Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary 23 (2022): 3–31

What is Man? Holiness and the Holy One in the Psalter: A Case Study of Book I of the Psalter

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Abstract

This article addresses the role of anthropological terminology in Book I of the Psalter in designating the identity of God's covenantal people in relation to holiness. In the Psalter, anthropological designations are made in reference to the human body. Those designations are often depicted in relation to moral life and what it means to be in covenant relationship with God as His creation.

Discussion of God's attribute of love (e.g., *ḥesed*) clarifies the nature of holiness addressed in Ps 3–41 (Book I). Also, this article grapples with how this divine attribute plays an important role in Book I of the Psalter seen in its structural the micro-syntactical and macro-structural level of expression.

Keywords: lovingkindness (*ḥesed*), *holiness, anthropology, psalm, covenant*

1. Introduction

The subject of holiness in the Psalter represents a medley of ethical, doxological, and social declarations, imperatives, and values.[1] The voice of the Psalter describes humanity in multiple spheres of life, which can be

[1] Daniel C. Owen, *Portraits of the Righteous in the Psalms: An Exploration of the Ethics of Book I* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013); Gordon Wenham, *Psalms as Torah: Reading Biblical Song Ethically*, Studies in Theological Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012).

summed up as holiness. The familiar refrain, "What is man?" in Ps 8, evokes the difficulty of describing humanity in all its complexity. The intersection of moral, ritual, and communal life in the Psalter also raises the question of what it means to be human in juxtaposition to what it means to be holy.[2]

Given that many references to holiness in the Psalter modify God's name,[3] His dwelling,[4] His person,[5] His presence,[6] and other aspects of His work in human life,[7] the topic cannot be delimited solely to humanistic interests; it is suprasensible.[8] This perspective has given rise to a burgeoning field of study called "theological anthropology."[9] Marc Cortez notes that theological anthropology is a "theological reflection on the human person … as they actually exist in the world."[10] Within this perspective, the scope of holiness is relational, that is, covenantal (the covenanted-creation), representative of the *imago Dei* in conjunction with the person and work of God. Identity is not subsumed solely under biological, psychological, sociological, or economic designations[11] but is dealt with in the context of humanity's

[2] Robert D. Bell, *Theological Themes of Psalms: The Theology of the Book of Psalms* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018), 69–77; J. Prescott Johnson, "The Beauty of Holiness," *ATJ* 52.2 (1997): 5–15; John P. Peters, "The Hebrew Idea of Holiness," *The Biblical World* 14.5 (1899): 344–55.

[3] Pss 30:4; 33:21; 97:12; 103:1; 105:3; 106:47; 111:9; 145:21. Versification will follow *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (*BHS*) unless otherwise indicated.

[4] References here include the tent, tabernacle, Temple on earth, and the heavenly Temple: Pss 2:6; 3:4; 5:7; 11:4; 15:1; 20:6 (heaven); 24:3 (place); 43:3; 46:4; 47:8 (throne); 48:1; 65:4; 68:5; 78:54 (land); 79:1; 87:1; 93:5; 99:9 (mountain); 102:19; 134:2; 138:2. Ps 28:2 uses "inner sanctuary/holy of holies" (Heb. *dəbîr*) to refer to God's holy dwelling.

[5] Pss 22:3; 29:2; 71:22; 78:41; 89:18, 35; 96:9; 99:3, 5, 9.

[6] Ps 51:11.

[7] For example, see Pss 77:13 (God's way); 89:20 (anointing oil); 98:1 (God's saving work); and 105:42 (promise).

[8] Adolphe Gesché wrestles with this dilemma describing and critiquing the atheistic and non-biblical notions of divinity being a threat to mankind's autonomy (Adolphe Gesché, "L'identité de l'homme devant Dieu," *RTL* 29.1 [1998]: 3–28). See also Bernd Janowski, *Arguing with God: A Theological Anthropology of the Psalms*, trans. Armin Siedlecki (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2013), xv–xix.

[9] Marc Cortez, *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: T&T Clark, 2010); Joshua R. Farris, *An Introduction to Theological Anthropology: Humans, Both Creaturely and Divine* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020); G. W. Bromiley, "Anthropology," *ISBE* 1:131–36.

[10] Cortez, *Theological Anthropology*, 5f. Previous examinations of what it means to be human included rationality, language, and culture (Philip H. Towner, "Mind/Reason," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed., Baker Reference Library [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996], 529).

[11] Bernd Janowski, "Der ganze Mensch: Zu den Koordinaten der alttestamentlichen

origin, nature, life, and destiny. The Psalter, as a compilation of five books, portrays humanity as a unified self from the womb to the tomb and beyond.[12]

The language in the Psalter that refers to the human body (e.g., eyes, hands, heart, feet, etc.) describes varied anthropological aspects encompassing physical, psychological, and social designations in relationship to God, others, and the world.[13] These aspects are captured in poetic form. Thus, the structure, parallelism, and imagery of individual psalms and the structural import in groups and collections help advance a more robust biblical understanding of human holiness. This analysis seeks to assess one dimension of this complexity by analyzing the intersection of the lexeme, "the godly one" (Heb. *ḥasîd*), which includes the concept of holiness[14] and the thematic range of anthropological terms contained within the psalms in the Psalter addressed here (Pss 4; 12; 16; 18; 30; 31; 32; 37), using Book I as a case study.[15] This terminology includes the multifaceted nature of humanity (i.e., physical, mental, emotional, and social) and ethical designations expressing varied aspects of holiness.

Based on its etymological relationship to the noun *ḥesed* ("lovingkindness, covenant loyalty"), *ḥasîd*, can be translated actively as "one who practices *ḥesed*" (i.e., one who is loyal to the covenant).[16] Or, if taken as a passive adjective, the word can be translated as "one who is the object of divine love."[17] Both notions are present as seen in the associations between *ḥesed*

Anthropologie," *ZThK* 113 (2016): 1–28.

12 On several dimensions regarding the two, see Dermot A. Lane, "Anthropology and Eschatology," *ITQ* 61.1 (1995): 14–31.

13 Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1974), 7–79.

14 References to an important spatial arena of holiness in the Psalms include "sanctuary" (Heb. *qōdeš*; Ps 20:3 MT), "holy" (Heb. *qaḏôš*; Ps 46:5 MT), "saints" (Heb. *ḥasîd*; Ps 85:11), and "holy place" (Heb. *dəbîr*; Ps 28:2). See Jerome Skinner, "A Theology of Glory: Divine Sanctum and Service in the Psalter," in *Reading the Psalms Theologically*, eds. David M. Howard, Jr. and Andrew Schmutzer (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2023), 248–60.

15 The term *ḥasîd* occurs 25 times in the Psalter. Book I (Pss 4:4; 12:2; 16:10; 18:26; 30:5; 31:24; 32:6; 37:28); Book II (Pss 43:1; 50:5; 52:11); Book III (Pss 79:2; 85:8, 9; 86:2; 89:20); Book IV (Ps 97:10); Book V (Pss 116:15; 132:9, 16; 145:10; 148:14).

16 H. Ringgren, "חָסִיד," *TDOT* 5:76. See Janowski, quoting W. Schmidt makes this point concerning what humanity is as expressed in their actions. Janowski, *Arguing with God*, 11.

17 Allen Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms: Volume 1 (1–41)*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 230, 569. For an in-depth study on *ḥesed*, see Gordon R.

and the *ḥasîd* in the Psalter. The association is expressed in a relational experience concerning God's self-revelation (His attributes) and acts of covenant blessings, and the identifying marker of God's people as those whom YHWH has redeemed and covenanted with to restore His image in humanity (Gen 1:26–28; Exod 19:6).[18] In relation to holiness, biblical anthropology is relational, derivative, and subject to God's authority, example, and goal for human thriving. The semantic range of this designation and contextual aspects found in the Psalter are analyzed through this lens and understood conceptually.[19]

This study will use three analytical procedures to show the intersection of the identity of God's people seen through an anthropological lens and the description of holiness. First, this study will assess the semantic relationship between the anthropological designations of the people of God and ethical descriptions of holiness related to them. Second, this study will evaluate micro-structural considerations by considering how anthropological language functions in individual psalms within each grouping. Finally, macro-structural connections of groups in Book 1 of the Psalter (Pss 3–14; 15–24; 25–29; 30–32; 33–41) as it relates to the usage of anthropological designations that help to shape Book I of the Psalter are assessed, looking at how the covenantal identity of the people of God plays a structuring role.

2. What is Man? Anthropological Language and the Psalter

The pivotal question arises: How does one assign and define an anthropological term? The usual focus springs from the semantic corpus referring to

Clark, *The Word Hesed in the Hebrew Bible*, *JSOTSup* 157 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993).

