

The Royal Psalms

INTRODUCTION

There are a number of psalms that have been grouped together by form criticism, not because they share any single literary structure but because they share a common motif--the king. The role of the king was supremely important in ancient Israel, as it was in all the ancient Near East. The monarch had the power to direct the destiny of the nation for good or for evil. In many instances he was considered to be the representative of the nation. It is not surprising, then, to discover a number of psalms written for the most important events in the king's experience.

Gunkel designated this group of psalms as "Royal Psalms." We must be careful not to broaden the type to include any psalms with references to kingship imagery, for the common individual would often use such terminology. This group of psalms includes only those passages written for some momentous occasion in the life of the king, occasions such as his coronation, his wedding, the charter by which he would rule, or his greatest military campaigns.

KINGSHIP AND THE PSALMS

Kingship was always a part of God's plan for His people, in spite of how it developed historically. The oracle to the patriarch included kings in the promise of the seed (Gen. 17:16). The patriarch Jacob specified from his oracle of tribal sayings that the scepter would not depart from Judah until the one comes "whose it is" (*shiloh* [*sheh* + *l* + *oh*, "who to him"]), a passage to which the Targumist added the clarification "King Messiah" (Gen. 49:8-12). The Law included legislation for the king not to multiply wives or horses (Deut. 17:14-20). Balaam, the pagan diviner, foresaw Israel's king from the steppes of Moab (Num. 24:7; 24:17-19). Hannah's song also announced such a concept of the LORD's king being victorious (1 Sam. 2:10). So one may conclude from these passages as well as the historical narratives of Samuel that it was God's intention that the administration of his theocracy would

be through a king.

But this king had to be installed by the LORD Himself, not through palace intrigue or usurpation. In order for the king to rule legitimately in Jerusalem, several qualifications had to be met. First, he had to be *electd by the LORD*. To David God said, “I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel” (2 Sam. 7:8). One need only recall how the prophet went to the house of Jesse and asked for this youngest of the sons. When the covenant was made with David (2 Sam. 7:5-16), that ensured that every Davidic king was elected. When the kingdom split, the northern kings in the new kingdom of Israel that were set up by God ruled legitimately; the others did not. In Jerusalem, the Davidic covenant legitimized every monarch who was a descendant of David.

The king was *anointed by the LORD’s prophet*, hence, *mashiakh* (pronounced *mah-she-ack*, “messiah”), the “anointed” one. This act of anointing was the outward sign of the election. The symbolic act was drawn from the ancient custom of anointing guests as a sign of welcome hospitality. If the LORD anointed a prophet, a priest, or a king, it was a sign of special relationship between Him and the chosen administrator of the covenant. Often the anointing conferred power so that the monarch could exercise authority in office. Power, or charisma, came with the Spirit which came upon the person (see 1 Sam. 16:13, 14). This power from on high was essentially divine enablement for the administration of the covenant.

When kings ascended the throne in the ancient world they assumed honorific titles that expressed their special relationship to God and the aspirations for their administration. While this custom was not widespread in Israel (except see the articles on David and Solomon by J. J. Stamm, in *VT Supplement 7* [1960]:165-183; and *ThZ 16* [1960]:285-297; the article on the throne-names of the Messiah in Isaiah 9 by H. Wildberger, *TZ 16* [1960]:314-332; and the general article on the evidence for regnal names in Israel by A. M. Honeyman, *JBL 67* [1948]:13-25), titles were used to designate the special standing of the individual. In the last words of David there seem to be several designations used, although they are not all royal: “The oracle of David, the son of Jesse, the oracle of the man exalted by the Most High, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, Israel’s singer of songs” (2 Sam. 23:1).

The greatest title for Israel’s king was “son.” In the Davidic Covenant the LORD promised this perpetually to David’s seed: “When your days are over and you

rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father and **he will be my son**. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever” (2 Sam. 7:12-16). The title of the king was then God’s “Son,” a designation that is used in the Royal Psalms, the prophecy of Daniel, and the New Testament identification of Jesus as the king--the Messiah.

