

AN EXEGETICAL EXPOSITION OF PSALM 132

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## CHAPTER 1

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

One fascinating concept to ponder is the question, “Where does God dwell?” Perhaps the most common answer would be that God dwells in heaven, for the Bible often makes reference to heaven as the dwelling place of God. In Isaiah God declares, “Heaven is my throne” (Is. 66:1), and in Qoheleth 5:2, the writer says “God is in heaven,” but you (i.e., man) are on earth. These and other passages show us that God does indeed dwell in heaven.

The Bible does teach that heaven is the place where God lives, but from the Bible one can also see that there is more that must be said to fully answer this question. Early in the biblical record one finds evidence that God, in some way, dwelt in the midst of His people in other ways as well, for Genesis 3:8 says that Adam and Eve “heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden.” God, in some way, was dwelling in the midst of His people.

A survey of biblical history also suggests that there were other times when God brought His presence into the midst of mankind. The appearances of “The Messenger of the Lord” (i.e., “Angel of the Lord”) at various points of OT history strongly suggest that God (perhaps the pre-incarnate Messiah) made numerous appearances into the presence of the man at different junctures (e.g., Gen. 16:7-14; 32:24ff.; Ex. 3:2; 23:20-21; Josh. 5:13-15; Jdg. 6:11-25). A contextual study of many of these incidents suggests that it

was actually God Himself who was coming into the presence of man through this Messenger of the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from these appearances of The Messenger of the Lord, one can also see that God had a unique purpose of placing His own dwelling in the midst of His people Israel, and that this dwelling would be in one localized place wherein He would make His presence known. This dwelling place would be a Tabernacle that Moses would construct by the orders of God, and that it would become the immediate dwelling place of YHWH as well as the central focus of corporate worship for the nation.

Early in the history of the Exodus, God told Moses in Exodus 25:8, “Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them.” The purpose of God was to make His dwelling place among His people, and at this point in human history, such dwelling would be in the Most Holy Place within this Tabernacle in a cloud of glory over the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 40:34-38). Thus, from the time of the Exodus, God began to dwell in the midst of His people in this cloud of glory, and He did so until He withdrew this glory and brought judgment upon His people for their covenant rebellion. Apostasy of the nation led to God withdrawing this special sense of dwelling from among His people (cf. Ezek. 10-11).

At the other end of the Bible, God shows that He will one day bring about a final and permanent restoration to creation by banishing the curse of sin and death. At the center of this blessing is God’s promise that He will forever make His dwelling in the midst of His people and that this intimate fellowship will never again be interrupted (cf. Rev. 21:2-4). The apostle records God’s promise which says, “Behold, the tabernacle of

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<sup>1</sup> Such passages are beyond the scope of this paper. The writer lists them at this point only to show that God is clearly not restricted to a spiritual, spatial realm called heaven.

God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them” (Rev. 21:3). For those who love the thought of God, and who groan under the agonies of a cursed world, these promises are indeed sweet and precious.

This paper will focus on one particular psalm (Psalm 132) which speaks at length about the topic of God dwelling in the midst of His people. This analysis will be driven by a study of the text from its original language and will include interaction with scholarly works in theological journals, exegetical commentaries, and other relevant exegetical resources. To the extent the context suggests messianic implications, this paper will show how the historical events of the psalm also looked ahead toward the future messianic age.

## CHAPTER 2

### INTRODUCTORY ISSUES

Before looking into further exposition of this psalm, it is appropriate to consider several matters that are somewhat introductory in nature to the study of the text. This will include first of all a brief consideration of the grouping into which Psalm 132 has been placed. A second point of introduction will consider, at least in a preliminary sense, the authorship, dating, and historical background for the writing of the psalm. A third point of introduction will give a brief discussion to the text as a whole. Particular textual issues will be addressed as the exegesis of the psalm proceeds. The fourth point of introduction will consider the literary structure of the psalm.

#### *The Grouping and Genre of Psalm 132*

Psalm 132 is commonly called one of the *Songs of Ascent* (שִׁיר הַתְּעִלּוֹת). The English Bible places this title as a superscription, but in the Hebrew text this superscription is considered part of verse 1. Most scholars do not consider such superscriptions to be part of the inspired text, but they do help modern readers gain insight into the origin and purpose of these psalms in the ancient community. There is some question about the exact meaning of this expression and what it signifies.

One suggestion has been that term “ascents” refers to the fifteen steps up which the Levites and priests ascended from the Court Of Women to the Court Of The Israelites. A second suggestion has been that the expression refers to an ascending

literary structure within the individual psalms.<sup>2</sup> A third and preferable suggestion (traditional view) is that the Songs of Ascent were so named due to the fact that Jewish pilgrims would “ascend” to Jerusalem on a periodic basis to worship at the annual festivals. One source describes it as follows:

The pilgrim psalms or ‘Songs of Ascent’ were probably sung by the Jewish pilgrims going up to Jerusalem to celebrate the three major festivals of the year (cf. Deut. 16:16). The psalms were sung as they ascended into the hill country to worship in Jerusalem. The pilgrim psalms praise God for his choice of Jerusalem as his holy city.<sup>3</sup>

This traditional view shows us that this grouping of psalms were used by the community as an instrument of corporate worship for faithful pilgrims on their way to worship in Jerusalem. The historical evidence suggests this is how to best view the superscription.

Another related question is whether one should try to classify this psalm even further than the superscription according to a literary category. In this discussion of genre, one finds a considerable lack of agreement. Fretheim shows that some, like Gunkel, have classified it as a “Song of Zion”; others like Oesterley have called it a “Royal Psalm”; others like Kraus have classified it simply as a “liturgy.”<sup>4</sup> Reflecting on Kraus, Heinz Kruse says that most writers have abandoned the views of Mowinckel who taught the “New Year Festival” idea of Yahweh’s Royal Inthronization, but that Kraus is still holding the same basic idea with his “Royal Zion Festival” view (i.e., every year at Tabernacles the nation held a festive procession to celebrate God’s choice of David and

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<sup>2</sup> R. Laird Harris; Gleason Archer; Bruce Waltke. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed. Chicago : Moody Press, 1999, c1980), S. 669, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix.

<sup>3</sup> Robert B. Hughes and Carl J. Laney, *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), S. 205, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix.

<sup>4</sup> Terrence E. Fretheim, “Psalm 132: A Form Critical Study,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 86 (Summer 1967): 289.



Zion).<sup>5</sup> The major problem with such views is that they are strongly conjectural and lack biblical evidence. Kruse points out that many of these ideas hinge on statements made in verses 6-9 of this psalm and such limited data provides scant support.<sup>6</sup> It seems that an easy explanation for the procession concept is the fact that this is poetic literature, and that these poetic statements may be looking back in history to the movement of the Ark in a “procession” toward Zion, but that these statements need not be taken to suggest an annual festival. Another writer sees validity in Allen’s “Song of Zion” view due to the emphasis upon Zion, also noting that some writers view the psalm more specifically as a “coronation ceremony of a Davidic king.”<sup>7</sup>

The lack of consensus suggests caution about a dogmatic categorization beyond what the psalm is called in its superscription, a Song of Ascent.

#### *The Authorship, Background and Dating of Psalm 132*

The content of Psalm 132 raises many questions about authorship, background and dating. The fact that it opens with a plea to remember David’s afflictions argues against Davidic authorship. Beyond this, one can safely suggest that the authorship could be any prophet from the time of Solomon onward. A significant number of scholars have argued for a fairly late date. Many writers would “assign this psalm to the postexilic period,” even though there are others who assign it early to the period of the united

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<sup>5</sup> Heinz Kruse, “Psalm 132 and the Royal Zion Festival,” *Vetus Testamentum* 33 no. 3 (July 1983): 279.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

<sup>7</sup> Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 803-804.

monarchy.<sup>8</sup> The psalm could have been written by Solomon himself. With reference to dating, Feinberg shows his agreement with Oesterley that all the “royal” psalms appear to be pre-exilic, including Psalm 132.<sup>9</sup> Calvin wrote that “even though one may dispute Solomonic authorship, his background and direct influence is unmistakable.”<sup>10</sup>

Some objections to an early date stem from assumptions based upon some kind of Literary, Source, or Form analysis. Houk’s article on Psalm 132 interacts with the works of Fretheim and Cross (on these same issues) and comes to the conclusion that Psalm 132 in its canonical form is ultimately the product of various authors and redactors, pointing out that “the poet-redactors (if they are skillful) make additions to fit all of what is already present.”<sup>11</sup> Houk refers to the work of Cross and the idea that “literary developments in the psalm” brought it to its present form and is corroborated by “syllable-word structures.”<sup>12</sup> This writer was not persuaded by Houk’s assertions on any grounds, least of which were his arguments about things like “the calculation of mean word lengths” as a method of analysis for finding patterns in the psalm that teach us about exegetical meaning.<sup>13</sup>

As far as late dating, though, there is no intrinsic theological reason why one should object to this possibility. Even some conservative works suggest a late date, perhaps that it was “a prayer by the returned exiles who wondered about the fulfillment

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<sup>8</sup> Smith, James E.: *The Wisdom Literature and Psalms*. Joplin, Mo. : College Press Pub. Co., 1996, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix.

<sup>9</sup> Charles L. Feinberg, “The Date of the Psalms,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 104:414 (October 1947): 431.