[18] The semantic parallels found in poetic literature in the Bible affirm the ethical dimension in the semantic range of the term "covenant" (Heb. *bərît*; Ps 25:14). See Daniel I. Block, *The Triumph of Grace: Literary and Theological Studies in Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic Themes* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2017), 60–88; Carleen Mandolfo, *God in the Dock: Dialogic Tension in the Psalms of Lament*, *JSOTSup* 357 (London: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 127.

[19] Commenting on the notion of a semantic field, Joze Krasovec points out that when analyzing words there is a "whole range of dimensions" that necessitate both a semantic and literary (contextual) approach (Joze Krasovec, *God's Righteousness and Justice in the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2022], 2).

the whole person,[20] individual human body parts,[21] and stretches to idiomatic designations that denote the emotional, cognitive, and volitional functions and capabilities.[22] These directions are helpful, yet it is noted that in biblical anthropology, "God Himself must be the object of study, and man with this reference."[23] So, anthropological language in the biblical text orients the reader to see humanity's creatureliness in relation to humanity's Creator, YHWH. Much of the language that designates humanity in the Psalter garners its impetus from Gen 1–3,[24] but also grasps terminology from subsequent passages that engage the concepts and interests from the aforementioned chapters. For example, the introduction of death in Gen 3 shifts and shapes the human experience and expands the semantic constellations of what it now means to be human. Further, the concept of eschatology and its interests are also a part of the linguistic and theological domain of human identity in the Psalter. Thus, this analysis grapples with both the linguistic identifiers of humanity and the theological assessments and trajectories of the human experience in reference to God as Creator and, for this paper, his holiness.[25]

3. Holiness in Book I of the Psalter

Several structural groupings of Book 1 of the Psalter have been recognized, providing a narrative-like storyline to think through the larger picture to

[20] Bromiley notes four major terms, "man" (Heb. *ʾādām*), "son of man" (Heb. *ben-ʾādām*), "man in his weakness" (Heb. *ʾenôš*), and "man" [in his strength] (Heb. *ʾîš*) (Bromiley, "Anthropology," 132). To these a plethora of modifiers (participial phrases, adjectives, noun phrases) could be added.

[21] J. David Pleins, *Biblical Hebrew Vocabulary by Conceptual Category: A Student's Guide to Nouns in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 65–70.

[22] Andy L. Warren-Rothlin, "Body Idioms and the Psalms," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. David Firth and Philip S. Johnston (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 195–212. See also Janowski, *Arguing with God*, 8–10.

[23] Bromiley, "Anthropology," 132; Janowski, *Arguing with God*, 14; Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, trans. Keith Crim (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992), 143.

[24] Richard M. Davidson, "The Nature of the Human Being from the Beginning: Genesis 1–11," in *"What Are Human Beings that You Remember Them?,"* ed. Clinton Wahlen (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2015), 11–42; Gordon McConville, *Being Human in God's World: An Old Testament Theology of Humanity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 1–45.

[25] The issue of holiness raises the inquiry of whether humanity can be considered holy. Psalm 143:2 states emphatically, "for no one living is righteous before you," and yet God's people are called righteous throughout the Psalter (Jerome Creach, *The Destiny of the Righteous in the Psalms* [St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2008], 2–14).

which each psalm contributes.[26] Book I comprises several groupings (Pss 3–14; 15–24; 25–29; 30–32; 33–41). Significantly, reference to the godly one is found in each of these groups.

Table 1. Anthropology and Holiness in Psalms 3–14[27]

Psalm	Parallel description to *ḥasîd*	Reference to Holiness[28]	Anthropological Language-Physical	Anthropological Language-Group[29]	Activity of the *ḥasîd*
3			Life (Heb. *nepeš*, v. 3), head (v. 4), jaw (v. 8), teeth (v. 8)	Many (vv. 2–3)	
4	The one who calls (v. 4 MT)	God as the psalmist's "righteous one" (Heb. *ṣaddîq*, v. 2; "right sacrifices," v. 6)	Heart (Heb. *lēbab*; *lēb*, v. 8)	Sons of man (*bənê ʾîš*, v. 3)	Prayer (v. 2), set apart by God (v. 4)
5		Lovingkindness (Heb. *ḥesed*, v. 8); God leads the psalmist by His righteousness (Heb. *ṣaddîq*, v. 9); God blesses the righteous (Heb. *ṣaddîq*, v. 13)	Voice (v. 4), mouth (v. 10), inward parts (v. 10), throat (v. 10), tongues (v. 10)	Man of bloodshed (v. 7)	
6		God's lovingkindness (Heb. *ḥesed*, v. 5)	Bones (v. 3), life (Heb.		

[26] Jerome Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms: An Exegetical, Intertextual, and Methodological Analysis" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2016), 252–83; O. Palmer Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering Their Structure and Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2015), 53–83; Hendrik Koorevaar, *The Psalter as a Structured Theological Story with the Aid of Subscripts and Superscripts, in The Composition of the Book of Psalms*, ed. Erich Zenger, BETL 238 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 579–92; G. Barbiero, *Das erste Psalmenbuch als Einheit: Eine synchrone Analyse von Psalm 1–41*, Österreichische Biblische Studien 16 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1999).

[27] Hebrew words are designated to distinguish between words where an English translation may not be clear.

[28] Bell rightly notes that there are several synonyms that indicate the identity of the righteous as well as alternative ways of referring to these persons. See Bell, *Theological Themes of Psalms*, 221–26. This list includes ethical terminology and activity of both God and humanity.

[29] There are many ethical descriptors of the wicked in these psalms. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus solely on phrases with anthropological terms and physically identifiable groups.

			nepeš, vv. 4, 5), eyes (v. 8), voice (v. 9)		
7		God commands justice (Heb. *ṣaddîq*, vv. 7, 9–10, 12, 18), upright (Heb. *Yashar*, v. 10)	Life (Heb. *nepeš*, vv. 3, 6), hands (Heb. *kaph*, v. 4), heart (vv. 10–11), kidneys (Heb. *kilyâ*, v. 10), head (v. 17)	Nations (Heb. *ʾummîm*, v. 8), community of peoples (v. 9)	
8	Creation-glory		Mouth (v. 3), feet (v. 7)	Babies (v. 3), sucklings (v. 3), man (Heb. *ʾĕnôš*, v. 5), son of man (*ben ʾadam*, v. 5)	
9/10		Justice i.e., righteous judgment (Heb. *mišpaṭ*, 9:5, 8–9; 10:4); "my just cause" (Heb. *dîn*, 9:5); humble (Heb. *ʿanî*, 9:12, 18; 10:2, 9, 12); *ʻanav* (meek, 10:17); *ebyon* (needy, 9:19)	Heart (9:2; 10:6, 11, 13, 17), feet (9:16), life (Heb. *nepeš*, 10:3), face (10:4), mouth (10:7), tongue (10:7), eyes (10:8)	Peoples (Heb. *lᵉom*, 9:9), "inhabitants of Zion" (9:12), people (Heb. *ʿam*), man (Heb. *ʾĕnôš*, 9:20–21; 10:18), orphan (10:18)	
11		Upright (Heb. *Yashar*, v. 2); the righteous (Heb. *ṣaddîq* v. 3, 5, 7)	Life (Heb. *nepeš*, vv. 1, 5)	Sons of man (*bənê ʾadam*, v. 4)	
12	The faithful (adj) (v. 2)	Poor (Heb. *ʿanî*, v. 5); poor (Heb. *ebyon*, v. 5)	Lips (vv. 3–4), heart (v. 3), tongue (v. 4)	Sons of man (*bənê ʾadam*, vv. 2, 9); man (Heb. *ʾîš*, v. 3)	They vanish (v. 2)
13		God's lovingkindness (Heb. *ḥesed*, v. 6);	Life (Heb. *nepeš*, v. 3), heart (vv. 3, 6), eyes (v. 4)		
14		The righteous (Heb. *ṣaddîq*; v. 5); *ʾani* (v. 6)	Heart (Heb. *lēb*, v. 1)	Sons of man (Heb. *bənê ʾadam*, v. 2); people (Heb. *ʿam*, vv. 4, 7)	

Psalms 3–14 are commonly understood as the first grouping of psalms in Book I.[30] Keywords and themes that tie Pss 3–7 to 9–14 converge in Ps 8.[31] Psalms 3–7 focus on threats to the Davidic covenant expressed in Ps 2 and hence can be examined as a small group. Psalms 9–14 focus primarily on the worldwide judgment and the destiny of the righteous and the wicked articulated in Ps 1. Vindication here is associated with YHWH's authority as covenantal Sovereign (Pss 9:7–8; 10:16–18). In Ps 8, reflections on creation mark out YHWH's sovereignty and humanity as His vice-regents. Thus the notion of what it means to be human and holy, at least in the structural view of this group expresses a focus where the broader storyline concerning holiness is covenantal. The psalmists describe God's character, the faithful's pleas, their identity, and the trajectory of their human experience in those terms.