To be God’s “Son” in Israel, however, was not to be divine. That should be clear from the fact that this king was designated as the son--it was a title imposed on him when he was crowned (cf. Ps. 2:7). Moreover, this one who would bear the title would be disciplined by the LORD should he go astray--and the history of Israel bears this out. No, such a king was only called the firstborn (Ps. 89:28), “adopted” as the son for the sake of ruling over the theocracy as the heir of the kingdom (Ps. 2:8). He was not, as the pagan monarchs claimed for themselves, divine. The term *’elohim*, “God,” could be applied to the human king (Ps. 45), as well as to judges (Ps. 82) or other human administrators (Moses in Exod. 7:1), but only in the sense that the king was God’s representative. For further discussion on the subject, see Ivan Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*; A. R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*; Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*; and J. H. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*.

The fact that the king could be disciplined by the LORD meant that he was under Torah--he had to obey the Law. Therefore, he would be known as the Servant of the LORD, *par excellence*. “The servant of Yahweh” is the highest title a human may have. Moses had it, so did Hezekiah, and even the promised Messiah himself. Paul simply substituted the name, and identified himself as the “servant of Jesus Christ.” For the king to be a servant of the LORD meant that the monarchy was a theocracy, administered through a king who was subject to Torah and prophetic word (cf. Ps. 18: 1; 89:4, 21: and 144: 10). The sad history of the nation reveals that while many of the kings could rule others effectively, they could not rule themselves as obedient servants under the LORD (cf. 2 Sam. 12:7-10).

But if the king was merely God’s representative on earth, it also meant that the

peace and prosperity of the nation was effected by the LORD and not by the king (see Ps. 144, especially verse 15). God keeps His own covenant promises, even if He must discipline. Thus, the promise of a sure dynasty is secure, and the promise of peace and prosperity remains for the king who is obedient to the LORD.

Because the idea of kingship was central to the theocracy and totally bound to the well-being of the nation, it is not surprising that many psalms are written for major events in the life of God's designated "Son." Moreover, since David, with whom the covenant was cut, was himself a psalmist, it is only natural that royal psalms exist.

These Royal Psalms would have been appropriate to any "messiah," i.e., any anointed king in Israel, and were probably used on many occasions. The main psalms classified as Royal Psalms are as follows:

Psalm 2	The Coronation of the Son and the Certainty of His Dominion
Psalm 18.	The King's Song of Victory in Battle
Psalm 20	A Prayer of the King for Victory in Battle
Psalm 21	A Praise of the King for Victory in Battle
Psalm 45	The Wedding of the Victorious King
Psalm 72	The Righteous and Prosperous Dominion of the King
Psalm 89	The Davidic Covenant Assured in Adversity
Psalm 101	The Charter by which the King Rules
Psalm 110	The Establishment of the Kingdom by Holy War
Psalm 144	The Establishment of Peace and Prosperity by the King's Victory

Other psalms may contain royal motifs, but these are the established Royal Psalms in which the office, character, or activity of the king is central.

MESSIANIC INTERPRETATIONS OF THE PSALMS

One can see in reading through these psalms that there are many texts that are relevant for Christology. This raises the question of the so-called "Messianic" interpretation of the psalms, not only the Royal Psalms but many other relevant passages as well.

Franz Delitzsch in his commentary on the Psalms provided an early distinction in the types of Messianic psalms, or Messianic elements in the psalms:

1. Typically Messianic Psalms

In this type, the subject of the psalm is in some way a type of Jesus Christ. The truths concerning the psalmist find ultimate fulfillment in Him. For example, see Psalm 34:20.

2. Typico-prophetically Messianic Psalms

The psalmist uses language to describe his present experience, but that language goes beyond his own experience, and becomes historically true only in the Lord Jesus Christ. E.g., see Psalm 22.

3. Indirectly Messianic Psalm

These are the psalms which at the time of composition had reference to a contemporary king or to the house of David in general, but await their final fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ, the greater David. These are the Royal Psalms, such as Psalms 2, 45, and 72 and others.