<sup>10</sup> John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Volume VI* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 142-143.

<sup>11</sup> Cornelius B. Houk, “Psalm 132, Literary Integrity, and Syllable-Word Structures,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 6 (Fall 1978): 46.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

of God's promises to David, primarily the promises of eternal dominion to David's family and of worship in righteousness in Zion."<sup>14</sup>

In terms of historical background, though, Leupold sees it as "intriguing" the way that some writers argue that this psalm was part of a "New Year's Festival and to be sung in procession" or as some kind of festival of enthronement" for Yahweh.<sup>15</sup> Leupold rightly exercises caution about reading into Scripture ideas with no support from within the Bible.

Perhaps the safest statement on authorship, background and dating is to say that it could have been written anywhere from Solomon through the post-exilic era, but that internal evidence suggests an earlier date when the Ark was still in temple, perhaps even that Solomon himself composed the psalm when dedicating the first temple.<sup>16</sup> The enthusiasm over the Ark (the only psalm to mention the Ark), suggests a date between Solomon and the destruction of the first temple when the Ark disappeared, never to be seen again.

### *The Text of Psalm 132*

Generally speaking, the Masoretic Text (MT) is without any major textual problems.<sup>17</sup> The BHS does contain various statements in the textual apparatus, but none of them raise any serious textual issues. The psalm is found among the Qumran

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<sup>14</sup> John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985), S. 1:887, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix.

<sup>15</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1969), 911.

<sup>16</sup> VanGemeren, 803.

<sup>17</sup> Fretheim, "Psalm 132: A Form Critical Study," 289; Kruse, 280.

manuscripts in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> which contains fairly complete texts of Psalms 93–150, but in a somewhat different order than that of the MT.<sup>18</sup> Wilson provides an interesting analysis of this Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPs<sup>a</sup>).<sup>19</sup> He says that some scholars (like James Sanders) see the scroll as being a first century A. D. textual and canonical development of the Psalter (the scroll does date on paleographical and archeological grounds to the first century A. D.). However, Wilson also points out that many other scholars do not hold this view, but rather accept a fourth century B. C. canonization of the Psalter and consider this Qumran scroll to be a “late, non-authoritative arrangement of canonical and apocryphal psalms collected after the fixation of the canonical Psalter.”<sup>20</sup> For this paper, the significance will be whether or not any particular textual issues are affected by this debate. This writer does not agree with the “open-ended” canon idea as Sanders affirms, nor does he see any help in textual issues from these finds.<sup>21</sup>

One of the directly relevant points to this analysis of Psalm 132 that Wilson deals with is his suggestion that Psalm 132 may contain an elaboration of concepts in 2 Samuel 7:4 that came from certain non-canonical statements that were in the Samuel text (statements that had been noted as being non-canonical by early scribes).<sup>22</sup> Reflecting on the studies of Shearyahu Talmon, Wilson says that Talmon shows how some manuscripts contain certain scribal markings (found in various portions of the OT and abbreviated as

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<sup>18</sup> Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. 3rd. ed. (Chicago : Moody Press, 1998, c1994), 561, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix.

<sup>19</sup> Gerald H. Wilson, “The Qumran Scroll Reconsidered.” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 47.4 (October 1985): 624-642.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 624-625.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 628.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 629-630.

p.b.p.) after 2 Samuel 7:4 that indicate an insertion of explanatory data following the canonical portion of the text (note: this p.b.p. at 2 Samuel 7:4 is not in the Leningrad or Cairo codices).<sup>23</sup> From this discussion, Wilson suggests that there could have been some early Jewish tradition that was placed into certain 2 Samuel manuscripts that may have had influence on Psalm 132. This conjecture may or may not be true.

As far as the Septuagint, Codex B is missing the section that contains Psalm 132 with a gap from Psalm 106:27–138:6.<sup>24</sup> The psalm is found, however, in various other Greek texts and such information (in addition to the Targums, Syriac and other textual sources) does provide extra witness for the analysis of individual textual problems.

### *The Literary Structure of Psalm 132*

Opinions vary on the structure of Psalm 132. Alexander takes verses 1-9 as former the first half of the psalm with verses 10-18 forming the fulfillment of what was requested in the first half.<sup>25</sup> VanGemerren sees the psalm as consisting of three stanzas (vv. 1-5, 6-10, 11-18),<sup>26</sup> but goes on to suggest that verse 10 (still part of the petition) forms an inclusio with verse 1. His final conclusion is still that 11-18 are an answer to the petitions of 1-10. Several writers, like Delitzsch, see four ten-line strophes, although, as he notes, the first strophe could actually have only nine lines.<sup>27</sup> Kruse calls them four

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 630, n. 26.

<sup>24</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Philip W. Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* (Wheaton, Ill. : Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), S. 190, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix.

<sup>25</sup> Joseph A. Alexander, *The Psalms: Translated and Explained* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1864), 523.

<sup>26</sup> VanGemerren, 804.

<sup>27</sup> Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, tr. By D. Easton (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1889), 309, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix.

strophes of “perfectly equal length,” something he believes should caution against suggesting omissions, additions, or interpolations which destroy the symmetry.<sup>28</sup>

Allen suggests a structure that neatly divides the psalm into two parts, verses 1-10 and 11-18,<sup>29</sup> with each of the two halves providing a “systematic repetition of the terminology” that shows how the petitions of 1-10 are answered in 11-18.<sup>30</sup> Leupold also sees this structure.<sup>31</sup> The following chart puts the structure in graphic form:

The Petition	The Answer
Vv. 1-5: The plea on David’s behalf that recalls David’s oath to never rest until YHWH has an honorable dwelling place	Vv. 11-12: The answer from YHWH in the form of an oath that YHWH will establish a permanent dwelling in Zion through the sons of David
Vv. 6-8: The plea for worship of YHWH at His chosen dwelling place	Vv. 13-15: The answer that YHWH has chosen a place where He will dwell
V. 9: The plea that godly priests lead in worship	V. 16: The answer that godly priests will lead in worship
V. 10: The plea for the sake of David that YHWH not turn away the face of His anointed	Vv. 17-18: The answer from YHWH that He will cause the horn of David to prosper and that no enemies will prosper against him.

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<sup>28</sup> Kruse, 281.

<sup>29</sup> Leslie Allen, *Psalms 101-150* in the *Word Biblical Commentary* series, vol. 21, eds. David A Hubbard and John D. W. Watts (Waco: Word, 1981), 204.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Leupold, 910.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE NEED FOR A DWELLING PLACE FOR THE LORD (VV. 1-10)

Psalm 132 clearly brings out one main concept: the discussion about a dwelling place for the Lord. The first half of Psalm 132 comes in verses 1-10 and focuses on a petition that shows the need for a dwelling place for the Lord. Two main themes come out in this first half of the psalm, (1) David's dedication to finding a dwelling place for the Lord (vv. 1-5), and (2) the establishment of a dwelling place for the Lord (vv. 6-10).

#### *David's Dedication to Finding a Dwelling Place for the Lord (vv. 1-5)*

The repeated emphasis in verses one to five is upon the zeal and dedication of King David to find a suitable dwelling place for YHWH, the God of Israel. Following his rise to power and the securing of his kingdom from both internal and external threats, King David demonstrated his heart-felt desire to see a dwelling place for YHWH that would truly honor Him as God. Verses one to five show this dedication in David's plea (v. 1) and David's zeal (vv. 2-5).

#### David's Plea (v. 1)

Verse one opens the psalm by recording a plea from the psalmist that God would, on David's behalf "remember" all of David's afflictions. When the Psalmist asks the Lord to remember David, it is not as though God has forgotten who David is. There are a number of times in the Bible where the expression "remember" has the idea of taking action on behalf of someone (cf. Gen. 8:1), and such seems to be the sense here. What the Psalmist is doing is pleading with God to show favor and grace to the Davidic dynasty for the sake of King David (זִכְרוֹן). The use of the preposition *lamed* has the idea

of perhaps for the “interest” or “advantage” of David,<sup>32</sup> or perhaps the closely related sense of “ethical dative” in which “a person other than the subject or object is concerned in the matter.”<sup>33</sup> Although it is possible that this plea was being given in a time of crisis for the Davidic dynasty, there is little within this context to suggest that such was the case. The prayer simply seems to be a petition for sustaining grace on behalf of David and his dynasty.

There is some question about what is intended by this expression “affliction” (לְיָדָיו: an infinitive construct with a third person masculine suffix). Without further textual evidence, one should probably not adopt the Septuagintal or Syriac concept of “humility” which appears to be an attempt to smooth out the somewhat hard reading of the Hebrew text.<sup>34</sup>

One of the questions concerns the Masoretic Text’s use of a Pual infinitive construct form as represented in the NASB’s “affliction,” the term that forms the direct object of the verb “remember” (being noted as the accusative by the particle object marker לְיָדָיו.<sup>35</sup>). One can ask the question whether or not these afflictions are referring to some type of external afflictions (e.g., wars, national dissension, family conflicts, etc.) or whether they refer to some type of internal afflictions like a kind of self-imposed anxiety and restlessness.

Second Samuel 7 shows how David wanted to build a temple for the Lord. That is, David wanted to build a “house” for YHWH that He might dwell in it within the city

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<sup>32</sup> Waltke, 207.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 208; Kruse refers to six similar uses in Nehemiah, 281 (5:19; 7:14; 13:14, 22, 29, 31).