4. Psalm 8 and Humanity[32]

Couched in this group as a hymn of praise, Ps 8 contains several parallels with other psalms concerning what it means to be human.[33] Rolf Jacobson notes that in addition to creation, another important theme in Ps 8 is royalty.[34] The attributes of kingship (majesty and glory, v. 6 MT; cf. 104:1), the activity of kingship (Hiphil of *mašal*; cf. 1 Kgs 5:1), and the domain of the exercise of royal power (works of your hands, v. 7; cf. Ps 19:2) clarify notions of the human experience that include functionality as royal ambassadors/representatives (vassals) of God. Conveyed royalty from God finds its parallel in Gen 1, which itself includes positive ethical expectations (Gen

[30] Lissa Wray Beal, "Psalms 3: History of Interpretation," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*, eds. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 605–13; Andrew Witt, *A Voice Without End: The Role of David in Psalms 3–14* (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2021).

[31] Bruce K. Waltke, James M. Houston, and Erika Moore, *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 193.

[32] In addition to the fact that it does not use the word *ḥasîd*, the structural centrality of Ps 8 accounts for being dealt with separately here first. On the theological significance of the macro-literary setting of Ps 8, see Jerome Skinner, "Judgment for the Saints: The Justice of God in Psalms 3–14," in *Searching the Scriptures: Andrews University Seminary Emerging Scholars Pay Tribute to Their Professors*, ed. Slaviša Janković (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of the Old Testament, 2017), 105–26.

[33] Janowski, *Arguing with God*, 12–14. While a full literary analysis of each psalms assessed is outside the scope of this study, structural features will be expressed as they highlight features related to the topic.

[34] Rolf Jacobson, et al., *The Book of Psalms*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 120.

1:26–28). In Ps 8 identity and ethics include elements of justice (e.g., retribution, v. 3) and thus highlight an additional aspect of moral responsibility and culpability.[35] The psalm proper begins with YHWH and humanity, evoking the notion of a relationship. That relationship is expressed throughout the psalms as YHWH giving and humanity receiving.

The question "what is mankind?" is answered in part by the psalmist, who states that it is what God has done to humankind, better yet, for humankind. This can be described as theocentric anthropology. However, rather than a descriptor of activity or essence, the focus juxtaposes a series of contrasts that highlight the nature of humanity in relation to God (feeble infants and presumably strong avengers; humanity in its frail state with God's majesty evoked in His creative works). The noun translated "human being" (Heb. *ʾĕnôš*) is typically used in psalmic literature where various aspects of mortality are in view.[36] The point is that by themselves, humans are frail and subject to the vicissitudes of finitude, but when seen as God's creative work, they have dignity. Structurally, Ps 8 highlights the central concern of the collection of Pss 3–14. The intersection of anthropological interests with the descriptive concept of holiness as relational suggests that these concerns should be understood in reference to each other in a covenantal context.

5. Psalm 4

Embedded within a small grouping of Pss 3–7,[37] the thematic intersection found in Ps 4 between the accused, the accusation, and the accuser on the one hand and the appeal and Adjudicator on the other emerges from the lament's covenantal focus.[38] On the one hand, the introductory plea in v. 2

[35] From a Christian perspective, the apostle Paul notes that there is a transitory element to some facets of the Christian experience (1 Cor 13:8–10). See H. Hübner, "καταργέω *katargeō*," *EDNT* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990–), 2:267–68. Other NT passages pick up on the notion of royalty and its connection to humanity (2 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6).

[36] Pss 10:18; 90:3; 103:15; 144:3–4. Psalm 144:3 is the closest parallel to Ps 8:5 and its subsequent verse affirms this emphasis on human frailty. Cf. Job 7:17. See Gerald Wilson, *Psalms*, NIVAC 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 204.

[37] Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms," 255; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Die Psalmen I: Psalm 1–50*, NEchtB 29 (Wurzburg: Echter, 1993), 56.

[38] For different views on the identification of this psalm, see Jacobson, *The Book of Psalms*, 79.

carries a lexical cluster of the typical language of appeal to God as the faithful Judge and Vindicator (Heb. *qaraʾ* + *ʿanah*; cf. Pss 3:4; 118:5). On the other hand, the appeal for YHWH to be gracious (Heb. *ḥanan*; cf. Num 6:25) and the affirmation that YHWH has "made room" (Hiphil of *raḥab*) present echoes with other covenantal backgrounded texts (cf. Gen 26:22). Thus, the anthropological focus here is covenantal.

The psalm captures the nature of the accusers in anthropological language as the "sons of man." This phrase is used twice elsewhere in the Psalter to emphasize the socio-economic aspect of a human's status (Pss 49:3; 62:10).[39] They are those of high estate; those with power, which in appearance could be seen as a marker of being blessed (Deut 8:18; 2 Chr 1:11–12).[40] Thus, two powerful forces are in view, the accusers and the Adjudicator, YHWH. Also, two social statuses are in view, for the psalmist, his religious status, and for the sons of man, their economic status.[41] By designating the Lord as "God of my righteousness," the psalmist frames the relational/religious aspect in which he is pleading for God to act.[42] The repeated use of the same words, or words derived from the same root, set up a contrast between the psalmist and the accuser in terms of their activity.[43] Also, another contrasting element here is that God is the subject of three verbs (to make space,[44] to set apart, to give joy), whose connotations suggest that the psalmist is the true covenantal beneficiary of God's acts rather than the accuser and is thus designated as a godly one (vv. 2, 4, 8).

[39] Where one places their confidence is central in both of these psalms. Jacobson translates this phrase as "wealthy" (Jacobson, *The Book of Psalms*, 81).

[40] On the topic of power and politics in anthropological perspective, see McConville, *Being Human in God's World*, 119–47.

[41] Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 56. The noun *kābôd* has been understood in various ways. Longman suggests it may refer to a good reputation (Tremper Longman III, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, *TOTC* 15–16, ed. David G. Firth [Nottingham: Inter-Varisty Press, 2014], 67–68). VanGemeren suggests it is the position of the king (Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, EBC 5 [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008], 109). Jacobson prefers to associate glory with God (Jacobson, *The Book of Psalms*, 84–85).

[42] If the precative use of the perfect is in view here, the appeal is for God's presence. Cf. *IBHS* 30.5.4d.

[43] Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 2nd ed., WBC 19 (Nashville: Nelson, 2004), 79; Jacobson, *The Book of Psalms*, 81.

[44] Used elsewhere, the Hiphil stem of the verb "to make wide" (Heb. *raḥab*) carries covenant elements related to human thriving in the land of promise (Exod 34:24; Deut 12:20; 19:8). See Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC 2 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 731.

The parallel between v. 2 and v. 4 clarifies the description of the *ḥasîd* and suggests that "the godly one" is one who prays. The psychological nuances of these pleas express what the psalmist considers necessary for human thriving. The proclamation that God answers His appeals for grace and righteousness in life affirms righteousness as a gift. An apt translation could be, "YHWH has set apart/shown favor to His covenant fellow for Himself, YHWH hears when I call to Him."[45] This echo of the Exodus experience of YHWH making distinctions between His covenantal benefactors and the oppressor, Egypt, highlights that YHWH decides and designates the godly one as such (cf. Exod 8:18). As for the accusers, what betrays their misunderstanding is their human standing without such affirmation from YHWH. Albeit grounded in the covenant arena,[46] their request seems solely for material prosperity or benefit without the requisite relationship and ethical livelihood. They do not live out (i.e., speak) the covenanted value of showing *ḥesed*, which in this context would be faithful and fair speech to others. The internal state of love for vanity and the external action of seeking after a lie has brought reproach to the psalmist's reputation, and their words show they doubt God's *ḥesed* for the psalmist and themselves.[47]

The covenantal focus of the 'godly one' is further highlighted by the appeal for YHWH to "Lift up over us the light of Your face, O YHWH!"[48] The entreaty alludes to the Aaronic benediction here in response to what the accusers say and matches the initial appeal for YHWH to be gracious (v. 2, cf. Num 6:25). The psalmist shows this *ḥesed* to his accusers by appealing to them in a series of five imperatives to turn to YHWH and trust Him (vv. 5–6).[49]

[45] The reference here may be solely to the Davidic king, as the one who YHWH has set apart. In that case, the slander would be an act of rebellion against godly authority, which is in view in the previous psalm. See Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms," 31–38; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 61; VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 109.

[46] Michael Fox, "TOB as Covenant Terminology," *BASOR* 209 (1973): 41–42. Broyles suggests this alludes to connections with pagan rituals. Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendricksons, 1999), 54. See also VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 110.