4. Purely Prophetic Psalms

The psalm refers solely to the LORD Jesus Christ without reference to any other son of David. Psalm 110 is the only one that could fit in this category; even then, however, the psalm had to have had some meaning for the ancient congregation.

5. Eschatologically Yahwistic Psalms

These psalms refer to the coming of the LORD and the consummation of His kingdom. They will find their ultimate fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ. Psalms 96-99, the so-called “Enthronement Psalms” (to be studied later), fit in this section.

These classifications of Delitzsch will serve to direct our thinking in terms of Messianic interpretations in the Royal Psalms, the Enthronement Psalms, or in any

of the other psalms that are referred to in the New Testament as speaking of Jesus the Messiah in some way. However, biblical Messianism is incredibly complex. One cannot simply ignore the progressive revelation about the Messiah in an attempt to identify Jesus in the Old Testament, meaning, jump past any Old Testament meaning to the New Testament application or fulfillment. It sounds pious to make Jesus Christ the center of the study of the psalms; but it ignores the question of the historical use of these passages for centuries. The task of the exegete is to determine the historical, contextual, grammatical meaning of the passage, and then, if some use of that passage is made in the New Testament, the exegete must seek to understand how the Old lends itself to the New. Jesus will eventually be the focus as we complete the study of how God brought all revelation to a fulfillment in His Son. But our understanding will be richer when we understand the contexts of these passages.

Delitzsch's categories, with modifications, are workable for Messianic elements in the psalms; so I will draw on them to construct a simpler approach below.

In order to establish such guidelines, we need to survey how the Lord and His Apostles used and applied the Psalms. It should come as no surprise that their approaches fit what we know of standard Jewish hermeneutics of the first century.

THE USE OF THE PSALMS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT¹

There are times that the writers of the New Testament use a direct prophecy to show fulfillment in Christ, and with this we have no difficulty. But there are also times when they use Old Testament passages that do not readily suggest the usage they are given. There is no simple answer to the relationship of the Testaments, because the problem is varied. A survey of the hermeneutical possibilities may help the analysis.

Presupposition of Scripture

¹ The various works on the psalms have lists of these which will save you time in compiling them. Sabourin has a fairly good list (be careful to get the right chapter and verse because the numbering is different).

Any use of the Hebrew Scriptures by later writers, especially the New Testament writers, is based on the presupposition that the literature of ancient Israel has far-reaching theological significance. It was not just written for them in their day; it was written for us as well. The biblical hermeneutists all saw that the record of God's dealings through His people was constantly moving forward from promise to promise. This can easily be illustrated, but our Lord's use of Isaiah in speaking to His audience is a good example: "Well did Isaiah speak of you." Obviously, Isaiah spoke to his audience--but what he said is certainly meant for Jesus' audience as well, as also for ours.

The apostles saw that the Old Testament in general was the history of the promise which was being fulfilled through and in Christ--but even the advent of Christ brought the promise of a new fulfillment, another advent. Many prophecies were seen in a new and clearer light. But many scriptures of non-prophetic substance also seemed to carry a new significance in the light of the coming of Christ. In fact, it was Jesus himself who inspired such hermeneutics on the road to Emmaus. All such interpretations of the Bible reveal an understanding of the process of development and fulfillment of the promises of God. I suggest the following categories.

Categories of Usage

1. Direct Prophecy. Prophecy is clearly displayed in linear history and provides an explicit statement of what shall be in the last days, the so-called eschaton. It may be expressed in prophetic oracle (the most frequent), or in dreams and visions. In the Psalter directly prophetic material is greatly limited; it would include Psalm 110 (Delitzsch's "Purely Prophetic") for sure. It may also include the Enthronement Psalms (Delitzsch's "Eschatologically Yahwistic") if they are interpreted to reflect future event only. I would probably say, however, that in both these cases there would have been some historical event which was a fulfillment of sorts--what we call the "near fulfillment," which did not exhaust the fulfillment, and that at the end of the age the "far fulfillment," the actual literal and complete fulfillment will be realized. This is often how prophecy works. But since the Enthronement Psalms do not indicate clearly they are for a future fulfillment, I would move them to the next category. Psalm 110 may be considered prophetic since its contents could not be fulfilled in David's time. It had to be future as long as there were Levitical High

Priests.