<sup>34</sup> Allen, 201, n. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 179.



of Jerusalem. From a study of David's life, one knows that this desire came after many years of trials, conflicts and hardships to become king and rule over the kingdom of Israel. One thing is clear: David's faith in the Lord and his dedication to serve and honor the Lord brought him many afflictions. Some believe that this is the idea behind the use of the term afflictions. Solomon alluded to some of these external conflicts in 1 Kings 5:3 as he spoke these words to Hiram, the king of Tyre: "You know that David my father was unable to build a house for the name of the Lord his God because of the wars which surrounded him, until the Lord put them under the soles of his feet." Indeed, David had many battles to fight in bringing in a kingdom for the glory of the Lord. Based upon this line of reasoning, the plea would be a plea to YHWH to show favor to the House of David for the sake of David and all the external afflictions and conflicts that he endured for the name of YHWH.

On the other hand, there is some reason to question this exact line of reasoning due to a grammatical irregularity. There are some writers who doubt whether this expression affliction (Pual infinitive construct) is being understood correctly. As a matter of fact, some writers actually question whether or not the inspired text was actually a Pual infinitive construct, since such a form would seem to be slightly self contradictory. Waltke writes, "Because the [Pual] infinitive would mean the act of 'being put in condition' and because the Pual is not concerned with an act but an attained condition, the Pual infinitive is essentially a contradiction."<sup>36</sup> Waltke cites the work of Ernst Jenni who says that the only Pual infinitive construct would be this use in Psalm 132 and that the only use of a Pual infinitive absolute (which Jenni regards as questionable) would be

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<sup>36</sup> Bruce Waltke, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 419-420.

Genesis 40:15.<sup>37</sup> Gibson, however, without any dispute, lists this term in his grammar as a Pual infinitive construct.<sup>38</sup>

Delitzsch also accepts the form of the MT and takes the afflictions as specifically referring to internal kinds of afflictions, and not the idea of external conflicts. He writes, “By this verbal substantive of the *Pual* is meant all the care and trouble which David had in order to procure a worthy abode for the sanctuary of Jahve.”<sup>39</sup> Those who take this to be a Pual infinitive form in the original text base this understanding on the nature of the action and what such a form would produce in terms of meaning. Calvin takes this same approach and sees the term referring to David’s “anxious cares . . . numerous difficulties and struggles.”<sup>40</sup>

From the historical background and the expressions which follow in verses 2-5, the general idea seems to be clear: the expression seems to be speaking about all the challenges that faced David in establishing a dwelling for YHWH, and how these challenges left him in a state of unrest until he could accomplish this task. The psalmist then expands on this first plea in verses 2-5 with an elaboration of this zeal.

#### David’s Zeal (vv. 2-5)

Verses 2-5 give an elaboration on the intense zeal that King David had for the glory and honor of YHWH, in particular, that YHWH might have an appropriate dwelling place. Verses 2-5 contain a series of statements with numerous parallel

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., n. 2.

<sup>38</sup> J. C. L. Gibson, *Davidson’s Introductory Hebrew Grammar-Syntax* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 128.

<sup>39</sup> Delitzsch, xii, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix.

<sup>40</sup> Calvin, 144.

declarations all of which demonstrate David's zeal to establish a dwelling place for the YHWH. This includes (1) an affirmation of David's oath (v. 2), and (2) the content of the oath (vv. 3-5).

*The Affirmation of David's oath (v. 2)*

Verse 2 begins with the Hebrew term  $\text{וַיִּשְׁבַּע}$  which many translations treat as introducing an object clause, referring back to actions of King David ("how he swore," NASB). Alternatively, Waltke lists one use of this pronoun as being that in which it might take the force of the nominative case and introduces a dependant clause (i.e., "who swore").<sup>41</sup> Alexander is one writer who seems to take the term in this manner.<sup>42</sup> Neither use seems to alter the main force of the text, although the former concept ("how he swore") seems to more closely connect the idea of "affliction" in verse one with the oath of David in verses 2-5.

Here in verse 2, the psalmist speaks about the way that David "swore to the Lord" (YHWH) and how (in parallel), he says that David "vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob." This verse brings out the intense zeal that David had for the honor and glory of the Lord, so much so that David was willing to take an oath that he certainly would honor God, even at personal loss. The first term "swore" ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁבַּע}$ ) occurs in various forms 184 times in the Old Testament, mainly in the Niphal and Hiphil stems. As here, the Niphal stem often has a reflexive stress such as binding oneself by an oath.<sup>43</sup> The second verb ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁבַּע}$ ) is

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<sup>41</sup> Waltke, 333.

<sup>42</sup> Alexander, 523.

<sup>43</sup> Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed. Chicago : Moody Press, 1999, c1980), S. 899, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix.

a close synonym and means simply “to make a vow.”<sup>44</sup> There is little reason for seeing any significant distinction between these two parallel statements. Each of them is representing the idea that David made an oath to YHWH, the God of Israel.

The expression “Mighty One of Jacob” (here and v. 5) is a rarely used epithet for the God of Israel. Its first use is in Genesis 49:24, but it can also be seen in Isaiah 49:26 and Isaiah 60:16 as well as the similar expression in Isaiah 1:24 “The Mighty One of Israel.” The connotation is better understood as something like “the great strength of the Lord as the Divine Warrior”<sup>45</sup> rather than being an epithet for the Ark as held by Fretheim.<sup>46</sup>

One cannot actually see it recorded in Scripture when or where it was that David actually made such an oath. Several possibilities might explain how the psalmist came to write these statements. First, it is possible that the psalmist, by the work of the Holy Spirit, made these prophetic statements without any other outside sources, but that they do truly represent an oath that David made. Second, it is possible that the writer had another historical source (non-inspired) that the Holy Spirit employed when this psalmist wrote inspired Scripture (like the “p.b.p.” scribal markings mentioned earlier in this paper in the section on the textual issues).<sup>47</sup> Third, it is possible that the psalmist is taking implications from 2 Samuel 7 and, again by the work of the Holy Spirit, giving an inspired account of how David actually spoke to the Lord and dedicated himself to bringing honor to the Lord. Of these three possibilities, the latter seems most plausible.

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. common uses in passages like 2 Samuel 15:8 in which Absalom claims to have made a vow.

<sup>45</sup> VanGemeren, 805.

<sup>46</sup> Fretheim, “Psalm 132: A Form Critical Study,” 291.

<sup>47</sup> Kruse, 282 (“the possibility cannot be excluded . . . the poet . . . followed a reliable tradition”).

Certainly what one sees here is the zeal and dedication of King David. As Kidner put it, David's commitment to build a temple for the Lord was "not mere politicking, but rather a genuine zeal for YHWH."<sup>48</sup>

*The Content of David's Oath (vv. 3-5)*

The actual content of this oath that David made is now recorded in verses three through five. It consists of a four-fold oath by David that he will not give himself to enjoy the natural comforts of life until he has secured an adequate dwelling place for God. The oath statements of verses three to four contain three uses of the conditional particle  $\text{דִּלְמָא}$  (e.g., v. 3:  $\text{דִּלְמָא אֶבְנֶה לַיהוָה בַּיִת}$ ). The fourth statement in this oath still carries the force of the first three statements even though this conditional particle is not used in the fourth clause. A direct reading of this first statement would be something like "If I go into the tent of my house." These declarations represent the standard elliptical form of oath formulas that was common in biblical Hebrew. An expanded sense would be something like, "May YHWH do so to me if I go . . ."<sup>49</sup> In other words, David was calling on God to bring a judgment down upon him if he would not fulfill this oath.

In this first pair of statements, David vows that he will not enter his house or lie upon his bed. In this first expression David uses one Hebrew term that means "tent" ( $\text{בַּיִת}$ ), which raises the question on whether or not David was possibly making some kind of word play between his own palace and the Tabernacle in which the Ark had historically been housed (although the root term for tent and Tabernacle are different).

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<sup>48</sup> Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150* (Cambridge: IVP, 1975), 449.

<sup>49</sup> Gibson, 187.

Waltke suggests that the construct relationship with “tent” followed by “house” may be a “genitive of genus” with the idea of “my tent house.”<sup>50</sup> David’s tent was his house (described by others as a genitive of apposition).

In the second expression David vows that he will not go up to the couch of his bed. The former term (in construct) has the concept of couch (on which one lazily reclines, as in Amos 3:12; 6:4) while the latter term is the more narrow term that means bed, sometimes in the context of a marriage bed where marital relations take place (cf. Gen. 49:4; 1 Chron. 5:1; Ct. 1:16). The likely meaning here is not that David has taken an oath to refrain from sexual relations until fulfilling his vow to YHWH, but that he is vowing to refrain from enjoying normal comforts of life (such as sleep itself) until he has fulfilled his vow.

The third and fourth statements continue to follow the same basic theme. David says that he will not give sleep to his eyes nor slumber to his eyelids until he has fulfilled his vow. The statements need to be understood within the poetical context in which we see them spoken. Delitzsch writes, “The meaning of the hyperbolically expressed vow in the form of an oath is that for so long he will not rejoice at his own dwelling-house, nor give himself up to sleep that is free from anxiety; in fine, for so long he will not rest.”<sup>51</sup> He is probably correct in seeing hyperbole in these statements.