[47] Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 61.

[48] If Kraus is correct that v. 7b is a continuation of what the many are saying (cf. Ps 3:3) then the language of the Aaronic benediction seems to be on account of their status. See Hans-Joachim Kraus, *A Continental Commentary: Psalms 1–59* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 149–50.

[49] Interestingly, this identical imperative is used in Ps 115:10 in connection with the house of Aaron. The parallel description "God-fearers" identified as those who are obedient to the commands of YHWH (Deut 10:12; 31:12) suggests another covenantal connection. It is interesting that in the creation narrative when God is the subject of

Craigie notes, "The adversaries should know that the one whom they accuse is one who is loved of God and therefore godly."[50]

Thus, the human whose confidence is in God's *ḥesed* rather than their status lives with the gift of an internal state of joy (Pss *16:11;[51] 21:7; 100:2), which is fundamentally associated with God's presence. This is of more value than material covenantal blessings (cf. Num 18:27; *Deut 7:13). God's gracious presence (Heb. *ḥanan*) gives the blessing of the Aaronic benediction, which evokes "peace" (Heb. *šalôm*), seen here in the human experience of trust. The godly one sleeps in the security of God's presence (cf. Ps 3:6). The godly one here is the beneficiary of God's affirmation and presence signaled in the Aaronic benediction, who prays and speaks words of encouragement even to their accusers.

6. Psalm 12

The Literary Structure of Psalm 12[52]

A The Righteous (*bənê ʾadam*; v. 2)
  B False Speech (v. 3)
    C Wicked Speech (vv. 4–5)
    C¹ YHWH Speech (v. 6)
  B¹ Pure Words (vv. 7–8)
A¹ The Wicked (*bənê ʾadam*; v. 9)

Nestled within the small grouping of Pss 9–14, whose keyword is "heart" (Heb. *lēb*) throughout these psalms,[53] Ps 12 continues to deal with the inner person's disposition. The focus here is on speech: the speech of the wicked

the clausal construction "to see … the good" (Heb. *raʾah* + *tov*) in its various syntactical occurrences' points to the covenantal act of God's creative work (Gen 1:10, 12; cf. Pss 104–6). It is not surprising then that throughout the Psalter when God is the subject of the verb *raʾah* in the Hiphil stem (and "good" [Heb. *tov*] being implicitly understood as a covenantal designation), covenantal themes are in view (Pss 50:23; 59:11; 60:4; *85:8).

50 Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 80.

51 The asterisk* indicates biblical verses where the word *ḥasîd* is present.

52 Structural observations in this study are only made in reference to their import in assessing anthropological concepts. A complete structural analysis of each psalm is beyond the scope of this study. For a helpful view of a fuller structural assessment, see Martin G. Klingbeil, Dragoslava Santrac, David Tasker, Jacques B. Doukhan, and Richard M. Davidson, *Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, SDA International Bible Commentary 6 (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2022).

53 Skinner, "Judgment for the Saints," 121–23.

and YHWH's speech.[54] Left out here is the speech of the *ḥasîd*; they are simply designated as those who are faithful among humanity. The same parallel of the "godly one" and the "faithful" found in Ps 31:23 suggests God's preserving and empowering work enables His followers to be designated as such. In this context, they are the opposite of the wicked ones who speak deceptively. As a class, unfaithful humankind (Heb. *ʾîš*) is characterized as bereft of holy speech.

The term "heart" here refers to human will, mind, and thoughts that inspire motives and intentions.[55] The repetition of the noun *lēb* translated as doubled-minded (lit. "with a heart and heart") portrays the unholy one. The ambiguity of their speech indicates they have two different types of "hearts." It is significant that the unholy ones are described in terms of inner dispositions and external activities without reference to God's presence. With the change from the singular "lip of smoothness" in v. 3b to the plural "all lips of smoothness," the universal perspective about human nature is brought to view. The faithful are those who speak truth (cf. Ps 15:2). Without the pure words of God setting the tone for a life of purity, holiness expressed by "the *ḥasîd*" is perceived as absent.

Verses 4–5 (MT) reveal an ABBA pattern, emphasizing the devastating power of speech:

A "**lips** of flattery"(v. 4a)
B "**tongue** speaking great boasts" (v. 4b)
B[1] "with our **tongues** we shall prevail" (v. 5a)
A[1] our **lips** are with us" (v. 5b)

The prayer that YHWH cuts off all obscurantists' smooth lips highlights the work of the covenant Judge. First, the psalmist prays that YHWH will bring to judgment the boastful words directed at YHWH Himself, evoked in the question, "Who is Lord over us?". The speech is deceptive because it posits a world of autonomous individuals impervious to judgment. The proclamation of YHWH arising ("I will arise)" used in this group affirms that He is the Judge and that judgment is a part of the human experience (Pss 3:8; 7:7; 9:20). In contrast to the limited arena of human oppressive exaltation, YHWH's universal exalted status benefits the oppressed and holds the wicked accountable. The psalmist's plea suggests that what it means to be human necessitates responsibility. Also, the oppressive and devastating

[54] VanGemeren suggests that the speech of the wicked here is a continuation of the description from Ps 11:1–3. See VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 165.

[55] Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 145.

speech has created a dangerous and vile world that necessitates YHWH securing safety for the suppliants. The adjacent psalm, Ps 13, picks up on the theme of the exaltation of the wicked. Psalm 13 ends where the faithful plead with God about the seemingly unaddressed victory of death, evil in the world, and oppressors. Second, the affirmation of YHWH's pure speech is restorative and just and the speech of the godly in some way reflects that activity. They are called the faithful and yet it is not their speech or even presence that stops the danger.[56] The godly one preserves God's pure speech.

7. The Literary Structure of Psalms 15–24[57]

Psalm 16 is a part of a larger literary grouping of Ps 15–24.[58]

A Ps 15 (Entrance Liturgy)
B Ps 16 (Song of Trust)
C Ps 17 (Prayer for Help)
D Ps 18 (Royal Psalm)
E Ps 19 (Creation/Torah Psalm)
D[1] Pss 20 and 21 (Royal Psalms)
C[1] Ps 22 (Prayer for Help)

[56] Jacobson, *The Book of Psalms*, 154.

[57] Carissa Quinn, "Toward the Kingdom: The Shape and Message of Psalms 15–24" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of IBR, Emerging Scholarship on the Old Testament, San Antonio, TX, 2016), 9. See also Philip Sumpter, "The Coherence of Psalms 15-24," *Biblica* 94.2 (2013): 186.

[58] Skinner, "The Davidic Historical Superscriptions," 275; William Brown, "'Here Comes the Sun!' The Metaphorical Theology of Psalms 15–24," in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms*, BETL 238, ed. Erich Zenger (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 259–77: P. D. Miller, "Kingship, Torah Obedience, and Prayer: The Theology of Psalms 15–24," in *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschung*, Herders Biblische Studien 1, ed. K. Seybold and E. Zenger (Freiburg: Herder, 1994), 127–42. See also Philip Sumpter, "The Coherence of Psalm 15–24," *Bib* 94.2 (2013): 186–209. It has been suggested that Book 1 of the Psalter can be divided into four such sub-collections, each with a single psalm of praise at its center (Pss 8; 19; 29; 38). See Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 12–14. Jamie Grant proposed that Book I has been arranged chiastically.

Pss 1–14
Pss 15–24
Pss 25–41

Grant argued that the central section of Book I, Pss 15–24, highlights the opening themes of the Psalter, the Torah, and Messiah (Grant, *The King as Exemplar*, 71–119; 223–40).

B1 Ps 23 (Song of Trust)
A1 Ps 24 (Entrance Liturgy)

The chiasm above shows that along with parallels of their genre (see genre descriptions in the literary chiasm above), the thematic content also parallels each other. So, Ps 15 and Ps 24 envelop the entire literary unit, where both psalms ask the question about who may enter and dwell in the presence of YHWH (Pss 15:1; 24:3). In Pss 15–24, "the emphasis in this section of the Psalter is on godliness."[59] Just as in the previous grouping (Pss 3–14), creation is at the center in this group. However, a new element is highlighted here. The joy of Torah is central as it brings to human life a sense of direction in what it means to be human and holy. The focus on Torah brings the reader back to Pss 1 and 2 where the two ways are presented. The affirmation that "the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish" (Ps 1:6) is highlighted throughout this grouping.[60] The parallels between Pss 16 and 23 depict trust in God's faithful protection and providential guidance. These parallel psalms highlight that the nature of trust emerges from YHWH's faithfulness.