Prophetic announcements must be interpreted carefully, especially if there is no explicit statement in later Scripture of their fulfillment. This is not the case with the psalms in question. But one must be careful to recognize that even if a passage is directly prophetic in nature, it still carries some meaning to the original, immediate audience. But for a passage to be classified as direct prophecy, it has to indicate in some way that there is a future fulfillment (e.g., “It shall be in that day” or “And in the latter days” or the like). The category, obviously, will apply more in the books of the prophets. What often happens is that when the oracle is delivered it is clear that there is a future fulfillment. But the message may have a near fulfillment first which will encourage and draw faith from the people (or it may not have a near fulfillment. The near fulfillment then becomes a “Type” of the future and greater fulfillment.

2. Typology. There is hardly any hermeneutical principle applied more freely by Bible students today than typology. But if it is a hermeneutical principle, then we must be able to write some description of it and certain guidelines to follow. If we cannot, then as von Rad says, we are not dealing with a principle that can be controlled, but with one that cannot be taught, cannot be learned, cannot be checked by any academic assessment--all of which means it is not a hermeneutical principle at all (“Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament,” s.v., Westermann, *Essays* . . .).

One of the best defining descriptions of typology I have come across is by Barbara Lewalski in *Protestant Poetics*:

Typology . . . [is] a mode of signification in which both type and antitype are historically real entities with independent meaning and validity, forming patterns of prefiguration, recapitulation, and fulfillment by reason of God’s providential control of history. In precise terms, typology pertains to Old Testament events, personages, ceremonies, and objects seen to foreshadow and to be fulfilled, *forma perfectior*, in Christ and the New Dispensation (p. 111).²

² The word “dispensation” is a biblical word; it is used in the bible to describe an age in which God administers his program with his people in a specific way. All Christians agree that there are at least two major dispensations in the Bible, the old covenant and the new covenant. In

Typology and prophecy accomplish the same thing but from different means. Prophecy is explicitly stated in linear history, but typology looks back to the events and discerns that the New was already in the Old implicitly. Typology identifies the correspondences between type and antitype within the historical framework of God's revelation. Thus, it is based on the sovereignty of God over history and revelation. But it must be remembered that typology is a form of prophecy--it is indirect prophecy--because it is divinely intended. It is not merely an interpretation contrived by New Testament writers.

Typology must also be distinguished from archetypal symbols. A pure type has one antitype; an archetype has many. For example, Christ is the passover, according to Paul. There are no more "fulfillments" to come. What Paul is saying is that when God instructed Israel about the passover, He did it with the Passover in mind. Now that Christ has come, we can look back and see the correspondence and identify the old as a type. The old does not lose its meaning in the exposition of that passage in its context, but it is incomplete without the (now revealed) fulfillment. Cain, on the other hand, is an archetype. He is held up as the paradigm of hatred for the brother. There is no one "fulfillment" of Cain *per se*; but every individual who hates his brother is a murderer like Cain, John tells us. Archetypal symbols and events seem to fit better in the next category, the analogical application.

In identifying typology you will have to decide on what criteria you will follow consistently. I take the view that there must be some exegetically derived evidence, some communication from a writer of Scripture, that something in the text was a type. This is not to say that it must be called a "type" in the New Testament, or that the "fulfilled" formula must be present (such as, "this was said that the Scripture might be fulfilled . . ."). That might be there. But I look for specific literary allusions or references to the item(s) and a subsequent theological implication derived from them. This is not limited to the New Testament; even within the Old the writers clearly and deliberately used earlier texts this way. E.g., in Genesis 12:10-20 the narrative of Abram's deliverance from Egypt by plagues is typological of the Exodus (see Cassuto, *Commentary on Genesis: From Noah to Abraham*).

the new God's people no longer fight holy wars against Canaanites, bring animals to sacrifice in the services, have a hereditary priesthood, etc. etc. The word dispensationalist, often criticized without understanding, simply describes one who takes the distinctions between ages into consideration when interpreting the Bible. It refers to a hermeneutical approach; it is not a theology.