In verse 5 one sees that David’s commitment is centered in his desire to “find a place for the Lord,” expanded further in the parallel statement as being “a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob.” The heart of David’s oath is that he will not rest or have

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<sup>50</sup> Waltke, 153.

<sup>51</sup> Delitzsch, S. 5:xii, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix.

satisfaction until he can find and establish a dwelling place for YHWH that is appropriate for such a great God. The first term “place” (מִקְוֵה) is a very general term that is followed by the more precise term “dwelling place” (מִבְּרֵית דְּבִיר). The latter term is the term from which one gets the English word “tabernacle” (a tent dwelling). The imagery certainly hearkens back to the fact that the Ark of the Covenant had historically been housed in such a tent (cf. Ex. 25:9). Here in verse five, the term actually takes a plural form which raises the question why it is so represented. One can only offer educated guesses why.

One possibility is that David was considering the fact that he would have to bring the Ark into Jerusalem in a temporary dwelling before the more permanent temple could be built. Another possibility could be the fact that the Tabernacle had an outer sanctuary as well as the inner sanctuary—the Holy of Holies (Fretheim notes that a feminine plural is used for the temple in Psalms 43:3 and 84:1).<sup>52</sup> Perhaps the best solution is the one that this plural noun is an example of how some abstract nouns “have both singular and plural forms, the latter perhaps intensifying the idea of the singular.”<sup>53</sup> The basic idea seems clear enough: David will not be satisfied and rest until he can see a grand dwelling place constructed for the Lord. As Carson put it, David was willing to undergo “the subordination of personal life, and comforts to the great priority.”<sup>54</sup> Earlier in the history of the nation, God had indeed begun to dwell in their midst within the Tabernacle (cf. Ex. 40:34-38), but God had also promised that one day He would establish one particular

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<sup>52</sup> Fretheim, “Psalm 132: A Form Critical Study,” 294.

<sup>53</sup> Gibson, 20.

<sup>54</sup> D. A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary : 21st Century Edition*. 4th ed. Leicester (England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA : Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), S. Ps 132:1, cited in electronic form from Logos Libronix.

place of central worship for His people (Deut. 12:11; 14:23; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2). Moses did not reveal *where* this place would be, but he did say that God would choose one place. Knowing that YHWH desired one place as His permanent dwelling, David dedicated himself to seeing that such a place would be honoring unto God.

#### *The Establishment of a Dwelling Place for the Lord (vv. 6-10)*

Verse 6 brings a shift in focus from David's dedication to that of establishing a dwelling place for the Lord. This section may be broken down into (1) the focus on a dwelling place for the Ark (v. 6), and (2) the implications of a Dwelling Place (vv. 7-10).

#### *The Focus on a Dwelling Place for the Ark (v. 6)*

The idea in verse 6 centers on the finding of the Ark of the Covenant. It is first necessary to give a historical background, before giving an explanation of the verse.

#### *Historical Background to the Ark*

As noted earlier, it is true that God dwelt with man in the Garden of Eden. From that time onward, however, till the Exodus, one does not really any clear example of God dwelling in the midst of His people. For the nation of Israel, the construction of the Ark of the Covenant and a Tabernacle began a new era in which YHWH would dwell with His people. This Tabernacle (and the Ark within) was, by God's design, the place in which the God of the universe would localize His presence in a very special and unique way. During the 40 years of wilderness wandering, the Lord would go before the congregation and take them to the place where He willed to have them camp. The priests would settle the Tabernacle and the Lord would reveal Himself by the so-called Shekinah glory (a post-biblical term derived from the same root as tabernacle) within the



Tabernacle. The Bible says that throughout their journeys whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out, but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up. God was dwelling in the midst of His people. This pattern went on for 40 years until Israel entered into the land of Canaan and began to subdue the land.

Even after the wanderings, the Ark continued to be very much at the center of Israel's life as seen in the following examples: (1) the crossing of the Jordan River (Josh. 3:13-17; 4:9-10), (2) the overthrow of Jericho (Josh. 6:6-11), and (3) the beginning of their new life in a new land (Josh. 8:33: Gerizim and Ebal; cf. Jdg. 20:27: Bethel).

For a time, the Ark resided Bethel (Jdg. 20:27). For a time it resided in a place called Shiloh (when Samuel was a child). First Samuel 4 describes how the Ark got stolen by the Philistines and taken to the Philistine cities and how God afflicted the Philistines and compelled them to return the Ark to Israel. First Samuel six says that the Philistines sent the Ark up the Sorek Valley until Israel recovered it at Beth Shemesh. Unfortunately, the irreverence shown by Israel evoked the wrath of God so that over 50,000 men were slain, leading the people of Beth Shemesh to send the Ark up the hill into the mountain town of Kiriath-jearim (1 Sam. 6:21). There, in the house of Abinidab, the Ark remained for the next 20 years. Certainly it was common knowledge throughout the nation that the Ark had come to rest in the house of Abinidab (a rest concerning which 1 Chronicles 13:3 says, "we neglected it in the days of Saul").<sup>55</sup>

The next reference to the Ark is in 2 Samuel 6. David had now become king over all Israel (Israel and Judah) and sees that he should seek to unify the nation even further by creating one central place of worship in the city which he had chosen as his political

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<sup>55</sup> Kidner, 449.

capital (2 Sam. 5). Merrill provides substantial evidence however (evidence that others also agree with), that it actually may not have been till somewhat later in the reign of David that David actually brought the Ark into Jerusalem from Kiriath-jearim, and perhaps even later still that he expressed his desire to build a temple for the Lord.<sup>56</sup> Merrill suggests that even though Samuel and Chronicles suggests that he brought it in early in his reign, there are certain reasons why it should be understood as later, probably in the last decade of his reign. One of these is the fact that David built his palace with the help of Hiram king of Tyre, but, as Merrill notes, Hiram reigned from about 980 to 947 B. C.<sup>57</sup> Thus, the beginning of Hiram's reign was already into the last decade of David's life, a life that had already been filled with many conflicts, wars, and personal struggles. First Chronicles notes that it was after Hiram helped David build his royal palace in the City of David (14:1) that David then had a tabernacle constructed to house the Ark and had it properly transported into the city, having learned a painful lesson earlier when Uzzah died (15:1, 11-15). Verse 29 specifically states that this place was in the City of David (which contextually should not be taken as the place that would later become the temple mount).<sup>58</sup> Chapter 16 then describes the great festivities that surrounded the arrival of the Ark there within the city of David, a move by David himself to centralize national worship, a move that also could have been seen by some as an effort to "tamper

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<sup>56</sup> Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), cf. 238-263 for a lengthy discussion).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

<sup>58</sup> "Zion," also known as "The City of David," was initially only the area down the hill south of the Temple Mount. It appears that over time the Temple Mount to the north of the City of David and later even all of Jerusalem would come to be known as Zion.

with religious tradition,” something that really did not belong to the king.<sup>59</sup> If these events were later in life as Merrill suggests, it is likely that much of the earlier opposition (from enemy nations, Saul’s supporters, and even his own family) would have subsided, thus permitting David to bring the Ark in, perhaps around 977 B. C.<sup>60</sup>

As suggested by some, including Merrill,<sup>61</sup> it is also possible that 2 Samuel 7 did not immediately follow the entrance of the Ark to be housed in a tabernacle in the City of David. Delitzsch adds this note:

What he said to Nathan . . . was now in a time of triumphant peace . . . after the first step towards it had already been taken in the removal of the Ark of the covenant to Zion (2 Sam. 6); for 2 Sam 7 is appended to 2 Sam. 6 out of its chronological order and only on account of the internal connection. After the bringing home of the Ark, which had been long yearned for (Ps. 101:2), and did not take place without difficulties and terrors, was accomplished, a series of years again passed over, during which David always carried about with him the thought of erecting God a Temple-building.<sup>62</sup>

In other words, it is possible that Samuel places these events very close due to thematic elements that showed God establishing David, but his actual desire to build a temple (as spoken to Nathan in 2 Sam. 7) may have come after further family conflicts that come later in 2 Samuel. Merrill offers a well-supported reconstruction that places the eventual death of Absalom in 976 B. C. and suggests that it was not until sometime after this that David actually expressed his desire to build a temple (“house”) for the Lord

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<sup>59</sup> Merrill, 242.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>62</sup> Delitzsch, S. 5:xii, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix.

as seen in 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17.<sup>63</sup> This plausible reconstruction fits the biblical data.

Given this setting, one sees that David has gone through the whole ordeal of being chosen by God, yet hated and pursued by King Saul; he has survived all these attempts on his life by Saul; he has survived Goliath; he has fought many battles; he has become king over all Israel, eventually capturing Zion to make it his political capital; he has settled and strengthened his kingdom on every side; he has obtained multiple wives and multiple children; he has built his grand, royal palace; he has blown it by his sin with Bathsheba (and suffered the consequences); he has even brought the Ark into Zion. With all of this as a background, David sees that he is being exalted by God in the highest way, yet he also sees that YHWH is still dwelling in a tent there in the City of David.