Table 2. Anthropology and Holiness in Psalms 15–24

Psalm	Parallel description to *ḥasîd*	Reference to Holiness	Anthropological Language-Physical	Anthropological Language-Group	Activity of the *ḥasîd*
15		Blameless (Heb. *tamîm*; v. 2); righteousness (Heb. *ṣedeq*; v. 2); truth (Heb. *ʾĕmet*; v. 2); those who fear YHWH (Heb. *yārēʾ* YHWH; v. 4)	Heart (v. 2), tongue (v. 3), eyes (v. 4)	Neighbor (v. 3)	
16	My life Heb. *nephes*,	"Righteous one" (Heb. *qaḏôš*; v. 3); prominent	Lips (v. 4), kidneys (v. 7), heart (v. 9),		They will not

[59] Grogan, *Psalms*, 61. Groenewald notes that "the focus upon Yahweh's Torah and obedience to his divine instruction is the hallmark of this collection" (Alphonso Groenewald, "The Ethical Way in Psalm 16," in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms*, BETL 238, ed. Erich Zenger [Leuven: Peeters, 2010], 504–5).

[60] Pss 17:4; 18:21, 30, 32.

	v. 10)	one (Heb. *ʾaddîr*; v. 3)	flesh (Heb. *basar*, v. 9), life (Heb. *nepeš*, v. 10)		see corruption (v. 10)
17		Righteousness, (Heb. *ṣedeq* v. 1, 15); upright (Heb. *yashar*; v.2); God's lovingkindness (Heb. *ḥesed*; v. 7)	Lips (vv. 1, 4), mouth (v. 10), eyes (v. 11), life (Heb. *nepeš*, vv. 9, 13), stomach (v. 14), face (v. 15), life (Heb. *ḥay*, v. 14),	Humankind (Heb. *ʿadam*, v. 4), male (Heb. *mat*, v. 14)	
18	The blameless person (v. 26)	Righteousness (Heb. *ṣədaqâ*; v. 21); justice, i.e., righteous acts (Heb. *mišpaṭ*; v. 21, 25); blameless (Heb. *tamîm*; v. 24, 31, 33); God's lovingkindness (Heb. *ḥesed*; v. 51)	Hands (vv. 1, 21, 25, 35), voice (vv. 4, 14), ears (vv. 7, 45), eyes (v. 27), feet (vv. 34, 39), arm (v. 35), ankles (v. 37)	Humble people (v. 28), nations (vv. 44, 50), people (Heb. *ʿam*, vv. 28, 44, 48), foreigners (Heb. *bənê nekar*, vv. 45, 46), person of violence (Heb. *ʾîš ḥamas*, v. 49)	YHWH reciprocates *ḥesed* to the *ḥasîd* (v. 26)
19	Creation-glory	Blameless (Heb. *tamîm* v. 8); upright (Heb. *ṭahôr*; v. 9), pure (Heb. *bar*; v. 9); pure (Heb. *ṭahôr*; v. 10) justice, i.e., righteous acts (Heb. *mišpaṭ*; v. 10), they are righteous (Heb. *ṣadaq*)	Anthropomorphic language assigned to nature (vv. 1–7), life (Heb. *nepeš*, v. 8), heart (vv. 9, 15), eyes (v. 9), mouth (v. 15)		
20		YHWH saves from his sanctuary (Heb. *qodeš*; vv. 3, 7)	Heart (v. 5)		
21		God's lovingkindness (Heb. *ḥesed*; v. 8)	Heart (v. 3), lips (v. 3), head (v. 3), life (Heb. *ḥay*, v. 5)	Fruit (by analogy offspring, v. 11), sons of humankind (Heb. *bənê*	

			ʾadam, v. 11)
22	God is holy (Heb. *qadôš*; v. 4); those who fear YHWH (Heb. *yārēʾ* YHWH; v. 24, 26); humble/afflicted (Heb. *ʿanî*; v. 25), meek (Heb. *ʿanaw*; v. 27); God's righteousness is proclaimed (Heb. *ṣədaqâ*; v. 32)	Head (v. 8), womb (vv. 10, 11), mouth (v. 14), bones (v. 15), heart (vv. 15, 27), bowels (v. 15), tongue (v. 16), jaw (v. 16), hands (vv. 17, 21), feet (v. 17), life (Heb. *nepeš*, vv. 21, 30)	Fathers (v. 5), man (Hb. *ʾîš*, v. 7), humankind (v. 7), people (vv. 7, 32), brother (v. 23), offspring (Heb. *zeraʿ*, vv. 24, 31), clans of the nations (v. 28), nations (v. 29)
23	God leads in paths of righteousness (Heb. *ṣedeq*; v. 3); God's *ḥesed* (v. 6)	Life (Heb. *nepeš*, v. 3), head (v. 5), life (Heb. *ḥay*, v. 6)	
24	Innocent (Heb. *naqî* v. 4); pure (Heb. *bar*; v. 4); God's righteousness (Heb. *ṣədaqâ*; v. 5)	Hands (v. 4), heart (v. 4), life (Heb. *nepeš*, v. 4)	Inhabited world (Heb. *tebel*, v. 1)

8. Psalm 16[61]

As a song of trust, Psalm 16 focuses on the nature of the heritage and human destiny of the godly one. Moving from protection to provision to preservation (vv. 1–4; 5–8; 9–11). Beginning with a psychological attitude, "I trust you,"[62] the subsequent confession centers on a life-threatening crisis (v. 9) that is seen from the perspective of the promise of God's covenantal blessings (lit. "my goodness, not apart from/unto you," v. 2; cf. Deut 28:7–14) extend beyond material benefits. Holiness is brought into the picture via ritual activity. The psalm affirms that ritual practices inconsistent with the character of God are detrimental to human life and afford no acceptance.[63]

[61] Beat Weber, "Notizen zu Form, Pragmatik und Struktur von Psalm 16," *BN* 125 (2005): 25–38.

[62] Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reyburn, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 140.

[63] The psychological, physical, and social impact of engaging in idol worship (Heb. *nesek*,

Here, the psalmist highlights four important relational aspects of life with God where holiness was expressed where the saints are, in the land, which is the sign of God's faithfulness promised to Abraham (Gen 15). Faithful rituals bring religious and social cohesion (cf. 2 Chr 29–32), while false representations of true worship garner prophetic indictment. Another psychological facet of the godly is that they are always mindful of YHWH. They prioritize him in all their thoughts and actions by setting Him before continually (Heb. *tamîd*).

While there are clear messianic implications, the psalmist's affirmation of God's presence in the concrete expression of covenant living in society points to an eternal destiny for all the godly.[64] The godly one's covenantal heritage includes psychological well-being (v. 9) and trust that the destiny of the godly is substantively comforting in the present life (v. 11). The reality of the decaying of the body generates no weariness because God's covenantal blessings ultimately deal with the problem of death and decay. In addition, as the only anthropological body part in the Psalter as the subject of the verb "to be glad, rejoice" (Heb. *samaḥ*), the heart designates the innermost dimension of humanity and takes action in worship; it rejoices in God (Pss 33:21; 105:1–3). This aspect of holiness, doxology (i.e., worship), is part and parcel of the human response to life in the land that God blesses, living with hope beyond this life.[65] Joy in a person and not solely in circumstances impacts the whole person. The flesh, a possible synecdoche for the body, dwells securely in YHWH.

The soul (i.e., the life force) is not forsaken to Sheol. Here the nominal parallel to the "righteous one" (Heb. *nepeš*) is not given to see (i.e., experience) corruption. The parallel pointing to the experience of death suggests that the physical body is not fated to oblivion when there is a covenant relationship with YHWH. For the righteous one, the covenantal experience, even if stopped by death, is ultimately destined for eschatological hope (cf. 1 Cor 15). This was alluded to earlier as the psalmist stated that YHWH is his cup, which in other psalms points to the various aspects of human destiny (Pss 11:6; 75:8). The language from Israel's relationship with God in the

"libations") is a common theme in biblical theology. See Jacobson, *The Book of Psalms*, 179–80; Beat Weber, *Werkbuch Psalmen I: Die Psalmen 1 Bis 72* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001), 98.