Ultimately, the greatest typology finds its fulfillment in the New Testament. But the types do not lose their importance as part of revelation, after the greater antitype appears, by fading into mere shadows and schemes as the course of time extends beyond them; they become part of the eschatological proclamation while keeping their contextual significance.

Because typology and prophecy are so closely related, the New Testament writers could use the same formulae to introduce both. “That it might be fulfilled” or “spoke of the Christ” or any similar expression cannot be limited to the fulfillment of prophecy. Rather, it may be used also for a typological use of the Old in which the fullest sense is developed (cf. S. Lewis Johnson, *The Use of the Old in the New*, pp. 66ff.).

The Psalms contain typological material that finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. This is especially true of the Royal Psalms, but also applies to others. Delitzsch’s “Indirect Messianic” and “Typico-prophetically Messianic” classifications employ typology. The Royal Psalms, Psalm 2 for example, describe events in the lives of Davidic kings. Because Jesus is a Davidic king, those psalms are applicable to Him as well--but in a way that was never possible to the ancient kings. Thus, the New Testament writers draw on Psalm 2, 45, and 110 for the “full” meaning. They will look for no other Davidic king to whom these passages refer. Psalm 22 is classified as the “Typico-prophetically Messianic Psalm”; whether there is another that fits this type is questionable. The language of the psalm is lavish, but becomes historically true in Jesus Christ. Many times the New Testament writers drew on this passage to show its ultimate meaning ended with Christ’s death and resurrection.

Delitzsch’s other category, “Typically Messianic Psalms,” does not seem to me to belong to the category of typology, even though the samples do find correspondence with Christ’s experience. Psalm 34:20 is given as a sample. This verse, however, seems to me to be capable of a broader usage since it comes in a section of confidence. The expression is applicable to Christ for certain, but also to others. So I use a third category as well.

3. Analogical Application, or “Midrash.” In many places the New Testament seems to be using the Old a little more freely, not as prophecy and not as

typology, but as a broader application of the text. Here I would put the archetypal material, as well as the general truths of the Scripture that find certain applications in the experiences in the New Testament. E.g., in Acts 1:20 we read:

“For,” said Peter, “it is written in the book of Psalms,
 ‘May his place be deserted;
 Let there be no one to dwell in it.’
 and,
 ‘May another take his place of leadership’.”

The passages used by Peter to promote the necessity of replacing Judas are Psalm 69:25 and Psalm 109:8. They are imprecations in the psalms; they are appropriate to the one who brought a curse on himself by betraying Jesus. Because there is such a close analogy, they are applicable.

The New Testament writers were versed in the Bible. They knew it well and lived by it. “Analogical applications” to life were consistently made by the Jewish people down through the ages (as with the Church later).

It is at this point that I find a great deal of help from studying Rabbinic hermeneutics, notably the *midrash*. Many evangelicals recoil from this because of apparent excesses in the *midrashic* literature, or because modern writers have used “*Midrash*” as a foil for redaction criticism (i.e., to say the story was made up). But misuse and excesses do not make a method invalid (or we would have to repudiate exposition). Addison Wright has an excellent discussion on some of the predominant types of *midrash* in his article in *CBQ* 28 (1966). In it he demonstrates that the Rabbis understood Scripture on two levels: the *p^eshat* (“simple”) and the *d^erash* (“derived and applied”). The first was the simple, plain, literal sense of the passage. It was seldom brought up in their discussions, unless it supported *Torah*, because it was obvious to all who read it.

