> religious significance of the *šôpār* as an awe-inducing instrument sound and is said to have accompanied the theophany of Yahweh at Sinai (Exod 19:16, 19; 20:18) and blasts were prophesied to herald great events of the Day of Yahweh (Joel 2:1; Zeph 1:16; cf. Isa 27:13; Zech 9:14) (O'Connell 1997b:68).

The שופר was also associated with the mythic-religious conquests of foreign gods and nations. In the context of Psalm 47 its use is parallel to תקע (to clap one's hands, verse 2), רוע and תרועה (to shout/blast of war, verses 2 and 6).

כסא קדשׁ (HOLY THRONE, VERSE 9)

From "the time of Moses the ark seems to have been regarded as the throne of Yahweh – an *empty* throne upon which Yahweh was invisibly present" (Anderson 1972:365). Yahweh sits enthroned on the cherubim in Psalm 99:1.[37] It is likely that his throne was initially associated with these figures and later on with the ark. In Jeremiah 3:16 we read that Yahweh's throne is Jerusalem, while other writers of the Old Testament view it as being in the heavens (cf. 1 Kings 22:19; 2 Chronicles 18:18; Psalm 103:19; Isaiah 66:1) (Anderson 1972:365). It is highly unlikely that Psalm 47:9 refers to Jerusalem as his throne, but it should not be discredited as a possibility (Anderson 1972:365; Briggs & Briggs 1969:399; Ridderbos 1958:57-58).

The Israelites believed that no created thing is inherently holy, but receives that quality through some relation to Yahweh. The temple in itself is not holy, but because Yahweh dwells there or has established it, it becomes so (Keel 1997:174). Therefore, when we read in Psalm 47:10 that "God has sat on his holy throne," we can surmise that he rules from his temple or heaven. This is also apparently to where he ascended in verse 6. Yahweh enthroned is the Great Universal King to whom all honour is due as he is the patron of the universe which is indebted to him for defeating the forces of chaos.

נדבי עמים (THE NOBLES OF THE NATIONS, VERSE 10)

The word נדיב "noble" can also be translated as "noble man", "willing man", "willing and generous" according to Carpenter and Grisanti (1997:31). It occurs

[37] Cf. Psalm 11:4; 93:2, 4; 97:2 and 103:19 (Van Uchelen 1977:52).

six times in the Psalter.[38] The verb נדב can be translated as "to incite", "offer freely", "give freewill offering", "to make willing", "to move to do something" (*qal*) or "to offer of one's own accord, freely" (*hitpa'el*). In general terms, the basic meaning of the root נדב is "prove oneself freely willing".[39] This corresponds to the North Arabic verb *naduba* which means "be willing, noble, generous" (Conrad 1998:220).

The noun נדב can be taken to describe the act of voluntary contribution for cultic purposes in a small number of texts[40] but in all other cases it refers to a social category, namely the noble, that usually denotes a leader among the people; as they occupy the highest human position in tribe and state. They enjoy special respect on the grounds of their wealth and wide influence, as well as their leadership. Wisdom literature depicts the noble as someone who is set apart from others due to his blameless conduct by being righteous, innocent and acting with wisdom. It also "embodies the wisdom idea of the righteous sage and represents human perfection" (Conrad 1998:224-225). It describes the noble man that not only counsels generous or noble things, but also possesses

[38] Psalms 47:10; 83:12; 107:40; 113:8; 118:9; and 146:3.

[39] It is a word that primarily refers to the cultic realm, and in the majority of occurrences mean "freewill offering", which is "the offerings of private individuals outside the regular sacrificial system". Such offerings could be made at any time, but the preferred time for making such offerings was during the major festivals, when freewill offerings were proclaimed in public and were considered to be "good works". They were primarily voluntary offerings. Their main purpose was to express thanksgiving to Yahweh, especially for demonstrations of favour and to acknowledge Yahweh as helper and deliverer. It could also refer to a freewill contribution, which is distinguished from a freewill offering in that its primary emphasis is not its voluntary nature, but its generosity, abundance and opulence. Another possible meaning of נדב is that it refers to free decision or choice of a particular action. Whatever choice is made, it directly or indirectly involves a decision in favour of Yahweh, who initiated the actions and in whose name they are carried out. Another meaning is that it refers to free divine favour. Usually Yahweh appears as the subject of נדב in phrase names. These names are given to children at birth as the parent's attestation of Yahweh's generosity. In essence, the child is a free gift from Yahweh. This is evidence of Yahweh's favour of the family by presenting them this free gift of a child (Conrad 1998:221-223).