64 Gregory V. Trull, "Views on Peter's Use of Psalm 16:8–11 in Acts 2:25–32," *BSac* 161 (2004): 194–214.

65 Pss 9:3; 34:3; 122:1.

promised land is filled with references to ethical living (land, lot [cf. Josh 15:13], boundary, inheritance) and is equated with life in YHWH.[66]

There is another dimension alluded to in this psalm that connects the human ethos, the ethical aspect of covenantal life, and eschatological hope. The psalmist says that it is in his innermost conscience (Heb. *kilyâ*, "kidneys") that God instructs him. The connection with human destiny is noted earlier in Ps 7:10, which states, "Oh, let the evil of the wicked come to an end, and may you establish the righteous—you who test (Heb. *baḥan* "examine") the minds (Heb. *lēb*) and hearts (Heb. *kilyâ*), O righteous God!"[67] Note that it is not the active work of sacrifice that assures confidence in YHWH's promise of everlasting joy, but rather submissively receiving divine guidance. For the godly one, God's counsel is efficacious when the human response is faithful and trusting that God's ways provide present and eternal hope. So, the psalmist states that with God at the center of his life he shall not be moved. This language is significant in the Psalter as it typically refers to the notion of God's judgment as King (Pss 93:1–2; 96:10).[68]

Structurally, this psalm connects back to Ps 15, giving a sense that the godly one "adheres to the example of a just supplicant" and is said to never be moved (Ps 15:5), which is affirmed in 16:8. This link connects the ethical descriptions of the one who has access to dwell in God's presence in 15:1 with the activity of setting YHWH continually before the psalmist in 16:8.[69] This statement points to proximity, and indicates "both God's protective presence and also the psalmist's obedience to the divine law.[70] The structural focus of this grouping is here noted. Godliness is associated with covenant fidelity to God's revealed will, and God functions as the divine Sovereign who counsels through His revelation what it means to be human and how to function in His holy presence. The language of the phrase "path of life" is used elsewhere to suggest ultimate destiny in ethical terms (Job

[66] Cf. Lev 27:30. See Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 76–99. Hossfeld and Zenger note the verbal usage in this psalm that points back to the land allotment in Israel's conquest of Canaan. See Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 112.

[67] The kidneys (*kilyâ*) carry semantic overlap with the heart (*lēb*) in the Psalter (Pss 26:2; 73:21).

[68] Note in Ps 21:8 the connection of this phrase with the reference to God's *ḥesed*.

[69] Groenewald, "The Ethical Way in Psalm 16," 506–7. Groenewald also notes the connection with the subsequent psalm as a "concretization" of Psalm 16. See Groenewald, "The Ethical Way in Psalm 16," 508.

[70] Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 157.

8:13; Prov 2:8).[71] The connections suggest that the covenantal experience in human life encompasses both the present moment of worship, justice, culpability, and covenant fidelity, as well as a hope oriented towards a future beyond the grave.

9. Psalm 18

Given the breadth of Psalm 18, I will here only note several structural features that highlight the connection between the godly one's character and God's holiness and salvific work.[72]

A Opening praise (18:2–4)
  B YHWH's mighty rescue of the psalmist (18:5–20)
    C YHWH's help came because the psalmist was blameless (18:21–25)
      D YHWH exalts the humble but brings low the proud (18:26–30)
    C[1] YHWH is blameless, helping those who appeal to him (18:31–32)
  B[1] The psalmist's mighty defeat of his enemies with YHWH's help (18:33–46)
A[1] Closing praise (18:47–51)

Moving towards the center of the chiasm, two linking themes that pull the whole psalm together are emphasized: blamelessness (fidelity to YHWH) and deliverance (YHWH's fidelity to His character). Towards the center of the chiasm, there is a division of three smaller sections, vv. 21–25, 26–30, and 31–32 which are all tied together lexically and thematically. The *leitwort* throughout this section is "blameless" (Heb. *tamîm*, vv. 24, 26, 31).[73]

[71] In a later psalm, YHWH's saving activity in the exodus experience, that leads to life in the land, is connected to the fact that YHWH's way is holy (v. 14 [ET 77:13]). See Groenewald, "The Ethical Way in Psalm 16," 501–11.

[72] For a more in-depth analysis of this passage, see Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms," 52–73; 276–79.

[73] Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms," 68; J. Barton Payne, "תָּמִים," *TWOT* 973–74. The emphasis in the Psalter is ethical as indicated by the connection in the Psalter to the "law" (Pss 19:8; 119:1, 80), as well as the focus on the covenant fidelity (Pss 15:2; 84:12; 101:2, 6). Cf. J. P. Oliver, "תָּמִים," *NIDOTTE* 4:306–8. After investigating the semantic and thematic range of ethical terminology, Wenham concluded that "law" in the Psalter is broader than the legislative species and points to the genus of all divine revelation (Wenham, *Psalms as Torah*, 77–118).

The first strophe (vv. 21–25) expresses a chiastic structure that emphasizes the moral aspects of the psalmist's covenant fidelity.

A v. 21 (my righteousness, cleanness of hands, he returned; Heb. *ṣidqî, kəbōr yāday, šûb*)[74]
  B v. 22 (I kept; Heb. *šāmar*)
    C v. 23 (I did not turn aside; Heb. *lōʾ ʾāsîr*)[75]
  B[1] v. 24 (I kept myself; Heb. *šāmar*)
A[1] v. 25 (my righteousness, cleanness of hands, he returned; Heb. *ṣidqî, kəbōr yāday, šûb*)

The conjunction in v. 23, if taken as a marker of causation clarifies the type of righteousness the psalmist is alluding to and how he walked in fidelity.[76] Being blameless is not equivalent to being sinless, but rather, the psalmist has received YHWH's instruction and acknowledged and submitted to His authority in life as revealed in Torah and this directs his prayer.[77]

The second strophe (vv. 26–30) expresses a tight structure emphasizing reciprocity in the context of loyalty and purity.[78] This section draws attention to the fact that with the *ḥasîd* "godly one" God shows Himself loyal (Heb. *ḥasad*); with the blameless man, He shows Himself blameless. In vv. 28–30 there are three descriptions that typically deal with covenant fidelity

[74] Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms," 68. The closest parallel to "cleanness of hands" is found in Job 22:30, where the parallel statement has to do with being innocent.

[75] In Ps 89:31–33, the two nouns "judgments" (Heb. *mišpaṭîm*) and "statutes" (Heb. *ḥuqqōt*) are used together where similar concerns of the covenant, obedience, and fidelity are tied together. The covenant emphasis is expressed elsewhere when the two nouns are used together (Deut 6:1, 2; 7:11; 30:10). The lexical connections (*sûr* + *min*) with the law of the king in Deut 17:19–20, the introduction of the poem in Deut 32 (Deut 31:29), and the *mišpaṭ* ("judgments, ordinances, rights, duties") of the king in 1 Sam 10:25 point to the royal aspect of this psalm. The possibility also exists that here there is a reference to the "pre-war" activities such as sacrifice, vows, oracular inquiries, and ritual cleanness. Cf. Tremper Longman III and Daniel G. Reid, *God is a Warrior: Studies in OT Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, 1995), 33–37.

[76] Bratcher and Reyburn commented that "in verse 22 *ordinances* and *statutes* are both synonyms of 'the ways of the Lord' in verse 21; and the verbs in verse 22 *were before me and not put away* are also synonyms of 'kept' and 'not wickedly departed from' in verse 21" (Bratcher and Reyburn, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, 174). There is no indication in this psalm, contra Weiser, of a "cult of Covenant Festival," or necessity to see here a focus on "ritual aspects of the ordinances of the Covenant" (Weiser, *The Psalms*, 192).

[77] Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms," 68–69.

[78] Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms," 69.

in the Psalter.[79] Those three clauses invoke themes of wisdom[80] and moral courage. This section closes by refocusing on the ways of YHWH as instilling confidence,[81] protection, and benefit to those who take refuge in Him (vv. 31–32; cf. the link of vv. 31–32 with v. 3).[82]

Structurally, in Ps 17, many of the lexemes are used in the context of expectation, forward-looking and in Ps 18 those same lexemes and similar phrases are used in the context of praise looking back to how YHWH brought about answers to the pleas and hopes of Ps 17. The confidence of the psalmist in Ps 17 leads David to associate his uprightness with YHWH's keeping (Heb. *šamar*), while in Ps 18 he continues confidently stating that he has kept YHWH's ways. The parallels between Pss 18 and 19 highlight how YHWH lights up (Heb. *ʾwr*) the psalmist's way to victory. In a similar way in Ps 19, the Torah enlightens the simple with moral acuity. The godly one experiences God's Lordship in various ways, whether externally in life's complexities or internally in character development.[83]

[79] The noun "faithful" (Heb. *ḥasîd*) is used 25 times in the Psalter and out of those it is used 12 times in Davidic psalms (Pss 4:4; 12:2; 16:10; 30:5; 31:24; 32:6; 37:28; 52:11; 86:2; 145:10, 17). The noun "blameless" (Heb. *tamîm*) is used 12 times in the Psalter and out of those it is used 9 times in Davidic psalms (Pss 15:2; 19:8; 37:18; 101:2, 6). The verb "to be pure" (Heb. *barar*) is used only in this verse in the Psalter. The only other occurrence in the Niphal stem (Isa 52:11) is an imperative and may refer to moral purity. Cf. John Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 372–73. The fourth colon deals with the morally crooked. In Ps 18:27b the use of the disjunctive *waw* indicating antithetical parallelism followed by the break with the noun and verb pattern of lexical correspondence of a cognate implies that reciprocation operates on a different level than moral equivalents. The pattern is used in ANE literature as well. Wilbur commented, "The blameless character of a king before his god was a common theme in royal inscriptions and prayers. Ramesses II's victory hymn states, 'O Amun, I have not transgressed your command'" (Wilbur, *Psalms*, 5:334). On the complex notion of God and deceit, see Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, 94. See also R. B. Chisholm, "Does God Deceive?," *BSac* 155 (1998): 11–28.