The *d^erash* (hence: *midrash*) appears to be creative exposition. The *p^eshat* of Scripture was the point of departure. The *d^erash* was the use made of the text for religious purposes. It was the exposition and application of the text for current use. It was a homily, seeking the hidden, religious meaning, making the Bible come alive. It corresponds to the *peshet* of Qumran and the Talmudic tradition, although the *peshet* is more limited.

The fact that the *peshat* was never in question can be seen from Qumran's "Habakkuk Commentary" in which the text of the prophet is given and then the *peshet* [. . . *peshet* 'al, "The meaning of . . ."]. At one place the text mentions that the Babylonians will invade; the commentary says this is the Romans, i.e., the Romans were their Babylonians. But the reference to the Babylonians and the explanation as the Romans are there on the scroll, side-by-side. The commentator is making an analogy and thereby an application.

In the same way if Paul is speaking about not muzzling an ox, or about circumcision of the heart, the literal understanding of the laws in the Old Testament have not been negated. An analogical application has been drawn. In a sense we do the same thing when we use the Bible (even an epistle) in exposition. Biblical verses or passages are applied based on analogy. The Rabbis did it. The New Testament writers did it too.

Naturally, excesses are present in Rabbinic *midrash*. In fact, I tend to avoid calling the New Testament usages of the Old that correspond to *midrash*, "*midrash*," because most people do not know what it is, and those who do may not know what kind of *midrash* I mean. But it seems to me that there are many places where the New Testament makes a spiritual point by analogy to some Old Testament passage in an expositional form--under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They were, after all, expounding the Old Testament regularly.

Some expositors would list this category of analogical application as a part of typology, making typology a very broad category. But I would keep it as a separate category for those uses of the Old Testament that are not restricted to an antetype and those passages in the Old that are not to be called direct prophecy.

The safeguard in interpreting such passages is rather straightforward: study the Old Testament passage in its historical context first, and then see how the New Testament used it. If you employ the New Testament too soon, you shall run the risk of reading into the Old the idea of the New. Do not misunderstand; you must use the New Testament in exegesis when it uses the Old Testament (directly or indirectly), but you must use it correctly. For example, many people have used Psalm 2:7 as a proof-text of the "eternal generation" of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (meaning, that He was eternally the Son). A careful exegesis of the psalm will show it to be a coronation psalm for a (every and any) Davidic king. Once this is clearly understood,

then the New Testament usage can be traced. Hebrews 1 correctly takes the typology to the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of the Majesty on High where he awaits His inheritance at the second coming (when He again brings him into the world). Other passages in the Bible clearly teach the eternal “sonship” of Jesus the Messiah, but Psalm 2 is distinctly a coronation psalm.

Samples of Usage in the New Testament

Hosea 1:1 and Matthew 2:15. Hosea describes the nation of Israel being delivered out of Egypt: “When Israel was a youth, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.” Matthew applies this passage to the return from Egypt of Jesus when a youth: “that it might be fulfilled . . . ‘Out of Egypt I called my son’.”

The word involved is “son.” The contexts are similar: oppression from Gentile and pagan rulers, calling, and deliverance out of Egypt. But “son” in the OT refers to the nation, and in the NT to Jesus. It should be noted that both uses of the word “son” are within the semantic range of the word. “Son” may refer to: 1) literal descendant; 2) grandson or great grandson, etc.; 3) dependent nation (as in genealogies); 4) title of kingship. Hosea clearly has in mind the nation; various attempts to show that he had Messiah in mind have been contrived and unconvincing. Matthew turns the expression and uses it for Jesus’ coming out of Egypt. This, Matthew says, is the fullest sense of the words, the most significant for us. Matthew was not denying the literal Exodus of Israel from bondage in Hosea; but he sees a greater use of the words, a use which corresponds in all areas. I would classify this usage as typology because the antitype is specifically Jesus Christ. This is in harmony with other passages where Jesus Christ becomes the antitype of things pertaining to Israel as a nation, the seed.