Prior to this, the first step would have been to bring the Ark up from Kiriath-jearim, that small, obscure, wooded village to the south west of Jerusalem where it had been since it was returned by the Philistines. This is the immediate point that Psalm 132:6 is focusing on—the actual bringing of the Ark into Jerusalem. In all of this one must bear in mind that this psalm is a piece of poetic literature and as such it exhibits certain traits of poetic literature that require special handling. Failure to recognize the poetic features will frustrate the exegete who is searching for a clear interpretation. Perhaps this is what led Calvin to say, “This verse is obscure,”<sup>64</sup> when a proper understanding of the poetic genre would have easily explained the fluid movement within the psalm.

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<sup>63</sup> Merrill, 245-246.

<sup>64</sup> Calvin, 146.

The psalmist is recounting the significance of this entire background to show the way that God demonstrated His purpose to establish a dwelling place in Zion, but in so doing, he is bringing together various historical elements and descriptions which are (on a surface reading) out of chronological order. This is due to the poetic genre in which the psalm is set. David is looking at his own comfort and glory as the king of Israel and realizes that God is not being honored the way that he should. David knew that it was time to stop neglecting the Ark and to find a dwelling place for the God of Israel.

#### *The Explanation of the Finding of the Ark*

Verse 6 presents (in poetic form) a description of the joy of the people (David being one of them) over the joy of reintroducing the Ark to the nation. As noted, this psalm was written after David, possibly in the days of Solomon, and possibly even later, but here it is looking at the joy of the nation when the Ark was reintroduced.

This writer believes that the stated genre considerations and former historical background alleviate many of the objections that have been raised about the meaning of this verse. Interpretively, this writer suggests that verse 6 should be understood as two parallel statements which are effectively synonymous; that is, the declaration of the people that they have “heard about it in Ephrathah” stands in a synonymous relationship to “we found it in the field of Jaar.”<sup>65</sup> Space limitations prevent interaction with all the explanations that have been suggested to try and explain verse 6 (e.g., Ephrathah refers to Ephraim or Shiloh, etc.). The central points to observe are as follows: (1) One can clearly show that Ephrathah is closely related from ancient times not only as embracing

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<sup>65</sup> The feminine suffix translated “it” refers to “Ark” (אֲרוֹן) in verse eight which is in a feminine form in verse eight, 1 Samuel 4:17 and 2 Chronicles 8:11, although other uses in the OT are masculine.

Bethlehem (cf. Mic. 5:1-2), but also as indicating a region that goes beyond Bethlehem to include the surrounding environs. Alan Ross adds this thought: “Ephrathah, also called Ephrath, Gen. 35:16, 19; 48:7, was an older name for Bethlehem or the name of the area around Bethlehem.”<sup>66</sup> Delitzsch takes this same position when he explains how Caleb’s third wife Ephrath gave birth to *Hur* (1 Chron. 2:19) and that *Hur* was the father of the population of Bethlehem (1 Chron. 4:4), and that *Shobal*, the son of *Hur*, was the father of the population of Kiriath-jearim (1 Chron. 2:50).<sup>67</sup>

The psalmist was saying that when they heard that the Ark was in Ephrathah, it was, in that context, referring to Kiriath-jearim, the small, wooded, mountain village that lay west of Bethlehem within the environs of Ephrathah.

This declaration finds its parallel in “We found it in the field (Heb., “fields”) of Jaar.” The latter expression is a direct reference to the town of Kiriath-jearim (“the village of the forests”). This is precisely what Jaar is referring to for each word (Jearim and Jaar) comes from the Hebrew term that means forest or woods (יָרֵם, *jaar*, singular; *yearim*, plural). The Bible shows that this village is called by at least nine different names in various places of the Old Testament (e.g., cf. 2 Sam. 6:2). Given this variation, the present solution seems very plausible that the psalmist is equating these expressions as all referring to Kiriath-jearim.

This verse is exclaiming the national excitement over the fact that the Ark would soon be brought up from Kiriath-jearim to Zion. Genre considerations suggest that one need not take this verse to mean that the people did not actually know that the Ark was in

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<sup>66</sup> Walvoord, S. 1:887, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix.

<sup>67</sup> Delitzsch, S. 5:xii, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix.

Kiriath-jearim, for such had been common knowledge. The point is this: it is the intense, national excitement that a dwelling place for YHWH would soon be established.

#### The Implications on a Dwelling Place for the Ark (vv. 7-10)

Verses 7-10 change the focus from the discovery of the Ark to a focus on worship (v. 7) and then, it seems, to a call for YHWH to go forth for the purpose of moving toward His final place of dwelling (v. 8), and then to a general prayer for God's blessing toward the Priests and Davidic King (vv. 9-10). This change of focus has troubled some writers, but genre considerations suggest that the movement within these verses need not be taken as problematic. In these four verses one can identify four kinds of exhortation that are all implications to the "discovery" of the Ark.

#### *Exhortation to National Worship (v. 7)*

The first exhortation consists of a call to national worship. The parallel statements are effectively synonymous and express a strong mutual exhortation (seen in the volative *he* on each verb) to go to the Ark to worship YHWH. The people are exhorting one another to go to the new dwelling place for the Ark in Zion where the nation can offer worship at YHWH's "footstool," the dwelling place where YHWH has chosen to make His dwelling (cf. Pss. 99:5; 110:1; 1 Chron. 28:2; Is. 66:1; Lam. 2:1; note: in 1 Chronicles 28:2 the Ark is the footstool).<sup>68</sup> The need is to bow down in humility with reverence and worship to YHWH their God, a worship that carries with it the inherent idea of prostrating oneself before the one to be worshipped.<sup>69</sup> This is a call to come worship God at His new dwelling place.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Allen, 202, n. 7.

Clearly the language brings to mind the temple dedication speech of Solomon in 1 Kings 8 (a text which may be the very heart of this psalm), but the surrounding context suggests that some of the imagery may still be pointing back to the antecedent Davidic setting when the nation would have first been summoned to come together for corporate worship at God's new dwelling place.

*Exhortation for YHWH to Enter His Dwelling (v. 8)*

Verse 8 now gives an exhortation to YHWH and “the Ark of [His] strength” to rise up and travel to His chosen resting place.<sup>71</sup> The term used for “your resting place” (רָחֹק־מִנְּךָ) is a new term for the psalm that comes from the root word (נָח), the term that simply means “to rest” (in a *mem* preformative nominal form meaning “place of rest”). The implication is that at long last a final resting place has come for the Ark.

Of all the Psalms, it is only here in Psalm 132 that one finds a direct mention of The Ark of the Covenant. The Ark (אֲרוֹן) was a wooden chest that God commanded Moses to make. This chest would become the place where God would manifest His presence in a unique way among the people. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia gives this concise explanation of the Ark.

The ark was a chest made of acacia wood, 2 1/2 cubits long, 1 1/2 cubits wide and 1 1/2 cubits high. . . . Exodus, in addition to mentioning an acacia-wood chest, goes on to prescribe an overlay of gold within and without, and a molding of gold running all around. At the feet of the ark were to be four rings of gold for use with the gold-

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<sup>69</sup> Harris, 267, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix.

<sup>70</sup> In older studies, many understood the Hebrew verb used here for the English “worship” as a Hithpael stem of the root נָחַשׁ, with the idea of “bowing down,” but this is now commonly taken as a Hishtaphel (or sometimes Eshtaphel) of the consonantal root נָחַח, “to worship” (yet also with the connotation of bowing low).

<sup>71</sup> “Ark of your strength” should be understood as the Ark in which God chose to manifest His presence and might in a unique way, especially in contexts of warfare.



covered carrying staves. . . . Such carefully crafted wooden chests with gold overlay are known from the time of Tutankhamen and earlier. . . .

On top of the ark was the gold *kappōret* or “mercy-seat,” flanked by two gold cherubim . . . with outstretched wings. In the later temple of Solomon the ark was placed between two much more massive cherub figures (1 K. 6:19; 23ff; 8:6).<sup>72</sup>

Further commands included the instructions to put inside the Ark three items: (1) the stone tablets God gave to Moses as a witness to the Law/Covenant made at Sinai, (2) the rod from Aaron that produced buds, and (3) a golden jar that contained a portion of Manna as a testimony to the way that God supplied the needs of His people. As seen in Exodus 40:34-38, upon the completion of the Tabernacle where the Ark was to be housed, the inner sanctuary was so filled with the glory of God that no one could even stay in its presence. It was this Tabernacle and Ark with the glory of God within that led the nation from the Exodus onward.

The language of Psalm 132:8 lead one to remember the words of Moses in Numbers 10:35-36 where Moses called out to YHWH at the beginning of the Exodus to lead the people toward the place where YHWH would choose as a place of rest: “Then it came about when the ark set out that Moses said, ‘Rise up, O LORD! And let Your enemies be scattered, And let those who hate You flee before You.’”

More significantly in the immediate context are the words of Solomon in 2 Chronicles 6:41-42. In the dedication of the newly constructed temple, he spoke these same words:

Now therefore arise, O LORD God, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your might; let Your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation and let Your godly ones rejoice in what is good. O LORD God, do not turn away the face of Your anointed; remember *Your* lovingkindness to Your servant David.

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<sup>72</sup> Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988; 2002), S. 1:292, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix.