[80] The phrase "haughty eyes" is used in Prov 6:17 in a wisdom context.

[81] Kraus suggested that the phrase "the word of Yahweh is pure" is an oracle of victory (Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 18). There is some textual support for this notion. See 1 Sam 23:2; 28:6; 30:8.

[82] Kidner argued that this monotheistic proclamation points back to the Song of Moses as "part of David's inspiration for this song" (Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, 95). This suggestion is supported by the Sinaitic theophanic references.

[83] One commentator aptly notes, "YHWH, the God who behaves ethically, also requires ethical behaviour from his followers" (Groenewald, "The Ethical Way in Psalm 16," 510).

10. Psalms 30–32: Psalms of God as Refuge and Hiding Place

The repetition of linguistic parallels, a hallmark of psalmic poems, connects a cluster of psalms (Pss 30–32; 34) dealing with the godly ones in anthropological terms. These psalms form a group of psalms that focus on God as the godly one's refuge and hiding place.[84]

Table 3. Anthropology and Holiness in Psalms 30–32

Psalm	Parallel description to *ḥasîd*	Reference to Holiness	Anthropological Language- Physical	Anthropological Language-Group	Activity of the *ḥasîd*
30	Those who make mention of YHWH's holiness	Holy (Heb. *qodeš*, v. 5)	Life (Heb. *nepeš*, v. 4); blood (Heb. *dam*, v. 10)		Singing and giving thanks to YHWH (vv. 2, 13)
31	The faithful (adj) (v. 24)	Righteous (Heb. *ṣaddîq*, vv. 2, 19)	Breath (Heb. *rûaḥ*, v. 6), life (Heb. *nepeš*, vv. 8, 10, 14), feet (v. 9), eye (v. 10), stomach (Heb. *beten*, v. 10); life (Heb. *ḥay*, v. 11), bones (v. 11), heart (vv. 13, 25), tongue (v. 21), hand (vv. 6, 9, 16)	Sons of man (Heb. *bənê ʾadam*, v. 20); man (Heb. *ʾîš*, v. 21)	Loving YHWH
32	All who pray (v. 6)	God's loving-kindness (Heb. *ḥesed*; v. 10)	Breath (Heb. *rûaḥ*, v. 2), bones (v. 3), heart (v. 11)	Man (Heb. *ʾadam*, v. 2 man) (Heb. *ʾîš*)	Praying for forgiveness (v. 5)

[84] Wilson sees Ps 30 as a summative psalm forming the end of the collection Pss 23–30 that emphasizes the house of YHWH (Gerald Wilson, *Psalms Volume I*, NIVAC [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002], 514). There are several clear parallels between Ps 30 and 31 where keywords and phrases are used (Heb. *ḥsydyw* "his pious ones" 30:5; 31:24, Heb. *wʾny ʾmrty* "but I have said" 30:7; 31:25, Heb. *śmḥ* "rejoice" 30:2; 31:8, cf. 30:12, Heb. *šwʿ* "cry for help" 30:3; 31:23, Heb. *dmm* "fall silent" 30:13; 31:18). It has been noted that in "every verse of Ps 32 there are elements with keyword links to Ps 31" (author's translation) (Weber, *Werkbuch Psalmen I*, 159).

11. Psalm 30

Table 4. Structural and Linguistic Parallels in Psalm 30

Verses	Translation	Occurring throughout the Psalm	Translation	Occurring only in a Strophe
		Stanza 1 (vv. 2–8)		
vv. 2–4	Go down	*yrd*	life	*npš**
vv. 5–8	Give thanks, sing, forever	*ydh*, *zmr*, *ʿwlm*	favor	*rṣwn**
		Stanza 2 (vv. 9–13)		
vv. 9–11	Go down, give thanks	*yrd*, *ydh*	Be gracious	*ḥnn**
vv. 12–13	Give thanks, sing, forever	*ydh*, *zmr*, *ʿwlm*		

* Indicates a repeated root lexeme that only occurs in that strophe

Psalm 30, a thanksgiving psalm, vividly depicts the covenanted life through dramatic contrasts in human life cycles captured in four strophes (vv. 2–4; 5–8; 9–11; 12–13).[85] Throughout the psalm, there are contrasts dealing with time (moment-lifetime; evening-morning), feelings (anger-pleasure; weeping-cry of joy), experience (brought up, Heb. *ʿalah*/*dalah*; go down Heb. *yarad*) and worship (mourning-dancing; singing-silence). The threats of death and the joys of life traverse the scale of human experiences and the *ḥasîd* are encouraged to respond to these reversals of fortunes with praise (v. 5) and prayer (v. 11). The language in the psalms echoes again the revelatory proclamation of YHWH in Exod 34:6–7.[86] The covenantal experience of the *ḥasîd* is mediated through the contrasts expressed.[87] The threat of illness, death, and God's anger (v. 4) are associated with sorrowful mourning with sackcloth and the darkness of the evening whose lengthening shadows all evoke terror. It underscores YHWH's hidden face, which elsewhere may connote death (Ps 104:29).[88] Yet, the brevity of God's wrath is juxtaposed with a lifetime of/in/with His pleasure. The associations of dancing and

[85] Hossfeld and Zenger see a different structural focus (vv. 2–6; 7–13). See Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 186.

[86] Timothy Saleska, *Psalms 1–50* (East Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2020), 495.

[87] The overlap of these contrasts has a rhythm to it. While the ebbs and flows of distress and deliverance are part of the lived experience, the faithful can "draw consolation that their own distress has a limit," and deliverance can be anticipated at some point. See Saleska, *Psalms 1–50*, 495.

[88] Wilson, *Psalms*, 517–18. It is possible that v. 8 MT is a reversal of the Aaronic benediction (Num 6:25).

singing coupled with the light of morning whose extending rays are felt like a warm joyous embrace suggest that the godly one's life is filled with moments and memories of God's *ḥesed*.

Moreover, it is death, not due to natural causes, war, or accidents, that was perceived as a sign that somewhere along the way, the covenantal relationship had been fractured or was in jeopardy. In fact, death is the backdrop against which the crisis and deliverance are framed.[89] As the notion of healing was a sign of covenant blessings, the necessity for healing suggests a covenant breach that brought sickness in its wake (cf. Pss 41:4; 103:3).[90] Consequently, the synonym and poetic metonymy for life (Heb. *dam*; cf. Gen 9:6; Lev 17:11) ironically points toward death. While death and sin reverberate from Genesis 3, there are several allusions to Gen 37, where the word *sheol* first appears in Scripture.[91] As there, in Ps 30 the threat of death is viewed as a descent into the grave. For the psalmist, it is addressed through an expression of God's *ḥesed* (cf. Pss 86:13; 103:4–8). In the face of these tensions of human existence, the psalmist's expression of confidence is that securely in YHWH's hands he cannot be shaken from trusting in YHWH's work of restoration (v. 7).[92] Indeed, the plea for grace highlights that for the psalmist, their covenant Lord was present in every experience of life wherever that fell on the spectrum of existence. The confidence of the psalmist brings forward the final contrasts captured in the beginning and ending of the psalm. In what does one rejoice? God has not allowed the enemy to rejoice (Heb. *samaḥ*, v. 2). For the godly one, who has sought compassion/grace

[89] Eriks Galenieks, *The Nature, Function, and Purpose of the term Sheol in the Torah, Prophets, and Writings: An Exegetical-Intertextual Study*, Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 2005), 330–35.

[90] Alan Kam-Yau Chan, Thomas B. Song, and Michael L. Brown, "רָפָא (*rāpāʾ* I)," *NIDOTTE* 3:1162–73.

[91] Chan et al., "רָפָא," 22–34. Keywords include *sak* "sackcloth" (Gen 37:34; Ps 30:12 MT); *yarad* "to go down" (Gen 37:35; Ps 30:4, 10), *sheol* "world of the dead" (Gen 37:35; Ps 30:4), *bakah* "to weep," *beki* "weeping" (Gen 37:35; Ps 30:6). Also, *ʿabal* "to mourn" is a synonym for *saphad* "to wail, mourn" (Gen 37:34; Ps 30:12; cf. Amos 5:16; Mic 1:8). See Arnulf Baumann, "אָבַל," *TDOT* 1:45. There are several other connections that echo the catastrophe of death connected to sin, including *ʿaphar* "dust" (death, Gen 3:19; Ps 30:10), *shakhat* "to destroy" (the flood, Gen 6:17; Ps 30:10). See John Goldingay, *Psalms Volume 1: Psalms 1–41*, BCOTWP (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 431.