[40] Examples are Exodus 35:5, 22 for materials for the furnishing of the tabernacle, 2 Chronicles 29:31 for offerings and Psalm 51:12, 14 for a constant ready devotion to Yahweh. In 1 Chronicles 28:21b the text refers to those who volunteer their craftsmanship for the construction of the temple (Conrad 1998:224).

magnanimity of character or a generosity of spirit. It describes a generous, willing and noble heart that was possessed by those who gave freely to the temple or tabernacle.[41] Thus, a willing spirit is open to God (Carpenter & Grisanti 1997:31). In all its occurrences, except in Numbers 21:18, נדב refers to a member of the upper class in a socially stratified society, such as developed during the course of the monarchy in Israel. Their social and economic superiority made acts of generosity possible and only reinforced a particular ideal of nobility (Conrad 1998:226).

The depiction of the aristocrat in the Hebrew Bible, however, does not always correspond to this ideal. An example is the book of Job that clearly expresses this contrast (Conrad 1998:225). The nobility can be depicted as opposed by God, as in Job 12:21 (Carpenter & Grisanti 1997:31-32). Still, nobles are merely human and, therefore, do not deserve full confidence. Concerning the nobles of the nations, Conrad (1998:225) writes that they are also subject to Yahweh's sovereignty, as can be clearly seen in Psalm 47:10 and that they will be destroyed if they are among Israel's enemies, as in Psalm 83:12. It is interesting that the Dead Sea scrolls (1QSb 3:27, 4 QM (4Q491)) depict the nobles as representatives of foreign nations who are made subject to or excluded from God's salvation (see also the quotation of Psalm 107:40 and Job 12:21 in 1Q25 1:7) (Conrad 1998:226). Conrad (1998:224) writes on מגני־ארץ that it probably refers to kings of the nations, as מלך appears as a parallel term to נדב in Job 34:18, Proverbs 8:15, and 25:6.

The homage of "the nobles of the nations" before the Judaic king on Zion would be a tribute to Yahweh (Keel 1997:268). It is ironic that in Psalm 47:10 the nobles or "honourable ones" of the nations are gathered together to praise the God of Israel, that is, to proclaim his world-wide honour (Botha 1998:24). Perhaps this is what makes these representatives noble in the first instance –

[41] According to Carpenter & Grisanti (1997:31): "The freewill offering was a major part of Israel's sacrificial system (Lev 7:16). At Israel's festive meals (Deut 16:10) freewill offerings … were presented. They are among the offerings of well-being … that Ezekiel envisioned as continuing in the new temple (Ezek 46:12). Vows that were made freely had to be carried out; they could not be rescinded (Lev 22:23). Freewill offerings could be given for no other reason than an expression of love for Yahweh, or they could be given to express thanks for deliverance (Ps 54:6[8]). The offering could be presented only at those sacred sites that Yahweh chose for his offerings (Deut 12:6-7)".

they realise they are subject to their conquerors and their God's will and so offer themselves freely to the inevitable instead of shaming their new-found patron and their God which would only result in retribution and revenge by Israel.

מגני־ארץ (THE SHIELDS OF THE EARTH, VERSE 10)

Longman (1997a:844) writes that apart from the literal meaning of "shield" the word מגן is also used metaphorically in the Bible to refer to God's protective power and that this metaphoric use of "shield" must also be understood in connection to theological motifs of holy war and that of a divine warrior. In a few cases a human king is called a shield to his people, as in Psalm 47:10.

Large shields were used by Assyrian shield-bearers to protect Assyrian soldiers. While men are fighting, they would have special shield-bearers holding the large shield, with the bottom resting on the ground to offer protection of the whole body for the battling warriors (Freeman 1996:135-136). Keel (1997:222) and Longman (1997a:845) point out that in Psalm 35:2 a supplicant asks of Yahweh to be his shield-bearer, and even though this is a subordinate position, it shows intimacy and trust that the supplicant experiences with Yahweh.[42] This image is probably based on a confidence motif that originally pertained to the king – it was an honour to be the king's shield, reflecting loyalty.

In Psalm 47 imagery appears to be turned on its head. Yahweh is honourable, that is why the leaders of the nations would wish to "protect" him – it is the only manner in which they can regain a measure of honour after suffering a humiliating defeat at the God of Israel's hands. It is important to note that the "nobles of the nations" are parallel to the "shields of the earth" in verse 10, indicating that this is the same group that God rules over, together with Israel. The blessing of Abraham, as promised in Genesis 12:3 by God, finds its fulfilment in that the whole world stands before God as Abraham's descendants (Anderson 1972:365; Delitzsch 1893:100; Weiser 1962:378). Here there is clear evidence of divine salvation and the *Heilsgeschichte*.[43] מגני־ארץ

[42] "To summon Yahweh as shield-bearer presupposes that intimacy which permits one to ask a friend to perform a lowly service without offending him. The frequent predication of Yahweh as the supplicant's shield bears testimony to a strong relationship of trust" (Keel 1997:222).