Solomon recognized there at the Temple dedication that the end of a long journey had come with God’s choice of Jerusalem as a dwelling place, and in this prayer he is inviting God to come to His chosen place of rest. As Kidner put it, “The pilgrimage began at Sinai and is now coming to an end.”<sup>73</sup> Forty years of wandering was about to culminate in a final resting place as chosen by YHWH, and from that time on “God was ever afterwards to be worshipped only at that place.”<sup>74</sup> This did not mean that personal worship could only take place at that location, but that Jerusalem would forevermore become the uniquely chosen city of the King (cf. Ps. 48; Matt. 5:35).

*Exhortation for Priestly Worship (v. 9)*

The next exhortation comes in verse 9 and comes in the form of a third person command (using a jussive third person plural) that God’s priests might be “clothed with righteousness” (רַחֲמֵי־יְהוָה). Following this is another exhortation in what is somewhat of a synonymous parallel (although one might perhaps consider it to be more of a synthetic nature). This next exhortation (also a jussive third person plural) is that His “godly ones” would sing for joy (יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל). It is an exhortation for loud and joyful worship in view of what God has done for His people.<sup>75</sup> As noted in verse 8, this appears to be an exhortation that was given by Solomon himself at the dedication of the temple as recorded in 2 Chronicles.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Kidner, 450.

<sup>74</sup> Calvin, 151.

<sup>75</sup> Loudness seems to be a key aspect of this verb that sometimes is in (1) distress (cf. Lam. 2:19), (2) joy or exultation (Jer. 31:7; Is. 12:6), or (3) summons and exhortation (Prov. 1:20; Is. 52:9).

<sup>76</sup> Kidner, 448-449.

There is some question about the exact meaning of these statements. In the first clause, the grammar shows that the subjects are the priests, but these priests are also becoming the direct objects of the action as they are “clothed with righteousness.” Gibson explains this is an illustration of the way that certain verbs function with the result that the subject becomes an object of the action and a direct object complement (in this case “righteousness”) applies to the subject (the priests) with an adverbial force (i.e., clothed *with* righteousness).<sup>77</sup>

The idea seems to be that the psalmist is exhorting the priests to lead the nation in worship because of the blessing that YHWH has poured out upon His people. YHWH has been faithful to His promises; that is, He has acted according to His own righteousness to save and bless His chosen people. Later in verse 16, it says that God will clothe the priests not with “righteousness,” but with “salvation.” Other passages show this kind of conceptual overlap between righteousness and salvation. Isaiah, for example, describes how God, by His own provision, brings about salvation to His people (e.g., 59:16: “His own arm brought salvation to Him and His righteousness upheld Him. He put on righteousness like a breastplate and a helmet of salvation on His head”).

These findings suggest that it is proper to see a connection between the concept of “righteousness” as being related to the idea that God brings “salvation,” and the blessings that come to His own people due to His own faithfulness.<sup>78</sup> In view of this righteousness, it is only right that His chosen intercessors should lead the nation in worship and praise.

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<sup>77</sup> Gibson, 112-113.

<sup>78</sup> VanGemeren, 807 (“It is synonymous with ‘salvation,’ . . . signifying victory, blessing, and deliverance”).

The parallel statement calls upon YHWH's "godly ones" to sing for joy.<sup>79</sup> The parallel structure in this verse and other uses in the Psalms suggest that this expression "your godly ones" is a reference to God's priests to lead the nation in worship.<sup>80</sup>

*Exhortation for Favor to Davidic Dynasty (v. 10)*

This final verse of exhortation is directed toward the Lord. It is an exhortation for God to show favor toward the Davidic dynasty. Once again (as in vv. 8-9), it seems clear from the reference to 2 Chronicles 6:41-42 that this prayer is actually taken from the words Solomon spoke at the dedication of the Temple. Here, the psalmist is asking God to continue to perpetuate and bless the king who sits on the throne of David. The expression "Do not turn away the face" is a plea for favorable treatment. The idea is that one has come before the king to seek the favor of the king. To turn away the face would be to reject the plea and to show no favor, that is, "to refuse" (cf. Bathsheba in 1 Kings 2:20 when she came before Solomon to ask Abishag for Adonijah). What this reflects is a plea that God would continue to show favor to the Davidic dynasty just as He promised He would. Although it is possible to take the expression "Thine anointed" of verse 10 (אֲנֻיְהוָה) as referring back to David, it seems preferable to see it here as speaking of Solomon, the anointed Son of David who was now occupying the throne of David according to God's promise or, perhaps, to a later son of David holding the position of God's anointed king. Solomon is asking God, for the sake of the covenant that He had

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<sup>79</sup> With reference to this expression "your holy ones," the Hebrew term (אֲנֻיְהוָה) may be rendered by the expression "your pious ones" or "your holy ones." The expression could be taken as meaning either (1) to be kind and pious in relation to others, or (2) to be faithful in devotion to God—particularly as should be true of His chosen priests (Francis Brown and Samuel Driver and Charles Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. electronic ed. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, 2000, xiii, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix).

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Pss. 30:5; 31:24; 37:28; 52:11; 79:2; 85:9; 89:2; 97:10; 116:15; 148:14; 149:1, 5, 9.

made with his father David (whose favored, intimate relationship with God is described as “Thy servant”), that God not reject him in his role as king.

With this final plea, one comes to the end of the first half of Psalm 132. In response to these pleas, God answers in verses 11-18 to show that He will indeed bless the king and his people. Central to the answer is God’s declaration that He has both chosen David and his sons to rule, but also that He has chosen Zion as the place in which this will take place.

#### CHAPTER 4

##### THE CHOICE OF A DWELLING PLACE FOR THE LORD (VV. 11-18)

The second major portion of Psalm 132 begins in verse 11 in which one finds the answers to the petitions of 1-10. God is affirming that He has and will continue to bless

His people. The reason why this is so is because God has made a covenant with His people that He will indeed bless them.

This answer to prayer can be divided into three major points: (1) the nature of God's covenant (vv. 11-12), (2) the certainty of God's covenant (vv. 13-14), and (3) the benefits of God's covenant (vv. 15-18).

### *The Nature of God's Covenant (vv. 11-12)*

These first two verses focus primarily upon what is called "The Davidic Covenant," the covenant God made to David that He would establish an eternal dynasty from his family. The two major historical texts that record this covenant are 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17. Each of those passages gives the historical record of God's promise to David that an eternal kingdom would be established through his progeny. Psalm 89, as here, too, celebrates this covenant by recognizing that Israel's dynastic blessings are sure because of the fact that God has sworn an oath to bless His people with an eternal kingdom through David's family. Careful inspection of this covenant, though, indicates that there are both unconditional and conditional elements. Verse 11 places the focus upon the unconditional elements of this promise.

#### The Unconditional Nature of the Davidic Covenant (v. 11)

Here in verse 11 God answers the petition of verse 10 by declaring that He has made an unconditional oath to David (same verb for "swear" as in v. 1). The NASB reads, "The Lord has sworn to David 'a truth' from which He will not turn back." Many writers believe, however, that this term "truth" (אֱמֻנָה) should be taken as an adverbial

accusative rather than as a direct object to sworn (i.e., “The Lord has ‘truly’ sworn”).<sup>81</sup> The statement that follows, then, would be properly read as an independent clause which would read, “He will not turn away from it” (i.e., from that which he has sworn). This explanation provides a better understanding of the Hebrew. Clearly, however, these statements are highlighting the certainty of this unconditional covenant.

The heart of this oath comes in the next clause when God says, “Of the fruit of your body (אֲנִי־בְרִי־ךָ אֲשֶׁתְּכֶנָּה) I will set upon your throne.”<sup>82</sup> This is an oath from God to David that God Himself will establish a dynasty through David’s progeny.<sup>83</sup> In other words, not all of David’s sons will be kings, but from among these sons God will establish a dynasty, and this is something that is absolutely certain.<sup>84</sup>

The verse does not actually supply a direct object to the transitive verb “set” (שָׁבַע) so it becomes necessary to supply one. The root Hebrew term (שָׁבַע) could be mistaken by some as the idea of “sit” (an intransitive verb which would produce the idea that God is promising that He will sit on David’s throne), but the term is in fact a transitive verb, one that carries the idea of “to put or set.”<sup>85</sup> Although it would be grammatically possible to take “throne” (with its affixed *lamed*) as the object and see the idea as “I will set a throne for you,” there is a better solution. That solution is to

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<sup>81</sup> Delitzsch, 314.

<sup>82</sup> Grammatical note: the 2<sup>nd</sup> person suffix which appears to be feminine is masculine and in this form due to the pausal form, thus referring to David.

<sup>83</sup> Allen notes that this expression could read literally as from the fruit of his “belly or womb,” but obviously in the sense that it is referring to a physical descendant of David. The construction is utilizing a “partitive” use of the ׀ that is affixed to the term “fruit” to mean that from among David’s fruit one will come to rule as God’s chosen king, 203, n. 11b.

<sup>84</sup> Terence E. Fretheim, “Divine Foreknowledge, Divine Constancy, and the Rejection of Saul’s Kingship,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 47 (October 1985): 598.

<sup>85</sup> Brown, Page xiii, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix.

recognize that “sons” should be supplied as the implied direct object. The psalmist, then, was celebrating the fact that God had promised to establish an eternal kingdom and, as verse 12 shows, that this kingdom would be established through David’s “sons.”