What makes this even more compelling is that Matthew is presenting Jesus as the promised Seed, the true Israel. And so a passage that is about the nation of Israel, the seen of Abraham, will be of great significance to Matthew’s argument, especially when the events correspond so clearly. This, to Matthew, cannot be fortuitous.

Exodus 34:29-35 and 2 Corinthians 3:12-18. This use of the Old Testament fits the analogical application category very well. What is so interesting is that it comes in a passage in which Paul is explaining that the Jews do not understand the

Scriptures when they are read. Since he uses a midrashic hermeneutic to argue his case, the point must be that the content and not the method is what the Jews did not understand.

In this passage Paul contrasts the old covenant with the new, the spirit of the law with the letter of the law. The old covenant had great glory--the evidence coming from Moses' shining face. By a Rabbinic argument (known as *qal wahomer*, what is true of the lesser is certainly true of the greater), the glory of the new covenant is greater. But Paul then applies the Exodus passage in a different way, for the text also says that Moses covered his face with a veil. This motif is brought forward: Moses appeared with a veil, but Paul without (i.e., bold). As there lay a veil upon Moses' face when he spoke with the people, so there is still a veil upon the people when the books of Moses are read. This veil is only done away with when they turn to Christ. Only when the Jew comes to faith in Christ can he understand the Scripture as he should. Paul keeps the motif of the veil; but specifies that Scripture speaks clearly of Christ and His glorious covenant, only the Jews cannot see it because there is a veil on his heart. When he turns to the Lord (=Jesus), then he will come to see that Moses spoke of Christ. Paul is saying that the Jew does not read Scripture in the right way, i.e., he refuses to turn to Christ in faith, and so lacks the Spirit.

Paul's argument is *midrashic*. According to verse 16 he says, "But whensoever one **turns** to the Lord, the veil is taken away." This is taken from Exodus 34:34 which says, "When Moses **returned** to the LORD to speak with Him, he took off the veil." Paul leaves out the last part of the verse that has no use here, and interprets figuratively. Thus, the verse in Exodus contains all the parts necessary for an applicational analogy: "At the returning (**turning**) to the Lord he will remove the veil." He does not at all deny that Moses had a veil on his face and removed it when he ascended. The literal meaning is taken for granted. Paul's concern is an analogy. His analogy is built on two contexts that correspond very well--the hard hearts of the hearers and the veiling of the glory. By using the familiar story and playing with the words Paul makes a pointed lesson.

SAMPLES OF ROYAL PSALMS

We now turn to the discussion of the Royal Psalms which prompted the discussion of Messianic and New Testament use of the material. On the following pages there are a few sample syntheses of the Royal Psalms that are most clearly Typological or Prophetic. The discussion on the Enthronement Psalms to follow will supply a few more that have great bearing on eschatology. Much more can be and should be done on this topic, but not in these introductory notes.

Psalm 45: A Royal Psalm: The Wedding of the King

Message:

After praising the royal bridegroom for all his splendor, majesty and righteousness, the psalmist counsels the new bride on attaining favor with the king, her Lord, before she is brought into the palace in all her glory, predicting universal and eternal remembrance of the king through the progeny.

Structure:

- I. The psalmist praises the royal bridegroom on his wedding day (1-9).
 - A. He expresses the descriptive character of his song (1).
 1. This hymn is a song of love to the king.
 2. This hymn is inspirational--to contain it is impossible.
 - B. He praises the person of the king (2-9).
 1. The king is transcendent and excellent in person (2).
 2. The king is a mighty man of valor (3-5).
 3. The king is righteous in his administration (6-7).
 4. The king is joyfully blessed on his wedding day (8-9).
- II. The psalmist charges the bride on attaining the proper relationship before she

is conducted to the palace (10-15).

- A. The prophet charges her to forget her own people and concentrate her homage and affections on her new lord (10-12).
 - 1. He enforces the commission (10).
 - 2. He instructs her to do homage to her lord, forsaking her family (11).
 - 3. He foretells the far-reaching blessings if she obeys (12).