[43] Weiser (1962:378) notes that the prophets' prophecies of salvation (Isaiah 49:14; 56:6; 60:3; Zechariah 8:22) are surpassed as the nations become "the people of the

thus probably refers to the kings, princes or rulers of the nations (Conrad 1998:224). They, along with Israel, are the clients of the Universal Great King.

PATRONAGE AND CLIENTAGE IN PSALM 47

A notable characteristic of the morphology of Psalm 47 is that the person and gender of words and suffixes clearly refer to three distinct persons or groups, namely the nations ("you"),[44] God or Yahweh,[45] and Israel ("us" – the "in-group").[46] From this it can be deduced that what concerns the author of Psalm 47 is the relationship between the three role-players.

In Psalm 47 God functions as Israel's patron when he subdues nations (verse 4) and chooses Israel's inheritance (verse 5) for them. Israel responds to this act of grace by proclaiming God's honour and even compelling the nations to do so as well, for not only did God look after the interests of Israel, but he is also the creator, sustainer and king of the whole earth. It follows that all living

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God of Abraham."

[44] There is a preference for nouns in the absolute state masculine plural form to refer to the nations ("you") and imperative 2 masculine plural verbs to refer to the actions of the nations (or what they are exhorted to do). Muilenburg (1944:244) writes that the view that "all the nations/peoples" refers to the peoples of Palestine is contradicted by the content of the psalm. The writer of Psalm 47 also mentions three times (verses 3, 8 and 10) that the whole earth is the range of his vision.

[45] אלהים (God), יהוה (Yahweh), עליון (Almighty or Elyon) and מלך (king) are all used to refer to God. Perfect 3 masculine singular verbs are used to refer to the actions of God. God is mentioned a total of eleven times in Psalm 47. In eight instances אלהים is used and in two instances יהוה (Sabinga 1988:475).

[46] Israel ("us") is indicated by the use of first person plural suffixes. In verse 10 the members of the "in-group" are referred to as עם אברהם (nation of Abraham, masculine singular) and מגני (the shields of, masculine plural; all nations are now part of or "with" the nation of Israel). Israel is not referred to once as doing any specific action – the first person plural suffix does not appear attached to any verb. The assumption can be made that Israel exhorts the nations to praise God and that they also praise him, but this is not explicitly stated in the text itself. The fact that they speak of "our inheritance" which also seems to be "the glory of Jacob" is enough reason to view this group as Israel. Craigie (1983:347) states that "the peoples" in verse 2 refer to both Israel and foreign nations that are exhorted to praise God's kingship. From the above it is clear that there is a distinction to be made between Israel and the nations who are exhorted to praise.

beings are indebted to God (DeSilva 2000:126-127). This applies to Gentile and Jew, Israel and "the Nations" as the fact that God is praiseworthy reflects positively on Israel and God's honour.

God subdues the nations and chooses an inheritance because he promised to do so. It is God that initiated the covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12. Abraham responds to God's calling in trust and is given a promise that his offspring will possess a land of their own, they will become a great nation and through him and all the families of the earth will be blessed (Linington 2002:691-692; cf. Cross 1998:15-21). By keeping his word, God shows his favouritism for Israel, as he subdued nations for Israel, indicating that he won the battle against foreign nations and gods for them. He did not act in self-interest. The land of Canaan is portrayed as the inheritance of the whole Israel and is associated with God's promise to Israel's ancestors that they will enter into their own land to enjoy it. To live on the land, though, had implications and brought moral responsibilities. To stay on the inheritance of Jacob, they would have to obey and be loyal to the commands of the covenant. This was what Israel was indebted to their patron God for his un-repayable favours.

There are a number of nouns, verbs, prepositions, conjunctions and articles that occur often in Psalm 47. It is important to take note of the repetition of כל in כל־העמים (verse 2) and כל־ארץ (verse 3 and 8), which emphasises the universal theme in Psalm 47. The function of these verses is to give the reasons for the exhortations to praise God, namely that he is the Universal King (Prinsloo 1996:390-391). Another particle that often occurs in Psalm 47 is על in verse 3 and twice in verse 9. It corresponds to the use of עליון (verse 3), עלה (verse 6) and נעלה (verse 10). The repetition of the particle על and the verbal stem עלה also emphasises the theme of Yahweh as Universal King (Prinsloo 1996:391).