As a side note to the main flow of the text, it would be good at this point to consider the advice of Elliot Johnson who reminds the student that this is a literal promise of a literal king who will be ruling from a literal Zion. Thus, it is illegitimate, says Johnson, to follow the reasoning of Progressive Dispensationalists like Bock who interpret passages like Psalm 132 (or 110) as meaning that Christ is reigning at this present moment from a throne of David in heaven. As Johnson says, “In such a reinterpretation the principle of the analogy of faith wrongly overrides and “corrects” the principle of literal, contextual interpretation.”<sup>86</sup> Toussaint also urges the reader to not confuse various New Testament events as meaning that the promised messianic kingdom has arrive when he writes, “The coming of the Holy Spirit did not automatically mean the coming of the kingdom.”<sup>87</sup> At the heart of the issue, writes Nichols, is the error of taking certain messianic events in Acts that did in fact take place and using them to argue that Psalms 110 and 132 (and others) are now being fulfilled by Christ as though he were ruling on the throne of David.<sup>88</sup> This promise is indeed literal and will indeed see an eternal fulfillment, but the present interruption of these blessings (which began in 605 B. C. and continue to this very day) are due to violations of God’s commandments by His

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<sup>86</sup> Elliot Johnson, “Hermeneutical Principles and the Interpretation of Psalm 110,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149:596 (October 1992): 434.

<sup>87</sup> Stanley Toussaint, “The Church and Israel,” *Conservative Theological Journal* 2:7 (December 1998): 366.

<sup>88</sup> Stephen J. Nichols, “The Dispensational View of the Davidic Kingdom: A Response to Progressive Dispensationalism,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 7:2 (Fall 1996): 231-233.



people and kings—commandments from the Law of Moses that constituted conditional elements for the Davidic Covenant.

#### The Conditional Elements of the Davidic Covenant (v. 12)

It is interesting to ponder the fact that an “unconditional” covenant can have “conditional” elements within it, but such is indeed the case.<sup>89</sup> As Kaiser writes, “Nevertheless, even this covenant is presented as if it were conditioned by the obedience of David’s descendants.”<sup>90</sup>

The grammatical structure of the verse shows that there were conditions that had to be followed if the sons of David were to enjoy covenant blessings without interruption. One sees this conditionality by the use of the conditional clause that begins with this statement, “If your sons will keep . . .” (אִם־בְּנֵי־דָוִד־יִשְׁמְרוּ). That is, ongoing dedication to God’s “covenant” (His “testimony”) which He teaches them was the condition that had to be fulfilled if covenant blessings were to be enjoyed. If the sons would remain faithful, God tells them that the dynasty would enjoy an unbroken succession of blessing with their sons sitting (or “dwelling”) upon David’s throne forever.<sup>91</sup>

The meaning of verse 12 is thus: in order for the Davidic dynasty to enjoy unbroken covenant blessings, there had to be obedience to the Law of Moses, the

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<sup>89</sup> Cf. Ps. 89:30-37 where this conditionality is clearly spelled out.

<sup>90</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “Leviticus 18:5 And Paul: Do This And You Shall Live (Eternally?),” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 14:1 (Winter 1971): 23-24.

<sup>91</sup> One should not prefer the textual variant in the Dead Sea Scrolls which reads “come up” rather than “dwelling.” As Homan has shown, both the Masoretic Text and Septuagint have “dwell” (Heb. יָשָׁבוּ from the root שָׁב can be rendered by the English terms “remain,” “sit” or “dwell”) and the variations in the Qumran Psalms scroll (from external and internal evidence) strongly suggest that this scroll was simply a “Psalmsbook” and not part of an authoritative element of God’s work to produce inspired canonical literature (cf. Martin J. Homan, “A Comparative Study Of The Psalter In Light Of IIQPs” *Westminster Theological Journal* 40:1 (Fall 1977): 127-129).

“testimony” which God was continually teaching His kings and people that had to be observed and obeyed.<sup>92</sup> Unfortunately, a reading of Old Testament history shows that covenant faithfulness did not happen. For this reason, the sons of David temporarily lost the privilege of ruling on David’s throne. Furthermore, contrary to Progressive Dispensationalists (or other non-dispensationalists like Calvin<sup>93</sup>), this throne has not already been restored, although it certainly will be at the Second Coming of the Messiah.<sup>94</sup> When the Messiah returns, He will indeed rule forever and ever (טַדְּ-וְטַדְּ) as suggested by the emphatic nature of the underlying Hebrew text (cf. Is. 26:4; 45:17; 65:18), but this promised rule from Zion has not yet begun.

#### *The Certainty of God’s Covenant (vv. 13-14)*

In verses 13-14, the psalmist shifts focus from the nature of the covenant God has made to elaborate on the certainty of this covenant. This certainty is reflected in four direct affirmations (all in a parallel structure) of the fact that God has purposed to establish a king to rule on the throne of David from His chosen capital, Zion.

In this first affirmation of God’s purpose, one sees God’s choice of Zion (v. 13a) where He says, “The Lord has chosen Zion.” The use of the causal particle (וְ, "for") shows that verses 13-14 are giving an affirmation of the certainty that was spoken of in verses 11-12. Why is the covenant certain? The answer is *because* (1) God has sworn it to be so (v. 11) and (2) *because* God has chosen Zion to become His own city.

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<sup>92</sup> Note: the singular demonstrative pronoun הַ (‘‘which’’) which is here functioning as a relative particle can legitimately refer back to a plural antecedent in poetic passages, Gibson, 7 (cf. Job 19:9; Ps. 74:2); Waltke suggests that one should prefer the this MT reading הַ to the Targum’s וְ, 336.

<sup>93</sup> Calvin, 154.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Ezekiel 21:27: ‘‘A ruin, a ruin, a ruin, I will make it. This also will be no more until He comes whose right it is, and I will give it to Him.’’

The place called Zion was originally taken by David when Joab captured the city called Jebus (2 Sam. 5). Zion was the area that became David's capital city. Over time, the term came to include the area of the temple mount just north of David's City and eventually to be virtually synonymous with all of Jerusalem, God's chosen city. The point is that Zion (Jerusalem) is God's chosen city, and that choice will never change.

A second affirmation of God's purpose can be seen in when it speaks in parallel of God's desire of Zion as His "habitation" (נִשְׁכַּח). The Hebrew term for "desire" (נָחַץ) is a verb that can have fairly strong feelings behind it (Heb. root: נָחַץ). This term was used, for example, in the last of the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy where it says, "Do not *covet* your neighbor's house" (Deut. 5:21b). This verse demonstrates the strong personal desire that YHWH feels toward Zion.

The third affirmation of God's purpose comes in verse 14 where it says that God has chosen Zion as His resting place (נָחַץ). In context, the expression refers to the literal city of Jerusalem and should be not be reinterpreted to mean that the whole world has now become God's resting place as non-dispensationalists assert. Calvin, for example, writes, "Mount Zion became an enlarged Mt. Zion upon the advent of Christ," with the meaning that this verse is speaking about the church.<sup>95</sup> A proper interpretation understands that when Jesus Christ returns He will rule from Jerusalem forever and ever (cf. נָחַץ as in v. 12) from His chosen capitol Zion.

The end of verse 14 brings a fourth affirmation of God's Purpose. This verse shows God's identification of a desired dwelling place when He says, "Here I will dwell

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<sup>95</sup> Calvin, 158.

(נִשְׁכַּח from the root נִשְׁחַח), for I have desired it.” Again, the text is clear: Zion is the place that God has chosen as an eternal dwelling.<sup>96</sup>

*The Benefits of God’s Covenant (vv. 15-18)*

Verses 15-18 give an elaboration of the benefits that belong to the people of God due to God’s choice of David and Zion. This section highlights five promises of blessing that belong to the people of God because of God’s choice of David and Zion.

First Promise: Abundant Food and Provision (v. 15)

With two parallel statements God assures His people that He will abundantly supply them with food and provision. In some contexts the Hebrew term that is here rendered as “provision” has the connotation of “prey” or “hunting” (cf. Gen. 10:9; 27:3), however, but it can also have a broader sense (as here) in which it simply refers to food in general.<sup>97</sup> God’s promise is that He will satisfy the poor in Zion with food (“bread”: Heb. לֶחֶם, *lechem*) so that they never lack again.<sup>98</sup> Not just the wealthy, but even the poor will have abundance, suggesting that there will be no poverty such as men experience in the present cursed age. Zion will experience the blessing of God, and with this blessing will come an age of unending abundance in which all will be satisfied.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Alexander notes how this verb for dwelling often has the connotation of sitting in the sense of being enthroned, 526.

<sup>97</sup> Calvin, 159 (“The word signifies food taken in hunting and then it is used to express food of any kind”).

<sup>98</sup> “Bread” functions here as a second accusative as an adverbial accusative as noted by Waltke, 176 (Waltke also notes that the same happens again in v. 16 with “salvation” being an adverbial double accusative, 176, n. 23).

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Zech. 3:10: “In that day, declares the LORD of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree.”

Second Promise: The Promise of Joyful Worship (v. 16)

Not only will the people have abundant food, but they will also have a life filled with joyful worship. The priests (also called His “godly ones”) will be “clothed with salvation” and “sing aloud for joy.” In verse 9, the Psalmist asked God to clothe the priests with righteousness, but here he says that they will be clothed with the garments of salvation. In other words, all the blessings of perfect and final salvation will be their’s, and in this salvation they will sing for joy over the blessings of YHWH.