[92] Several commentators see v. 7 as the structural and thematic center of the psalm. See David Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999), 183–84; Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 281.

(v. 9 MT), his praise endures forever as he has been girded[93] with joy (Heb. *śimḥâ*, v. 12). Throughout this psalm, the vocabulary of praise has a theological basis that gives direction to what it means to be godly and affirming the covenant with God, committed to a life of praise.

12. Psalm 31

Psalm 31, a lament expressed in five strophes (vv. 1–5; 6–9; 10–14; 15–21; 22–25), has the largest concentration of anthropological terms in the central strophe. The psalm alternates between thankful testimonies of salvation (vv. 6–9; 15–21) and retrospective wrestling's with guilt and hope-filled pleas (vv. 1–5; 10–14; 22–25).[94]

Strophic Structure of Psalm 31

A vv. 1–5 Pleas for deliverance
B vv. 6–9 Testimony of salvation with rejoicing
- I trust in YHWH
- I will rejoice and be glad in your *ḥesed*

C vv. 10–14 Reflection of guilt
B[1] vv. 15–21 Testimony of salvation with plea
- I trust in YHWH
- Save me by your *ḥesed*

A[1] vv. 22–25 Rejoicing in deliverance
- He has wondrously shown His *ḥesed*

The verbal parallels between A, A[1] and B, B[1] serve to highlight the central strophe's significance (vv. 10–14).[95] The repetition of the verb "to become weak" (Heb. *ʿašaš*) in the central section, coupled with at least 6 anthropological terms, highlights the perception of the feebleness and frailty of humanity. The description of physical weakness, social reproach, and being an object of intended violence serve as a reminder that the godly one is subject to all the bad experiences resident in a sinful world. This fact only makes the appeal for deliverance in the first two strophes and the proclamation of the answered plea in the last two strophes all the more noteworthy. When the godly one is at their weakest then YHWH's strength is seen in its fullness.

93 Mark F. Rooker, "אָזַר," *NIDOTTE* 1:344.

94 Weber, *Werkbuch Psalmen I*, 150.

95 The repeated verbs include to be ashamed (*bwš*; vv. 2, 18), to trust (*bṭḥ*; vv. 7, 15), to take refuge (*ḥsh*; vv. 2, 20), to save (*yšʿ*; vv. 3, 17), to rescue (*nṣl*; vv. 3, 16).

The cognate of *ḥasîd*, *ḥesed*, is found on both sides of the central strophe. The covenantal focus again is highlighted in an allusion to the Aaronic benediction (v. 17) as well as several parallels with the covenant speech found in Deuteronomy 31 as well as with Psalm 18.[96] The allusions to this passage, where God states that His people would break the covenant and He would hide His face (cf. Ps 30:7), may be the background for the psalmist's introductory formulaic language of taking refuge in YHWH and pleading not to become ashamed (cf. Pss 25:2, 20; 71:1). If this is the case, then the weakness may be due to a covenant breach. The psalmist's plea again appeals to the Aaronic benediction, requesting that YHWH "make His face shine" upon His servant (v. 17a), and continues the theme that godliness is not innate but necessitates the blessing of YHWH.[97]

13. Psalm 32

In this wisdom psalm,[98] the godly one is one whose sins are covered, whose transgressions are lifted up (from him), and against whom God does not impute/count against them iniquity (vv. 1–2). Typically, when these three words for sin are used together, God is in view as bringing atonement.[99] The covenant element is further developed by David's use of these words in regard to himself (v. 5; cf. Ps 51). It evokes his theological rootedness in YHWH's character of restoring broken sinful humans.[100] The happy/blessed one is the beneficiary of God's activity. Affirming this direction of intention, in v. 10 the godly one is the one who trusts in God and God's *ḥesed* surrounds him (Exod 34:6, 7a). These allusions to Exod 34 are key to understanding the relationship between the covenant Lordship of YHWH expressed in His *ḥesed* and those covenanted to Him experiencing His atoning activity. The anthropological focus here is on humanity in general. The passive participles in v. 1 are the antecedents to the noun human (Heb. *ʾadam*),

[96] Be strong and courageous (v. 25; cf. Deut 31:23); "to hide the face" (Hi. of *satar* + *pane*, v. 21; cf. Deut 31:17, 18; cf. Ps 10:11; 13:2; 22:25). Several other parallels with Psalm 18 (which also parallels Deuteronomy 31) also highlight the frailty of humanity. Both psalms utilize images of security (*ṣûrî* ["my rock," 18:3, 47; 31:4], yšʿ ["victory"], and *məpālṭî* ["deliverance and salvation," 18:3, 4, 47, 49; 31:2, 17]), and identify a source of antagonism, *ʾōyēḇ* ("enemy," 18:3, 49; 31:9).

[97] Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms," 57–61.

[98] Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 265–66.

[99] Exod 34:6–7; Lev 16:21; Job 13:23; Pss 32:1–5; 51:1–3; Isa 59:12–16.

[100] Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 203.

which lends itself towards an all-inclusive perspective.[101] The focus on humanity continues, but this time describes the impact of living in non-covenantal ways (i.e., repentance, humility) in what is hyperbolic language. The poetic line "my bones wasted away" depicts the interior pain that came from groaning (mental anguish).

The corrective to this dilemma is that YHWH gives wise counsel, instructs, and teaches the godly, encouraging them to accept His instruction so they may live with joy and thanksgiving. Exodus 34 connects the covenant lordship and attributes of atoning activity in the person of YHWH. This is alluded to in Ps 32:10, where the psalmist states that the one who trusts in YHWH (His person), *ḥesed* (His attribute) surrounds him. The godly are also called the righteous and the upright of heart. This is a strong indication that moral life is imputed and imparted in ways that have physical and psychological benefits for the godly one.

14. Psalm 37

As the final psalm that references the godly one in Book I of the Psalter, Ps 37 is a fusion of all the previous references to the godly in the aforementioned psalms. The psalm concentrates on the twin themes in Psalms 1 and 2, the two ways and the judgment of the godly and wicked. The strong emphasis on inheriting and dwelling in the land highlights the societal blessings of covenant fidelity (vv. 3, 9, 11, 22, 29, 34). Another feature of this psalm is a catalog of ethical dispositions and actions of the righteous (Heb. *ṣaddîq*; vv. 6, 16, 17, 21, 29, 30). Two main points are highlighted. First, it mentions that it is God who generates the activity of the righteous (v. 6) and that it is He who upholds them (v. 17). Their salvation is from Him (v. 39). Second, many of the actions of the righteous are things prayed for in previous psalms that reference the *ḥasîd* (e.g., vv. 21, 26 the righteous are gracious, Pss 4:2; 30:9; 31:10). This summative psalm on the godly one thus structurally serves as a summative statement on what it means to be human in the way of God in contrast to the way of the wicked. The anthropological elements of humanity are the same (physical, mental, emotional, social); how those elements function in life depends on the covenantal relationship one has with YHWH. The way one chooses as their ethical experience.

[101] Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 203.

15. Conclusion

In conclusion, the *ḥasîd* are those YHWH has set apart for Himself (Ps 4:4), whose lives He preserves (31:24; 37:28; 97:10), who do not see corruption (16:10, Messianic), who are faithful (31:24), who make a covenant with YHWH (50:5), who are His people (85:9), who are the children of Israel (148:14), who love YHWH (97:10), and who will have psychological well-being, societal blessings, hope in times of distress, and future hope that impacts present life. Holiness is not innate for the godly one, it is a gift of YHWH intended for human thriving, which in its essence means reflecting the character of God in the selfless care for "the other."

The semantic relationships analyzed in these psalms have evidenced that in descriptions of biblical anthropology, the language of holiness informs the language that describes human life and vice versa. Moreover, micro-structural considerations express how structured readings of these psalms highlight aspects of human holiness in relationship to God and His work in the world. Finally, the macro-structural connections create a narrative reading that provides a systematic theology of human identity, as repeated words, phrases, and concepts in psalm groupings and collections give an aerial view of the subject matter. The editorial placement of these psalms seems to indicate that the God of *ḥesed* and the *ḥasîd* are a central theme of the Psalter.

The summative conclusion is that holiness is both a divine attribute and a human experience. What it means to be holy can only be an identity marker in relation to what it means to be in a covenant relationship with YHWH. Holiness in its relational context is thus a gift to be accepted as well as an impetus for understanding humanity's origin, nature, life, and destiny.