It is unclear whether the leaders of the nations come willingly to worship Yahweh in Psalm 47:10 or if they are captives of Israel. It is possible that they were foreign representatives present at the pilgrimage festival. There were times when foreigners were incorporated into Israel such as Canaan and later proselytes. When Israel conquered an enemy, that territory became a vassal to Israel and leaders of such nations would have been obliged to attend cultic festivals (Anderson 1972:365). Yahweh was believed to be the sovereign over all the nations and that he could restore Israel to their inheritance after the exile.

The irony in Psalm 47 is that these other nations now become part of the people of Abraham (verse 10). The Psalm takes on a universal character when all the nations are as Israel in God's eyes.[47]

As the patron of Israel, God is expected to act in a specific manner, namely by looking after Israel's interests. He does this by not only subjugating the nations under Israel's feet (verse 4), but it is also stated in Psalm 47:5 that he loves Jacob, which implies that he would look after Jacob's descendant's interests as well by supplying them with a land to live on and by protecting them from foreign threats.

CONCLUSION

The theme in Psalm 47 shifts from God coming from heaven to deliver his people to returning to his throne. Yahweh has made a place for his people amongst the nations and the nations are included as his people (Psalm 47:5, 10).

One can conclude that the author of Psalm 47 made use of imagery that was familiar to him from the Syro-Palestinian context. The semantic domains of patronage in Psalm 47 indicate that the reader is encountering war terminology

[47] There is a text-critical note on verse 10 which states that the Septuagint and the Peshitta read עם עם (*'im 'am*) "with the people," instead of the Masoretic text עם (*'am*) "people," influencing the reading as "with (as?) the people of the God of Abraham." The assumption is made that עם (*'im*) was accidentally omitted by copyists due to haplography. The omission of עם (*'im*) drastically influences the meaning of the text, whether the nobles of the nations are to be considered part of the people of the God of Abraham or not. For the purpose of this study the explanation of the omission of a עמ is considered to be correct and the variant reading on verse 10 is preferred (cf. Anderson 1972:366; Buttenwieser 1938:353; Duhm 1899:134; Prinsloo 1996:396; Van der Ploeg 1973:293-294). Schneider (1995:310) prefers the vocalisation *'im* above the Masoretic vocalisation indicting the nations. The translation he proposes then reads "bei dem Gott Abrahams." But what is important here is that for the first time in the psalm there is no longer a distinction between "we" and "the nations" (cf. Bratcher & Reyburn 1991:440; Briggs & Briggs 1969:400; Conrad 1998:224; Delitzsch 1893:100; Duhm 1899:134; Du Preez 1997:315-316; Gunkel 1986:203; Hossfeld & Zenger 1993:291; Kraus 1966:348; Muilenburg 1944:242-243, 248; Prinsloo 1996:396; Ridderbos 1958:58; Roberts 2002:267, 270; Schaper 1994:262-263; Terrien 2003:378; Van der Ploeg 1973:293-294).

where Yahweh is depicted as warrior, or at least as a conqueror who acts on the behalf of Israel, and as universal patron.

It appears as though a universalistic perspective developed either during or after the Babylonian exile which caused the Israelites or Hebrews to have greater tolerance for cultural diversity. It is possible that Israel was not so estranged and separated from her neighbours as was traditionally believed, but had a much closer relationship which took on the form of patronage between them. Because of this patron-client relationship between Israel and the nations, the nations also became the clients of God.

Universalism is a prominent theme in Psalm 47. The nations are exhorted by Israel to praise God for the mighty deeds that he has done for his people. The content of Psalm 47 indicates that the nations become part of the nation of the God of Abraham and that the shields of the earth (princes or kings of the nations) belong to God (verse 10). The reference to Abraham recalls the covenant instituted by God and his promise to Abraham of many descendants amongst the nations in Genesis 12. The separation between Israel and the nations are being transcended when the nations are to be treated as Israel. The relationship between Israel and the nations takes on the form of patronage, as well as the nations' relationship with God. This study has shown that a patron/client relationship is also a covenant relationship. Through their assimilation into Israel, the nations are also subject to the same covenant with God. This study also indicates that, according to Psalm 47, God's rule resonates on all planes of existence, as he rules over all the earth, namely Israel and the nations, from his heavenly throne.

To praise God is an indication of being voluntarily subject to him and accepting his rule over oneself. The call by Israel to the nations for them to praise him thus reinforces the notion of their subjugation and willing subjection to him. To be gathered in the presence of God implies being where he is physically present, namely the holy mountain, holy city or the temple. This in turn implies that the nations will be able to move into the territory of Israel which would normally be forbidden as they risk profaning the holy sphere of where God rules and lives. It is clear that if the nations are considered as part of Israel and if God rules over all the earth that God's rule knows no boundaries and that physical and ideological boundaries are crossed.

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