Third Promise: Righteous Leadership by the Son of David (v. 17)

God’s third promise is that the nation will at long last have the righteous leadership that He has always wanted them to have. Throughout the Old Testament, God’s people had many kings who were not righteous, but the prophets all looked ahead with anticipation to that day when God would send a righteous king to rule the nation according to God’s own heart (cf. Is. 11:4: “But with righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth”). By God’s grace, such leadership will one day come through the Son of David whom God will once again send. This two-fold, parallel declaration of a coming ruler is rich in messianic imagery.

First, one must note that Zion (“There,” Heb.  $\text{דָּוִד}$ ) is specifically identified as the place from which He will reign, i.e., Jerusalem, His chosen capitol, and none other.<sup>100</sup> Secondly, one should not overlook the statement that God will cause “the horn of David to spring forth.” The expression “horn” frequently alludes to the idea of power. Several passages use this terminology to look ahead to the Messiah who will come to rule in the power of YHWH. In one passage that is indirectly messianic (1 Sam. 2:10), Hannah

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<sup>100</sup> Cf. Hag. 2:9; Zech. 2:13; 14:16-17.

speaks about the way that God will exalt the Horn of His anointed. Another passage that is even more directly messianic is Ezekiel 29:21 where God promises that He will “sprout” a horn up for Israel so that they will know Him. This last passage is very similar to Psalm 132:17, for each passage utilizes the term “horn” as well as the verb that means “to sprout.” Each looks ahead to the day when God will send His Son to rule the earth (with Ezekiel perhaps having had access to Psalm 132).

The verb “to sprout” (or “spring forth”) has some fascinating theology that revolves around it that deserves a brief comment. The root verb (here a Hiphil stem from  $\text{נִצַּח}$ ), when put into a nominal form, renders the English word “branch” ( $\text{נִצְמַח}$ , *tsemach*), a term that occurs in various portions of the Old Testament as a messianic title. An examination of the usage of this term suggests that the nation of Israel had a growing body of messianic promise that was accumulating one generation after another and that this term “Branch” was part of that messianic promise.

This messianic theology was reaching a point of culmination as one approached the end of the OT era. Zechariah (ca. 520 B. C.) was the last prophet to use the term Branch but a careful study shows that this term can probably be traced back all the way to words that were spoken by King David himself before his death.<sup>101</sup> For example, in Zechariah 6:12-13, the Lord spoke this promise, saying:

Behold, a man whose name is **Branch**, for He will branch out from where He is, and He will build the temple of the LORD. Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices.

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<sup>101</sup> Kruse, 289.

This passage shows that the Messiah will be a Priest/King and One who will rule forever. Earlier, in 3:8, God had also used the term once before when He said, “Behold, I am going to bring in My servant the *Branch*.” Each of these references to the Branch is to the coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Working backward to the 7<sup>th</sup> century B. C., one finds two similar messianic references to The Branch in Jeremiah (vv. 23:5; 33:15). Working back even further to the 8<sup>th</sup> century B. C., one finds another messianic use of the title in Isaiah 4:2.

Going back even further, though, to the 10<sup>th</sup> century B. C., one finds what is quite likely the origin of this expression as coming from the lips of King David in 2 Samuel 23:5.<sup>102</sup> To celebrate the beauty and certainty of this unconditional covenant (v. 23:4), David declared in verse 5, “Will He not indeed *make it grow*?” In all likelihood, this last statement (also a Hiphil Imperfect of פָּדַע as in Psalm 132) became the basis for a title of the long-awaited Messiah, “The Branch.”<sup>103</sup> Thus, God’s promise here in Psalm 132 is that He would bring forth the Messiah by causing this horn from David to spring forth.<sup>104</sup> The promise of the Scriptures, then, was this: a messianic Redeemer called “The Branch.”

Parallel in concept is the next expression that says that God will prepare a lamp for His anointed. In this context, the expression “for My anointed” (לְעֹלְמִי) probably is not looking ahead to Jesus Christ as “The Anointed One,” but back to David as the first in

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<sup>102</sup> In 2 Samuel 23:5 David was looking ahead to the soon-approaching day of his own death. In these last words (cf. esp. vv. 1-5), David was exulting in the promise that YHWH had made with him that an eternal dynasty would come forth from his sons.

<sup>103</sup> Allen, 209.

<sup>104</sup> Kruse has pointed out that this text actually became the basis for a daily Jewish prayer called “Benediction” of the Amidah (*Shemoneh Esreh*) which said, “Let the shoot of David your servant speedily sprout up; and lift up his horn by your salvation, for which we are waiting every day,” 290.

this line of promise. The idea of having a lamp means that one has a standing testimony, in this case a Davidic king sitting on the throne. One finds the expression in 2 Samuel 21:17 where David’s men swore to him, saying, “You shall not go out again with us to battle, so that you do not extinguish the lamp of Israel.” Their fear was that David might get killed and that the “lamp” (of God’s promise) would get extinguished.

The Old Testament is not unique in its use of this expression, though, for one can also see similar uses in Ugaritic and Akkadian literature which show that the concept was not unique to the Davidic Dynasty.<sup>105</sup> This is the essence of God’s promise: it is the oath by YHWH that David will have an eternal dynasty to rule out of Zion forever.

#### Fourth Promise: Deliverance from Enemy Oppression (v. 18a)

Here in verse 18, one finds a fourth blessing to the people of God: the promise of deliverance from enemy oppression. This promise is seen in the promise that God will “clothe with shame” the enemies of God’s coming King (תַּשְׁכֵּן אֶת־לְבָבוֹ אֶת־שׂוֹנְאֵי־יְהוָה).<sup>106</sup> The idea is clear: all who hate Israel and seek harm against her will find that God becomes their enemy and brings them down in humiliating defeat. Three of the other psalms (esp. Pss. 2; 89:26; 110) speak in graphic terms of how God will bring severe judgment against all who hate Him, and who hate His Anointed King, and who seek to oppress His chosen people.

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<sup>105</sup> For example, one finds such an example of dynastic perpetuation when the Assyrian King Tiglath Pileser III is referred to as “the light of all humankind”; cf. John Walton and Victor H. Matthews and Mark W. Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2000), 522.

<sup>106</sup> The grammatical construction here is similar to verse 9 above with the use of a double accusative. In this present verse the double accusative is the term “shame.”



Looking ahead to the last book of the Bible, one sees that the prime reason for such hatred is due to God's choice of Israel as the vessel through whom He would bring redemption (cf. Rev. 12:4, 13, 17). The issue is clear: the Devil hates Israel because God loves Israel, especially because God has chosen to bring forth His Son as a physical descendant of that nation (cf. Rom. 4:24; 9:3). God's promise in Psalm 132:18 is that one day His people will be delivered from all the hatred and oppression.

Upon hearing that his son (John the Baptist) would introduce the Messiah, Zacharias sang with joy over this coming deliverance when he spoke these words:

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant—as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old—Salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all those who hate us; to show mercy toward our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to Abraham our father, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days (Lk. 1:68-75).

The connection between Psalm 132 and the messianic faith of Zacharias is unmistakable, as is the fact that this coming One is the One who will deliver them from all oppression.

Fifth Promise: Honor and Glory to His Chosen People (v. 18b)

The final statement of this psalm looks back to the Messiah and how God will cause honor and glory to fall upon His people.<sup>107</sup> In particular, God says that the crown upon the Son of David shine.

The term here for “His crown” (כִּתְרוֹ) is the term that is sometimes uses when referring to the miter of the High Priest (cf. Ex. 29:6). Here the focus is upon the crown

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<sup>107</sup> Note the contrast with how the enemies will be clothed with “shame.”

as sitting upon the long-awaited messianic King. God's promise is that this crown "shall shine."<sup>108</sup> Another writer notes that this is "a poetic way of saying that David's royal position will blossom, will grow and develop from bud to flower."<sup>109</sup> Clearly the idea is that God heap honor and glory upon His people but, as the context particularly shows, He will heap this glory and honor upon His Beloved Son who gave Himself to redeem His people from eternal damnation.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The Bible says that one day soon, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the Lord Jesus Christ will rapture His church and, as the climax of His long-awaited return, come back to this earth to bring in an eternal kingdom of righteousness and peace. This promise reaches back throughout the ages and has been the source of hope for all those who love Him and long for His coming. This promise includes the long-awaited day when God will once again dwell in intimacy with His people.

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<sup>108</sup> Calvin (p. 162) preferred the term flourish, but the idea is "to shine or sparkle brightly."

<sup>109</sup> George Knight and Angus Fulton, *Psalms: Volume 2 in The Daily Study Bible Series* (Louisville : Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), S. 297, cited in electronic form with Logos Libronix.

Psalm 132 is one of God's prophetic oracles that celebrates this promise. It is a message for the church today that she keep her eyes focused on the promise of redeeming grace and the coming King who will banish the curse of sin and death forever. This will be the final realization of that day when at long last the Tabernacle of God will be among men, and God Himself will dwell in the midst of His people in an age of unending bliss (Rev. 21:3-4). Those who long for this day concur with the Apostle John who closed his prophecy with this plea, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 21:20).

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