- B. The psalmist describes the queen in her glorious apparel as she is conducted to the palace (13-15).
 - 1. The train of the bride is glorious (13-14).
 - 2. The procession takes her through the chambers to the king (15).

III. The psalmist pronounces the benediction (16-17).

- A. He predicts the prosperity of the marriage (16).
 - 1. The children will replace the ancestors.
 - 2. The children will be the princes of the land.

- B. He predicts universal and everlasting remembrance and acknowledgment of this king (17).

Typology:

Revelation 19 draws the main elements of this psalm into focus for the marriage of the Lamb. The text states that the bride was instructed to clothe herself in righteousness for this union with the victorious king. Hebrews quotes the description of the king (“Your throne, O God . . .”) in declaring Jesus Christ to be the exalted King of Kings. Thus, what must have enchanted many royal weddings becomes a major theological type of the Marriage of the King of Kings, that mystical union of the Lord with His saints.

Psalm 110: A Royal Psalm: The Conquest of the King

Message:

After receiving an oracle of the exaltation of his Lord, David describes the holy army of this King as He comes to do battle with all nations.

Structure:

- I. David receives an oracle of the heavenly conversation over the exaltation of his Lord by the LORD (1-2).
 - A. Present View: David's Lord is seated at the LORD's right hand until the rebellious nations are subdued under his rule (1).
 - B. Future View: The LORD will send this Messiah to rule (2).

- II. David describes the holy army of the King who will come suddenly to conquer (3-4).
 - A. The army of this Messiah will be willingly offering themselves in holy array for the appearance to battle (3).
 1. His people offer themselves spontaneously.
 2. His people are clothed in holiness.
 3. His people are as fresh as the dew of the morning.
 - B. The army of this Messiah will have the provision of an eternal high priest (4).
 1. Messiah will be a priest after the order of Melchizedek (and thus provide their holiness for battle).
 2. This priesthood comes by the oath of the LORD.

- III. David describes the victorious battle at his coming (5-7).
 - A. The victory will be won through the power of the LORD at Messiah's right hand (5).

- B. The victory will enable Messiah to judge all nations in great power (6).
- C. The battle will require refreshing sustenance along the way (7).

Prophecy:

Jesus uses this passage to show that David's descendant, the Messiah, is David's Lord. The psalm recognizes a greater "Messiah" than David exalted at the right hand of the LORD (see the literature for possible use at the Enthronement festival). Hebrews uses this psalm to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of prophecy that unites the offices of King and Priest (Zechariah), and that the Melchizedekian priesthood is superior to the Aaronic. The prophetic fulfillment of the psalm would then be the second coming in glory and the subjugation of all things under His feet. This is the way the New Testament explains the oracles.

Psalm 144: A Royal Psalm: Peace and Prosperity from the Conquest

Message:

Understanding how gracious and righteous the LORD is, David praises Him for his mighty acts which are passed from one generation to another, for his glorious everlasting kingdom which will be praised, and for the manner in which He responds to those who love Him.

Structure:

- I. David vows to praise the LORD everyday because of His mighty and marvelous acts which one generation lauds to another (1-7).
 - A. He will praise the LORD everyday because He is great (1-3).
 - 1. He will bless and extol God his King (1).
 - 2. He will praise Him everyday (2).
 - 3. The LORD is great and His greatness unsearchable (3).
 - B. The nation praises the LORD's marvelous acts, passing from one

generation to another (4-7).

1. Men shall speak of His power and glory (11-12).
2. Men shall praise Him for His everlasting kingdom of power and glory (13).

C. He instructs how the LORD is gracious and merciful to people (14-16):

1. The LORD upholds those that wait but fall (14).
2. The LORD gives food (15).
3. The LORD satisfies their desires (16).

III. David extolls the LORD as being righteous and gracious and then praises him for the way He responds to man (17-21).

- A. The LORD is righteous
- B. The LORD is righteous and gracious (17).
- C. The LORD will respond to those in need and deliver (18-20).
- D. All flesh should praise and bless His name (21).

